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**ACHIEVING SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUITY AND DEVELOPMENT:  
A REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN OF  
THE CARIBBEAN SUBREGION IN PREPARATION FOR THE  
FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, 1995**

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This document is a preliminary working document which has not been formally edited.

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INTRODUCTION

The member States of the United Nations, by General Assembly resolution 45/129, endorsed the Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 of 24 May 1990, in which the Council recommended that a world conference on women should be held in 1995 and requested that the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) act as preparatory body for the World Conference. By resolution 36/8A, the CSW agreed to hold the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, from the 4 to 15 September 1995 at Beijing, China.

The purposes of the Fourth World Conference on Women (WCW) are:

- (a) To review and appraise the advancement of women since 1985 in terms of the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000;
- (b) To mobilize women and men at both the policy-making and grass roots levels to achieve those objectives;
- (c) To adopt a "Platform for Action", concentrating on some of the key issues identified as representing a fundamental obstacle to the advancement of the majority of women in the world. It will include elements relating to awareness-raising, decision-making, literacy, poverty, health, violence, national machinery, refugees and technology;
- (d) To determine the priorities to be followed in 1966-2001 for implementation of the Strategies within the United Nations System.

For the WCW and the documentation laid before it to be truly representative of the world's women, the CSW underlined the importance of national level preparations which should culminate in the production of a national report.

Because this exercise was recognized as a complex process, the CSW requested the UN Secretariat to assist countries by providing guidelines for the preparation of national reports.

In keeping with its mandate the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has been providing technical assistance to governments and non-governmental organizations in the subregion in the preparatory process.

## **Background**

This document is prepared by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in preparation for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (WCW), to be held in Beijing in September 1995. It presents and consists of a synthesis of the Commonwealth Caribbean Report and the national reports of the non-Commonwealth Caribbean countries. It presents information from 20 of the 22 member and associate member countries of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC).

In addition to providing a statistical comparison of the countries of subregion through data made available in the national reports, this document highlights areas of consensus and dissensus and presents strategic objectives for the advancement of women in the subregion.

This document is expected to play a fundamental part in shaping the final Latin American and Caribbean Regional Report through the provision of the statistical data and the Caribbean perspective for inclusion in the regional report which would be laid before the Latin American and Caribbean region in Mar de Plata, Argentina, at the Regional Preparatory Conference 26 - 30 September 1994. The report covers the period 1980 to 1992.

## **Methodological considerations**

All countries received the United Nations Guidelines for the preparation of national reports. Technical assistance was provided regarding its use and technical officers from the ECLAC/CDCC member countries were provided with an opportunity to address the adequacy and relevancy of the indicators as suggested by the document. This they did during subregional preparatory meetings, with the exception of Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands who were not in attendance at preparatory meetings. Not all the data requested in the UN guidelines were available in every country. In instances where such was available data was not always disaggregated by gender.

CARICOM through the British Development Division in the Caribbean (BDDC), provided consultants and researchers to work with women's machineries in the Commonwealth Caribbean to assist in the collection and analysis of data and in the structuring of the final reports. Unfortunately no such financial support was available for the women's machinery in non-Commonwealth Caribbean countries. These national women's machineries must be congratulated for accepting the challenge of preparing the reports under difficult circumstances. The Trinidad and Tobago national report was not available at the time of preparation of this document.

## **Organization of document**

The first part of the document presents a global and regional context for the analysis of the status of women as presented in the national reports.

The second part presents a synthesis of the national reports identifying trends, areas of consensus and dissensus based on actual data presented.

The third part presents the strategic goals and objectives derived from the analysis contained in part one and two.

## SECTION I

### **Global and hemispheric context**

This analysis of the status of women in the Caribbean subregion occurs in a rapidly changing global environment marked by the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union; the end of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic government in South Africa; an economic setting characterized by increased trade liberalization and the formation of trade blocs; and an increased awareness of the fundamental link between people, development and sound environmental management.

#### Economic trends

The people of the Caribbean are confronted by the growing globalization of the world economy, the restructuring of its industrialization base and the international division of labour. All of this is taking place in a highly sophisticated technological environment.

The anxiously awaited global recovery since the 'lost decade' of the eighties did not materialize by 1992, and although economic activity increased slightly, the indications were that this increase may not have been sustained.

As the globalization of production changes the patterns of technology, investment, employment and labour, a shifting of certain types of low-technology jobs in electronics and garment assembly activities to the non industrialized world, often with women as the main source of cheap labour, has taken place.

At the same time globalization of the world economy has brought with it the phenomenon of jobless growth even in parts of the industrialized world. In the Human Development Report of 1993, a survey of the employment levels of countries revealed that many industrial countries, despite experiencing some growth in GDP in the mid 1980's, actually experienced low growth in employment or none at all, for others employment levels actually fell; in developing countries informal employment increased sharply offering low-wage, non-permanent jobs instead of remunerative productive employment. A significant segment of the informal sector worldwide is comprised of women. In Latin America and the Caribbean women make up 25 - 40% of the informal sector.

The globalization of the world economy has also impacted on the nature and scope of

telecommunications. Not only has the information flow increased, but it has been more rapid, moving the Caribbean into the global village with its attendant advantages and disadvantages at an alarming pace.

A trend towards 'international regionalisation' has also been identified with examples such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Enterprise of the Americas Initiative (EAI), and the European Union (EU) being cited. Some experts point to the potential positive contributions which this increasingly liberal international trading environment may bring. Key among these contributions they identify are easy access to large markets, to technology and more efficiently produced inputs for both industry and agriculture, and increased investment in the domestic economy. Other experts have argued however that such initiatives could further increase trade discrimination in the world and heighten the possibility of trade conflicts, leaving small, open and technologically weak economies, like these found in the subregion, in great difficulty.

### **Social trends**

Despite the fact that this current review of the status of women is taking place in a global environment which no longer has as its principal source of tension the cold war, the environment is however filled with conflicts, of an ethnic, cultural and religious nature. Peace still eludes the world's people.

According to the 1993 Human Development Report, internal conflicts afflict some 60 countries and about 35 million people are refugees or internally displaced.

Military spending in the industrialized world, has largely withstood the geopolitical earthquake that has occurred. Overall military expenditures stand at approximately \$750 billion a year - the equivalent of the combined annual incomes of the poorest half of the world's people. In real terms, the United States is spending approximately 50% more on defence today than it was a decade ago.

While military spending continues, nearly one billion - 35% of the adult population are still illiterate; 2/3 of the illiterates are women, and the drop - out rate at the primary levels is still as high as 30%.

UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report 1993, framed a picture of the world in which each day 35,000 children under five still die in the developing world from malnutrition and disease.

The link between population and poverty is becoming somewhat tenuous. The view that a reduction in the fertility rates would automatically lead to an improved quality in life has come under questions as women watch fertility rates drop but can discern no real improvement in the quality of life.

Fertility rates have fallen in almost every region of the world. In Latin America, the annual number of births has now begun to decline; in Asia, births will reach a peak in the mid-1990's and

begin to fall; even in South Asia, a peak will be reached within a decade. Only in Africa is the annual number of births expected to continue to rise until well into the next century. Significantly, almost one third (1/3) of the total population or 1.3 billion people still live in absolute poverty.

UNICEF suggests that the great demographic change taking place in our times coupled with the freeing up of a vast share of the world's resources - physical, financial, scientific, managerial - that has for so long been devoted to war and to military repression, should lead policy makers to the conclusion that the time is now right for a determined effort to overcome the worst aspects of poverty.

It is hoped that a greater share of such resources might become available for alleviating some of the great social problems facing the nations of the world; for halting and reversing the damage that is being done to the environment; and for investing in the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable economic growth.

These global goals cannot be achieved, it is suggested, unless the unsatiable desire for participation by the world's peoples, in the events that shape their lives, is satisfied.

People in the world during the 1980's witnessed a move away from authoritarian rule towards greater political freedom and democracy. Despite this, the current world environment is dominated by large segments of people experiencing the effects of social marginalisation based on considerations of race, ethnicity, gender, religious, cultural, physical or mental disability or economic status. Even in countries endowed with a certain degree of cultural homogeneity, sharing of political power has not been easy. In modern societies, where a plurality of cultures exists this task of empowering marginalized groups and ensuring the participation of people at all levels has proved to be a most difficult task.

However, one group has put its stamp on this period for its efforts at empowering marginalised groups and that is the non - governmental organization movement which has been led by the women's movement. The UNDP report identifies some of these NGOs major contributions as their success at keeping participatory democracy alive, and promoting participatory development through social and economic projects. The increasing numbers of people's organizations and Non-governmental organizations is a clear demonstration of how people all over the world are demanding greater participation in civil society.

The close of this decade sees growing partnerships and increased working relations between governments and non - governmental organizations at international fora and in nations throughout the world.

### **Changing development paradigms**

One of the most significant events occurring during this period under review is the

redefinition of the very concept of development. The concept which is gaining ground links growth with social justice and equity, and places people at the centre of the development paradigm and process.

The notions which simplistically equated development with modernization are fast losing ground. So too, are mechanistic interpretations of growth which suggest that marginalised groups through the trickle - down effect, will become participants in and beneficiaries of the development process. During this period it has become clear, that attempts at modernization and development have not always resulted in fostering the extent of social integration that was envisaged, as many societies face the close of the century engulfed in serious internal conflict.

Women and development specialists have played a key role in this reshaping of the development debate. It is they, who through their exposure of the ethnocentric bias inherent in the development projects sponsored and implemented by Western organizations, regarding the sexual division of labour and family-sharing of income and resources, brought a new dimension to the development debate. It is they, who drew the world's attention to the fact that women represent powerful human resources in development, that unnoticed they perform the major part of the world's labour and they do so under very underprivileged conditions.

It is they who have introduced the concept of gender into the development debate. The concept makes it possible to distinguish biologically founded, sexual differences between women and men, from the culturally determined differences between the roles given to or undertaken by women and men in a given society. The concept focuses then on relations which are socially constructed and not biologically defined.

Kari Levitt, visiting Professor at the University of the West Indies, Consortium Graduate School, has suggested a definition of development as "a creative process .. whose central nervous system is located in the cultural sphere; it is ultimately not a matter of money or physical capital or foreign exchange or of getting prices right, but the capacity of a society to tap the root of popular creativity, to free-up and empower people to exercise their intelligence and collective wisdom " for the well-being of present and future generations.

ECLAC has been a fierce proponent of an approach to development which it terms an integrated approach to growth with social equity. ECLAC argues that environmentally sustainable growth with equity in a democracy, is not only necessary but is possible. Just as social equity cannot be attained in the absence of strong sustained growth, such growth likewise calls for a reasonable degree of social and political stability, and this in turn means meeting certain minimum requisites of equity. These two tenets growth and equity, in the opinion of ECLAC, must be advanced simultaneously rather than sequentially if development is to be achieved.

The UNDP has advocated that development is about increasing people's choices. It is recommended that development should be weaved around people and not people around development. Its most recent report advises that people's participation is a most essential ingredient



to development and warns that participation is not an event but a process.

It argues that new models of sustainable human development are needed to invest in human potential and to create an enabling environment for the full use of human capabilities. UNDP argues that human development is development of the people for the people by the people. Development of the people means investing in human capabilities, whether in education or health or skills so that people can work productively and creatively is fundamental to development. Development for the people UNDP argues means ensuring that the economic growth they generate is distributed widely and fairly; development by the people focuses on giving everyone a chance to participate.

### **Subregional context**

The Caribbean subregion closes off this, the third decade which has focused on the advancement of women, more united by external pressures than by internal forces.

This review finds the subregion under the threat of marginalisation from the new hemispheric and international trading blocs and by the new geopolitical reality of Eastern Europe.

A positive occurrence has been the embrace by the subregion of the notions of consensus building and partnership. This is evidenced by the two key initiatives undertaken in the Commonwealth Caribbean in the 1990's : the Regional Economic Conference and the West Indian Commission . During both initiatives the Non-Governmental sector and the Women's movement within that sector, participated as equal partners.

### **Economic**

Debt servicing which became pronounced in the eighties continues to be a burden on the countries of the subregion into the 1990's. In 1992 the quantum of Caribbean Foreign Debt stood at approximately US\$ 21 billion (Pantin 1993). Despite as many as sixteen years of application in some countries, the people of the subregion have not yet seen the light at the end of the tunnel, that is structural adjustment and stabilization programmes which were meant to redress the balance payments crisis.

The most notable trend which has emerged from these programmes has been the similarities of the policies pursued and the ensuing problems which have emerged.(Henry 1993)

The issue of privatization has been key among those policies pursued within the ambit of structural adjustment and stabilization programmes. Privatization includes the transfer of assets and influence from the public to the private sector and of course divestment in its various forms as well as liberalization policies intended to improve the functioning of the market. Much of the gains of privatization have been used to reduce the external debt burden.

Unemployment and underemployment, the twin bugbears which have plagued the region since independence, during this period became more pronounced. Open unemployment rates by the end of the 1980s were around 20% of the labour force and this is thought to have increased in the 1990's. Underemployment rates are believed to be as high as 40-50 % in several countries.

In countries for which data are available, it is believed that high unemployment, and eroding real incomes have worsened income distribution, it has also brought with a new phenomenon of child labour for this modern period as children attempted to supplement the family income. (ECLAC working paper, Poverty issues and poverty alleviation in the Caribbean , Nov. 1993).

The ecological vulnerability of the subregion has become more evident during this period as natural disasters such as floods and hurricanes have resulted in loss of life, human suffering and severe setbacks to the social and economic status of the countries. Particularly vulnerable are those economies which rely heavily on tourism and agriculture.

There has also been an increased awareness on the part of policy makers and non-governmental organizations alike regarding the new environmental dangers to which the region is exposed. The new awakening has come through threats of the dumping of toxic waste and chemicals in the subregion, the damage to the ecology brought about by an exploitative and uninformed tourist sector.

## **Social**

There is little argument that the social costs of structural adjustment measures implemented in the subregion have been enormous.

"A large social debt is now due to the lower income groups in these societies who have borne the brunt of the adjustment through informalisation of work, the increase in unemployment and underemployment, the development and expansion of criminal underground economy, the spread of poverty and the growing presence of nutritional deficiencies among children and infants."(Henry 1993)

It has been recognized by national governments and international organizations the group who have borne the heaviest burden under the structural measures have been women (UN 1991).

The social landscape of the subregion is marred by poverty estimated in 1992 at approximately 10 million people living beneath the poverty line.

Haiti alone accounted for about one half this number and the Dominican Republic for about one third. Among the smaller countries Jamaica, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago also had a significant number of their population living in poverty. Despite their good economic performance it is generally accepted that pockets of poverty remain in the Eastern Caribbean.(ECLAC 1993)

There has been a dramatic increase in the transshipment and abuse of drugs and illicit substances bringing with it high economic and social costs to the subregion. In Trinidad and Tobago cocaine seizures rose from less than 20 kilos in 1980 to more than 115 kilos in 1990 (Lewis 1991) and at the other end of the Caribbean archipelago, Bahamas it rose from less than 2 kilos in 1983, peaked to 10 in 1987 and fell to 4 in 1991.

Economic costs, of the drug crisis, though not yet calculated, include lost productivity and potential wastage of scarce human resources, direct costs borne by the law enforcement agencies (army, police, coast guard), law courts and the burden on the health care systems. Additional direct costs involve cost of fines imposed on national airlines and the cost of economic assistance foregone due to bilateral agreements which are tied to the degree of or extent of drug control in the country. (Kambon 1993)

Social costs include political costs due to destabilisation of governments and agencies within nations, through influence and intimidation of government officials, the courts, legislatures. Other social costs include the costs to our human rights and physical safety which may be affected through acts of surveillance/snooping, entrapment questionable searches and arrests. (Cumberbatch and Duncan 1992)

It is precisely because there is agreement in the subregion that health is both an instrument of development and a consequence of it that any deterioration in the health status of the people in the region is reason for concern. Due to the cuts in expenditure of the non productive sectors of the economy called for by many of the structural adjustment programmes, areas such as health, welfare and education have felt the brunt of these policies.

In addition, the more participatory approach to primary health care which was agreed to at Alma Ata by governments of the subregion, demands and depends in large measure on the time energy and resources of women as women hold social responsibility in several critical areas of primary health care.

There has been concern in the subregion for the high morbidity and mortality rates from chronic diseases such as Diabetes Mellitus and Hypertension, breast and cervical cancer and the gentle yet disturbing rise in the incidence of once controlled communicable diseases. The new threat of sexually transmissible diseases especially HI/AIDS is cause for much concern in the region and the continuous narrowing of the gap of the male/ female ratio is not only of concern to women but to the provision of health services as it has implications for the number of children born HI positive.

It has been suggested that economic recession and Structural adjustment programmes further aggravate the transmission, spread and control of HI infection in two major ways: directly, by increasing the population at risk through increased urban migration, poverty, women's powerlessness and prostitution, and indirectly, through a decrease in health care provision.

Malnutrition is one of the leading causes of death in Haiti, and in Guyana it is the leading cause of death among infants. In Trinidad and Tobago data indicate that in 8 areas considered as

poor, 20% of the children were suffering from malnutrition . In Haiti data indicate that only 31% of the population meet the recommended energy consumption level, the indicators appear to point to pre-famine conditions. (ECLAC working paper on poverty. 1993)

The Governments in the subregion have acknowledged the importance of education as an essential ingredient for the advancement of women. Education accounts for much of the improvement in population quality and more than any other initiative, it contributes to the growth of individuals who can contribute to the process of development. On an average in the subregion there has been an increase in the literacy levels of women from 77% in to 82% to 84% for the three periods 1980,1985 and 1991 respectively. In the area of enrolment in primary and secondary schools, female enrolment rates equal or surpass male enrolment. For primary and secondary graduation rates, females also surpass male rates. Only at tertiary and technical graduation rates do males rates exceed that of females, but

only slightly. Significantly however, continued education graduation, female rates exceed male rates. This may indicate a desire on the part of women in the subregion to seize existing opportunities for skills training.

### **Key concerns in the subregional context arising out of national reports**

At the three preparatory meetings which brought women of the subregion together consensus building began on key areas of concern. As the reports were completed these areas were sharpened. They are presented below in no particular rank order.

### **The impact of the movement of people in and out of the region and within countries, on the conditions of women**

For all the countries in the subregion any dramatic change in the demographics affects the economic , environmental and social structures. Such movement of peoples puts strains, not only on the social services of the recipient country but of the source country who must deal with either the economic or social vacuum created. In addition, the loss of its skilled and professional human resources constitutes a serious capital loss to the subregion, in a situation where the knowledge factor, as a complement of physical capital investment, is a key motor to the production systems.( Henry 1993).

A worrying trend in migration patterns has emerged during this period. It has been suggested that the severe cuts in wage incomes have contributed to a high rate of emigration in the subregion. The World Bank has estimated that the Caribbean subregion has the highest rate of migration in the world. There is some concern in the subregion for the growing proportion of female emigrants who are highly educated and with university degrees. This is a very disheartening situation when combined with the declining performance of secondary school students across the subregion.

Countries such as Guyana now suffer from a shortage of skills in critical areas of the economy, severe enough to hurt expansion possibilities (Henry 1993). Trinidad and Tobago lost significant numbers of nurses during the period under review creating a severe shortage of health care professionals and putting health care services in difficulty. Jamaica, according to the World Bank, lost skilled workers between 1980 and 1986 corresponding to 50% of graduates produced during that six-year period. This net loss in investment was calculated at US \$194 million equivalent to the cost of training of these migrants (ECLAC working paper on Social Integration 1993)

Between 1985 and 1991 the legal migration from Cuba was approximately 41,000 persons. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the migrants listed the USA as their point of choice. (country report)

The Dominican Republic's country report indicated that the country has a long history of outward migration which up to the year 1991 was estimated to number approximately 700,000 persons. Most of these persons indicated the USA as the place of destination. Significantly, during the period 1985-1991 approximately 58% of all migrants left the Dominican Republic. According to the report, one in every six households have at least one member abroad and 52.1% of those migrants were women mostly young, middle class and well educated.

The Dominican Republic has also been the recipient country for large numbers of Haitian migrants, most of them male and poor from the rural zones of Haiti. Internal migration is also an issue of concern as most of the migrants are women coming from the rural zones seeking employment in the free zones.

While a country plays host to migrants it may at the same be the source. BVI has recorded significant numbers of immigrants from the Dominican Republic many of them women who work at low income jobs. The BVI report indicates, that although data is hard to collect, it is believed that many of these women have had to travel without their children, who have been left behind with grandparents and due to their illegal status suffer exploitation at the hands of employers.

Another member-country of the subregion has also been a recipient country for refugees and displaced persons and that is Belize. The Belizean national report concludes that regional conflicts have had very substantial effects upon Belize. Civil wars in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua have caused many thousands of refugees, displaced persons and economic migrants to cross into Belize. This situation has created a multiplicity of problems, both domestically and regionally. The influx of immigrants, and refugees has placed huge burdens on Belize's social, environmental and economic infrastructure. This in turn, has created new forms of exploitation and socio-cultural tensions.

The Bahamas finds itself also as a recipient country not only of immigrants from Haiti, who are estimated to number more than 40,000 persons but from drug smugglers and other persons attempting to get from the Southern part of this hemisphere and Southern Caribbean islands to the Northern part.

Suriname has identified an estimated 10000 to 15000 persons displaced due to their internal war during the period 1986 to 1992. These displaced persons are predominantly maroon Africans of the Saramaca and Juka people called 'bush negroes' and aboriginal peoples. The majority of these people and others living in the interior, now find themselves in a very difficult situation since health and education facilities were devastated during the war. The isolation of these groups has been exacerbated by the difficult economic period which the country is experiencing, which has resulted in high fuel prices. As a result, this part of the rural population is plunged back into an isolation comparable to that before the early sixties.

### **The growing violent culture in the region and the unending stream of violence directed against women**

Escalating violence, particularly violence against women and domestic violence against women and children is an ugly blot on the social fabric of the subregion.

Every single report in the region speaks to this issue of violence and violence against women. There is a tone of anger, disgust, sometimes mixed with frustration at the unending stream of violent crimes being committed in the region against women, from rape to brutal murder.

Although violence occurs in the private sphere it acts as a constraint to women's access to resources and to full participation in the development process in her community and country. Besides being abhorrent in itself, the intimidation caused by violence directed towards women limits women's self realization and deprives society of the fullness of their creative contribution to the development of society.

The NGO sector in the region has been in the lead working for the elimination of violence against women. They have established shelters and counselling facilities; have been involved in training of police officers, advocating for progressive laws and training women themselves to make use of the new legislation.

Governments in the subregion have enacted family laws, domestic violence legislation and increased the number of female officers in the police service. They have established sexual offences units, set up in-camera hearings and have built shelters for battered women. The number of women who work in the judiciary has increased (country reports)

Indications are, however, that increased services are needed to house women who are temporarily fleeing from a hostile/violent relationship, counselling for the survivor as well as the offender, half-way homes for the children in abusive situations. Training in non-violent, conflict resolution for men as they are in the main perpetrators of the violent crimes.

The Dominican Republic report addressed another aspect of violence against women. It refers to the large traffic of women from the Dominican Republic for activities in the sex industry. Sources indicate that there may be as many as 25,000 Dominican Republican sex workers as far away as Asia and Europe involved in the sex industry, without any legal protection.

Violence has been linked to abuse of alcohol and other psychotropic substances. The Guyana national report indicates that violence against women in the Amerindian community may be associated with alcohol use and adds that in some communities, particularly in mining areas, alcohol is more available than food supplies.

The Belize national report speaks of the social violence including the incidence of urban gangs and the siege mentality gripping women in the society.

## **The special yet differing cases of Haiti and Cuba**

### **Haiti**

Haiti is facing the most critical period of political instability and hardship of any of her sister countries in the subregion during this period. The political instability which began in 1986, has only aggravated the crisis of underdevelopment which the country has been experiencing.

While the economic recession is a world-wide phenomenon, for Haiti's troubled economy it has meant disaster. According to the national report compiled by an inter agency group led by UNICEF, the economy has suffered major set backs during this period. In the early 1980s, the Haitian tourist industry was destroyed due to the unfortunate linking of HI infection with the Haitian community at home and abroad. The industrial sector which was always heavily dependent on foreign direct investment, had lost its relative vitality, and by 1986, the growing unstable political situation further discouraged investors.

The GNP per capita decreased rapidly (2-3 per cent per year in 1988-89, 5-6 per cent between 1989 and 1992) to reach the amount of Gdes 682.

The internationalization of Haiti's conflicts brought about the adoption of an economic and commercial embargo by the Organization of American States and the United Nations Organization which has severely affected the already weakened economy and social welfare of Haiti. Women and children are the most vulnerable sectors affected by the blockade. The discontinuance of international assistance and cooperation has had a negative effect on health programmes such as immunization and AIDS prevention, to name only two.

Women, many who are head's of households have lost their jobs as a result of the closing of plants and factories. Following the adoption of the embargo, 40,000 jobs were lost in 1991-92. (Jerry Tardieu - Haiti Sous Embargo, 1992). As women are 70-75 per cent of the labour force in the textile and electronic industry, they have been the most affected by the retrenchment exercise which affected 64.2 per cent of those employed. Likewise, informal sector workers, in the main women, have lost their income as a result of the commercial embargo.

Since 1991 the school system has also been disrupted as parents fear for the safety of their

children and refuse to send them to school. In addition the embargo of oil has made gas very expensive resulting in a high cost and scarcity of local transportation. Because of high levels of unemployment, income to meet transport expenses is scarce as well. Under these very difficult circumstances, the illiteracy rate which estimated at 63 .1 per cent, is expected to increase.

Maternal mortality, which now stands at 345 per 1000, one of the highest of the underdeveloped world is also expected to increase.

Surveys conducted, though by differing agencies and using differing indicators, all point to an alarming deterioration in the nutritional status of children due to the deterioration of the economic situation (Harvard University Report). 50 per cent of pre-school children are categorized as malnourished according to the Haitian Institute for Children.

Despite the fact that the situation has not yet deteriorated to the point of civil war or armed conflict a culture of violence now pervades the society ever more. Evidence indicates that violence against women has considerably increased, possibly linked to the increased family stress aggravated by the current political and economic crisis. The report concludes that all shortages and poverty has increased the burden of women. This is so due to migration of predominantly male Haitians who tend to migrate in higher numbers than women, to other countries.

The women of Haiti, having participated in a democratic process of change are still hopeful that a peaceful resolution to their crisis can be found as war brings with it attendant suffering for all.

## **Cuba**

Cuba's national report indicates that external factors have worsened the economic situation of the country. Key among them have been the changes in the former socialist countries of Europe and the new felt impact of the 33 year old USA blockade against Cuba.

Owing to changes which have occurred in the Soviet Union and Eastern European Countries, Cuba lost more than 3/4 of its market, which represents approximately 81 per cent of Cuban exports and 85 per cent of imports.

Conservative estimates inferred losses of 40,000 million US dollars for the Cuban economy as a result of the US blockade against Cuba, which includes restrictions to acquire medicines and food. The country report states that in the four years of this decade, Cuba invested more than US\$45 million dollars to meet the public health needs of its people. This was done to offset the demand for goods and medicines which are brought mainly from Europe. Such expenditure represents at least a 30 to 40 per cent increased expenditure on the cost of these items if they could be purchased within this hemisphere.

Recognizing this hardship the General-Assembly of the United Nations forty-eighth session



passed a resolution which urged the US government to put an end to the blockade against Cuba.

Cuba has made enormous advancement in social and human development, particularly in the areas of health and education. Not unlike its sister territories in the subregion, these gains could be lost if the current situation continues.

In the last five years, despite the economic hardship, infant and maternal mortality rates have considerably decreased. In the case of the infant mortality rate, it is among one of the lowest in the world, and stands at 9.4 per thousand. Life expectancy, one of the indicators which denotes the well being of a population, for Cuba has reached the rate of 76.1 years. For the period 1990-1995, women's life expectancy is 77.6 years. Medical assistance is ensured free of charge to all citizens, and immunization against the twelve avoidable diseases is available for all children. These are: poliomyelitis, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, tuberculosis, typhoid, measles, rubella, mumps, meningitis B and C and hepatitis B.

The country report indicates that huge resources are invested in education, and suggest that this is one of the key reasons which has made Cuba one of the countries in the world with lowest illiteracy rates and the highest schooling rate of 98 per cent. There is one teacher for every 40 inhabitants. As a result of the priority given to education, Cuban women have considerably increased their participation in polytechnical schools and Universities. For instance, women graduated from Scientific and Technical courses at University in 1992 represented 56.4 per cent of total graduates. Within the Technical force of the country, women represent 61 per cent.

According to UNICEF, the mortality rate for children under the age of five years is seen as the best indicator of social development as it reflects the nutritional health and health knowledge of mothers, the availability of maternal and child health services, clean water and safe sanitation. In Cuba the mortality rate for children under five has decreased to 0.6 per thousand and the average rate of survival up to 5 years is 98.7 for the latest years under review.

Concerted efforts are carried out by the State and civil society organizations, not only for survival during this difficult period but also for development. Cuban society is moving towards a policy of sustainable development. Because of the human resources trained in the last decades, the scientific knowledge learned is being put into practice. While traditional medicine methods are applied to face the shortage of medicine, biotechnology research and vaccine production is being introduced as a commercial area of development. Health tourism is now a source of income of foreign exchange since the most modern medical services and therapeutic rehabilitation are available in Cuba.

Cuban women, one of the groups in society who benefited the most during the last decades, are developing and implementing important community projects to improve living conditions and the quality of life.

Alternative energy projects, recycling of raw materials, housing projects are implemented by

women. Important housing projects are carried out by community action, using a new formula called Roman cement, which demands less use of cement while incorporating other materials.

The adverse setbacks in agricultural production, due to the decrease in energy potential as a result of the lack of fuel, as well as fertilizers and pesticides, have been offset by the use of biological pest control and organic fertilizing techniques which are being widely applied. Sugarcane waste, wind and biogas are being used as source of alternative energy.

Severe cutbacks have not been applied to the social sector of the Cuban economy as has been done as part of structural adjustment measures in other parts of the Caribbean and this may be a decisive support factor to the continued participation of women in the labour force. Maternity leave was increased up to 6 months after delivery with 60 per cent of the salary. Social benefit provisions in practice in the last 3 decades, have been prioritized not decreased. These include support for day-care centers, lunch at primary school, health care, special diet for children under 7, and special provisions for pregnant women and old persons.

### **The continuing status of the dependent territories (or Non-Independent Caribbean Countries (NICCs))**

In the Caribbean the following territories are categorized as NICCs: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, The Netherlands Antilles, Turks and Caicos and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Because the ultimate responsibility for foreign affairs of most non-self governing territories, under the respective constitutional arrangements, is retained by the administering authority, the rights guaranteed to women vis a vis the international statutes and conventions have not in all cases been safeguarded. Women from the NICCs in the subregion raised their voices in unison and were supported by their sisters from the dependent territories in urging the responsible authorities to proceed to sign the relevant conventions on their behalf, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This Convention which became an international treaty in 1981 establishes not only an international bill of rights for women but also an agenda for action by countries to guarantee those rights.

It is highly recommend and just, that women living in the NICCs should be provided with the same rights and privileges of women living in the governing territories granted through the ratification of those UN conventions by their governing authorities.

In addition the laws of heritage and citizenship required examination to ensure that they did not disenfranchise women or affect them more adversely than men.

### **The plight of the indigenous women in the subregion**

The Guyana national plan provides as a strategic goal on the situation of the Amerindian

## Women in Guyana:

"to end the disparity between hinterland and coast in the provision of basic services, enhance the self-determination of Amerindian communities and peoples, and achieve equity between Amerindian men and women in harmony with their culture and environment."

This goal speaks most eloquently to the needs of the indigenous women in the subregion.

Indigenous people who can be found in Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize and Guyana and Suriname, have been described as the forgotten people and one of the most disadvantaged groups in the New World. Their extent of political representation, access to land rights, and participation in the wider society is now being challenged by their descendants in the Caribbean. The West Indian Commission concluded that - the aboriginal peoples inhabit in general the lower levels of poverty; despite their right as citizens of the vote, this does not translate into power for them where it matters, and their representation at the highest levels of decision taking is minimal.

The Guyana national report concludes that the Amerindian Act actually serves to deny Amerindians the level of rights provided other citizens. The report also alludes to the heavy burden which indigenous women have to bear in their families as the primary care givers for the elderly and young, who account for over 53 % of their population. Poor access to health care and services, high incidence of malaria, heavy burdens for the provision of food for their families and shrinking incomes have exacerbated the situation.

The plight of indigenous/aboriginal women in Suriname is also complicated by the displacement of significant number of this population due to the internal conflict between 1986 - 1992 (R. Simons, ECLAC 1994)

According to the Commonwealth Caribbean Report :

"Under these conditions, Amerindian women suffer a multiple indemnity, faced with health risks (including environmental health hazards), inadequate access to contraception; and high infant and child mortality. They must also deal with a hierarchial system of social and gender relations. Their livelihoods and well-being are further threatened by natural resource depletion due to indiscriminate planning and industrialization".

At the recently concluded SIDS Conference held in Barbados, the rights of indigenous people to their knowledge particularly as its relates to medicinal herbs and practices was recognized.

## **The issue of ethnicity, race, culture and the advancement of women**

In the early part of 1995 the world's attention will be drawn to the question of the social

integration of marginalised groups be they defined by economic status, culture, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, disability or ability. When any of these criteria become the basis for inclusion or exclusion in the political, socio-economic or cultural processes of the societies the potential for conflict arises. It is because this period of the world is so filled with internal conflicts, most based on one or the other of these factors, that the United Nations is hosting the World Development Summit.

The Caribbean should not consider itself outside of this scenario and give too much credence to the superficial description of itself as a 'rainbow /cosmopolitan society'. The history of the Caribbean is filled with social crisis based on ethnicity, race, colour, and class. It's history is based on the bringing together of very different racial, cultural and religious groups ,into small territories, within a structure that has been described as purposely divisive and exploitative (J. Stewart) West Indian societies emerged with internal divisiveness as a fundamental condition.

A major problem which has confronted Caribbean societies since the emancipation of enslaved Africans and the ending of indentureship has been the task of fashioning a functional harmony out of the disparate social, racial and cultural elements that comprise them. Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana face a most perplexing task as they possess a population almost equally shared by Indians and Africans. In the Caribbean a certain alignment exists between social class, race, religious and political party affiliation and position in society, thus compounding the issues of social integration.

The rebellions of the slave and indentureship period had ethnicity and culture as a central focus of their action so, too did the later rebellions of the 1930's and the 1970's. The special case of the riots in Guyana in the early sixties also had ethnicity as a focal point.

Wars and internal conflicts always increase the hardship of the most vulnerable groups in the society and such would be the case in the region for women and children should any form of social disintegration occur.

The Belizean national report speaks to the new problems to be addressed , the new forms of exploitation and socio-cultural tensions stemming from the bringing together of new and differing cultural groups into the society.

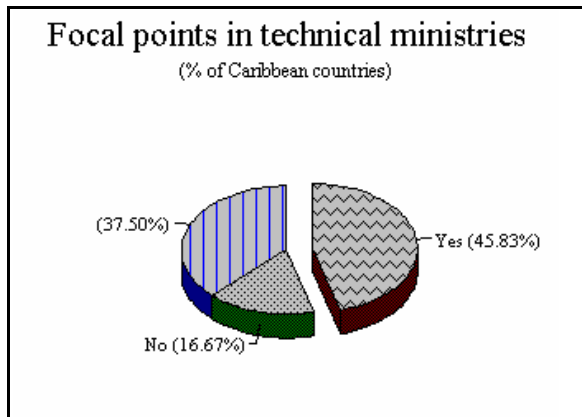
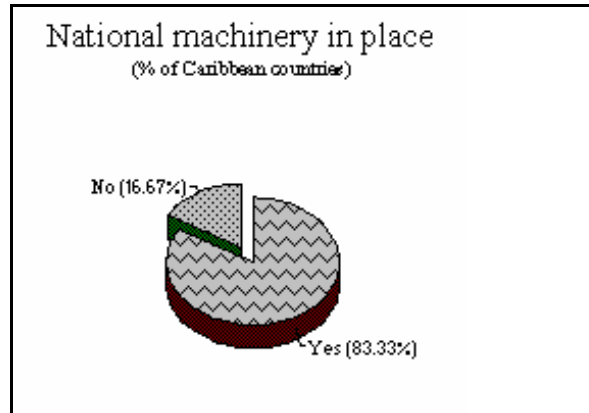
The Guyanese report hints at the difficulty of political polarization which has so far prevented individual women's groups, many of them vibrant, from cohering into a movement which could join in working for changes for the development of economic and social policies which would support the advancement of women.

**The need for greater improvement in the mechanisms created for the coordinating and monitoring of the integration of women in development at the national and subregional level**

A survey commissioned by CARICOM indicated that the national machineries had in most

instances been receiving reduced government allocation during the review period and had found themselves with increased dependence on overseas funding agencies for programme and project funding. National machineries as a rule, were found to be inadequately staffed and possessed a general absence of policy analysis and gender sensitivity skills. Effective inter-ministerial committees and other focal points were lacking and an absence of prioritising strategic objectives, as opposed to supporting women to meet practical needs existed. Limited implementation of policy objectives was noted, although the majority of the policy statements had been accepted and approved at the highest level. (Commonwealth Caribbean Report )

It was concluded that the machineries were not working effectively. They excluded rather than included groups which should have been brought to the table to develop, implement and review broad policy goals over time - not just for the duration of a government's term of office. Further, influential women on various committees remained insufficiently aware of possibilities and confined their activities to welfare work.

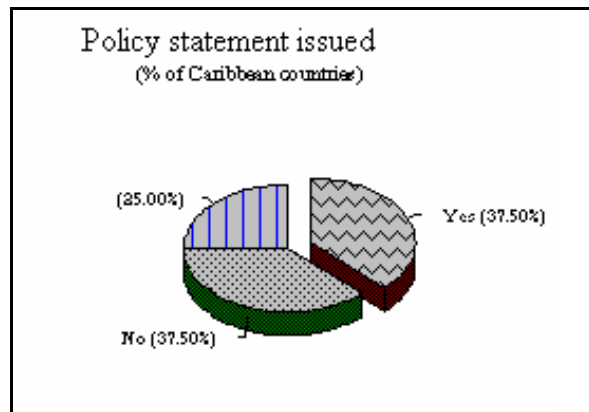


Recommendations: National machineries were urged to leave the welfare aspects of their work to the welfare ministries. Focus on building their policy and planning capacity and on seeking to develop gender units in government planning and policy departments. It was further advocated that they should address practical strategic gender issues, and identify exactly where policy issues were debated.

Other recommendations included: role clarification, strategic planning, creation of a

division of labour between government machineries and NGOs; data collection on women to enhance information power; revision of job descriptions; and identifying and acquiring the multidisciplinary skills needed to make the national machinery more effective.

Despite all the limitations outlined above it was concluded that women's machineries in the subregion have indeed managed to bring about changes in the laws which discriminate against women although the mainstreaming of women's issues had not occurred.



The ECLAC subregional headquarters notes that during this period of preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women, many national women's machineries have used this preparatory process to not only improve the information base of their units but to increase staff and overall effectiveness. Importantly the period has also been used to improve the networking of women's machineries within the subregion. These activities can only hold good for the future.

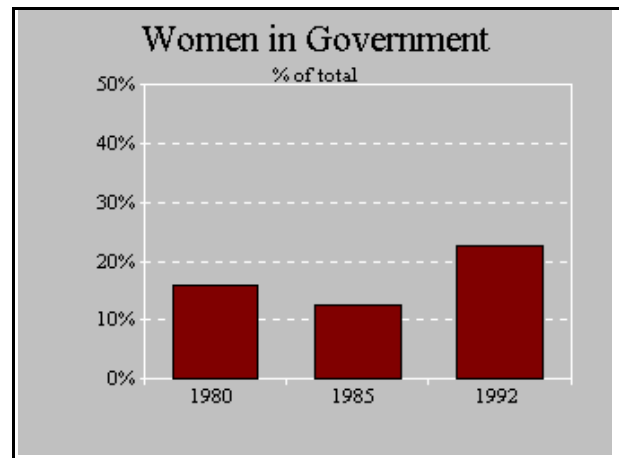
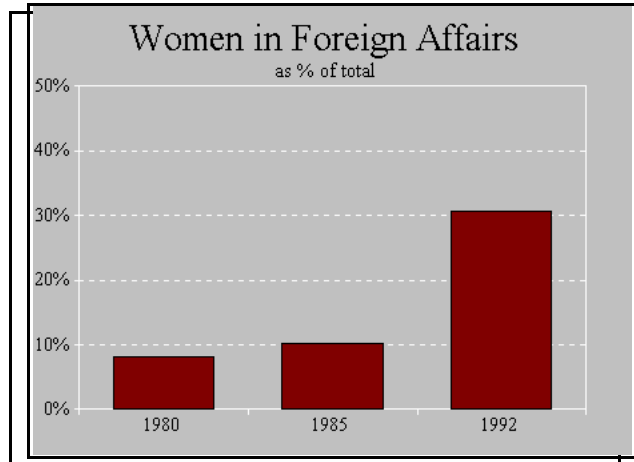
**The position of women in the decision making apparatus of the societies in the subregion.**

Women in the subregion constitute 50% of the population yet over the period under review the increase in women's participation in the decision making apparatus of the subregion remains decidedly weak. As the Guyana report notes, while some of the disparities have narrowed, women are still under-represented.

There is also a strong perception, as articulated during the preparatory meetings that even where representation exists women's influence on the decision making apparatus is weak. This it has been suggested, has to do with many women's lack of awareness, appreciation of and sensitivity to, women-in- development and gender issues and concepts.

On an average women's participation in the subregion in parliamentary assemblies stood at approximately 10% in 1980, increased to 12% in 1985 and stood at 13% in 1992. Women's participation in Government stood at 16% in 1980, decreased to 13% in 1985 and increased again to 23% in 1992. Women's participation in foreign affairs was obviously a very difficult indicator to measure as many countries did not provide data. However, for those countries who did, the trend appears to be increasing from 8% to 10% to 31% respectively.

In the area of participation in local representative bodies, the situation although showing a mild increase is still decidedly weak. The weighted average for the region indicates 14%,15% and 17% respectively, for the three years identified. A very high showing in this area of government would have been expected because it is at the local levels that many women expend their energies on school boards, church boards, village councils, as rank and file workers of unions and political parties. For women not to have achieved a 50% or more at this local government level is a sure indication that participation in the decision making apparatus of the society by women is weak.



For the strong and traditional role which women in the subregion have historically held as producers in addition to their role as reproducers, their levels as employers and own account

workers is expected to be significant. The figures bore this out despite the fact that again many countries found it difficult to submit data. But for those who did, for 1980 women constituted 25% of those who participated as employers/own account workers, 29% in 1985 and 35% in 1992.

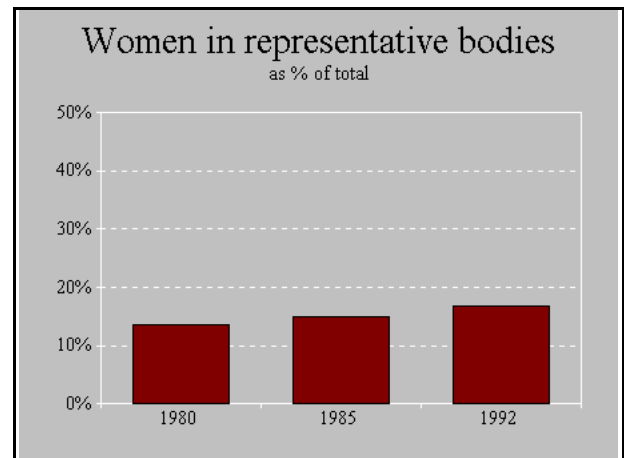
Women's participation in administrative and managerial positions on average across the subregion accounted in 1992 for 35% of the total, this represented an increase of 6% over the 1985 period and a 4% increase over the 1980 period. This could possibly be attributed to the education level attained by women during the period under review.

Despite the fact that a significant number of countries were unable to present data regarding the level of participation in business establishments of women during the period, available data indicates a positive trend. Women's level of participation increased on average from 20% , to 25% , to 49% representing almost half for the period under review.

### **The worsening position of poor women and their dependents and special groups such as the elderly and the disabled .**

Economic recession, high unemployment and Government austerity measures associated with structural adjustment have assisted in the economic marginalisation of particular populations, especially those women and their dependents, already classified as poor.

Expenditure cuts in the social sector of the majority of Caribbean countries have further hurt these already marginalised groups. In addition, such expenditure cuts carried out as part of overall macro economic policies have retarded the assimilation of these groups and their dependents into the mainstream of economic activity. It has also prevented them from achieving living standards comparable with other more fortunate groups within the society. Thus their potential contribution to the development process has been diminished. (ECLAC 1993)



Economic conditions in Female Headed Households (FHH) vary considerably but often these women are the most impoverished. The World Bank 1992 Report on the Caribbean Region reported that over 40% of the households in the Caribbean are headed by women. Country reports providing statistical data on FHH for 1992, move from a low of 22.0 % in Belize to a high of 43.9% in St. Kitts/ Nevis. The Bank report indicated that almost 90% of the heads of FHH have only a primary school education and about 38% of them work in the informal sector.

The performance of students within the schools system can also be linked to the effects of worsening socio-economic conditions. In a study of available data, ECLAC concluded that there

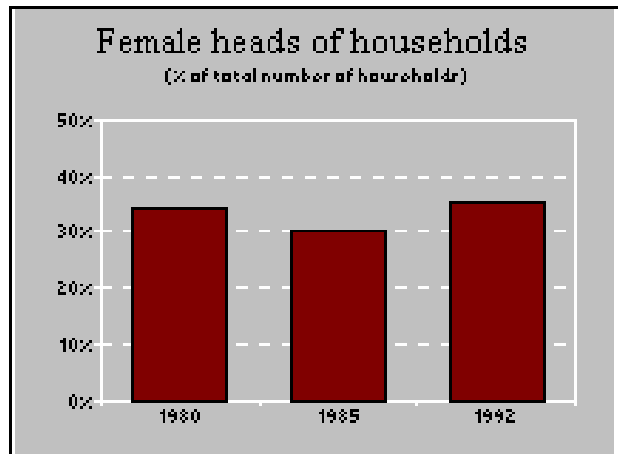


does seem to be a strong link between increased poverty and diminishing access to education.

Schools comprising students from poor households are limited in their ability to raise funds to supplement government expenditure cuts. This exacerbates the inequity of resource allocation in the education sector.

Child labour also takes children away from schooling. In the Dominican Republic and Haiti information about child labour is available. The country report for Haiti indicates that 10% of the economically active population come from the age group five to nine, while the age group ten to fourteen make up 13% of the economically active population. Although the Dominican Republic country report did not provide a statistical breakdown by age it does measure the economically active population from age ten. The Dominican Republic report pointed to the consequences of poverty on the population of children which forces them into early labour to supplement their families' income. This they conclude puts the next generation at risk.

In the area of health it was concluded that on the whole, health expenditure cuts have hurt the poor rather than the non poor. Economic recession and adjustment policies have eroded health care delivery systems generally, but the groups such as children under five, the aged and the poor particularly in rural areas, upon whom marginalised health care has fallen most heavily have been the hardest hit. The removal of food subsidies, part of the liberalization of import policy, a component of structural adjustment programmes, undoubtedly contributed to poorer nutritional status of the lowest income groups.



In the Caribbean subregion there is a strong correlation between unemployment and poverty. In Trinidad and Tobago for example the correlation is 0.88 (Henry & Melville 1989).

In Suriname, it has been suggested that the structural adjustment programmes have result in a deteriorated position for women in the society. With the fall of real wages women were pushed onto the labour market to gain additional incomes. The labour force participation rates rose from 33.9% in 1986 to 47% in 1990 and then fell to 41% in 1992. But these participation rates coincided with higher unemployment levels which went from 22.1% in 1986, 20.2 in 1990 but increased to 25% in 1992. These rates were higher for women in the 15 to 29 years age cohort, which is approximately 40% in 1992. Unemployment rates for women have been 1.7 times higher for women than for men in the 1986 - 92 period. (R. Simons, ECLAC 1994)

Another aspect of the impact of poverty on women has been her increased vulnerability to

sexual harassment on the job and sexual discrimination regarding equal pay due to the increased labour market participation and the high levels of unemployment among women.

A study previously quoted on poverty in Suriname highlighted the plight of the single women with young children during this period. It becomes very difficult for such a young woman to meet the additional financial resources for day care costs as these too have risen thus , reducing her ability to hold down a job.

The position of the elderly women is cause for concern. In a period of vast out migration, many elderly women are being called upon to look after grandchildren in the absence of mothers. The combination of inflation and the changing value of the dollar, has reduced the purchasing capacity of those living on fixed income such as pensioners and government transfer recipients. It is an area requiring some attention, although data is not presented especially in light of the longevity of women. This longevity must be matched by a sound quality of life.

The position of disabled women in the region is an under researched area but world statistics reveal a gender differential in patterns of disability. Men are more likely than women to be disabled in their 20's, 30's and 40's due to war and violence and women due to their longevity, their disability rates increase rapidly in their 50's, 60's and older. Evidence in the Caribbean points to the disabled having less access to education, health and rehabilitation services (ECLAC 1993).

### **The condition of and position of women in the informal sector and in low wage/low skill jobs**

The growth of the informal sector is a manifestation of the effort of the unemployed to devise and implement their own survival strategies. Yet the concentration on low productivity activities may attest to low levels of skills possessed by the unemployed.

The informal sector has grown with the contraction of the formal economy in many of the countries of the subregion. In Guyana according to the IDB Report the informal sector provides income for approximately 60% of the economy. It is estimated by the ILO that in Haiti 93% (or about 82% of all non agricultural employment) of all employment is in what is described as the informal sector. In the rest of the Caribbean there are estimates that between 30 and 50 % of all employment is in the informal sector.

Some of the key problems facing women in the informal sector are inadequate job opportunities, access to credit to establish and manage small business and training to manage.

## **SECTION II**

### **Key national indicators**

## 1. Inequality in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels

It can be concluded from the tables that women are still under-represented in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels, however, their participation in almost all the above aspects has increased throughout the years.

With respect to the participation in parliamentary assemblies the data shows that in 1980 women represented 10% of the total seats in parliament, while in 1985 this figure increased to 12% and finally the latest figures reveal that the percentage of women in parliamentary assemblies increased to 13%. The data also reveals that women in Cuba have had a fair representation from 1980-1992, women represented 23% in 1980, 34% in 1985 and 23% in 1992.

The participation of women in the Government also increased from 1980-1992. The weighted average reveals that in 1980 28% of the Government was represented by women, this figure fell to 14% in 1985 and rose to 37% in 1992. In the British Virgin Islands there were no women represented in Government from 1980-1992. The 1992 data for Jamaica and Montserrat reveals that the participation of women in Government was greater than that of men, in 1992 in Jamaica 56% of the seats were occupied by women. Similarly in Montserrat women held 57% of the seats.

The table that shows the participation of women in foreign affairs suggests that in 1980 women represented 8% of the total, in 1985 this figure rose to 10% and in 1992 there was a dramatic rise to 31%. The data shows that for the St. Kitts and Nevis no women were represented in foreign affairs from 1980-1992, and the condition was reversed in Montserrat in 1992 where there was only one foreign affairs officer and this was a woman. It must be noted here however, that these figures may be somewhat misleading due to the paucity of the data.

The participation in local representative bodies was no different, on average women represented 15% of the total. There were marginal increases in the participation of women in this area. In 1980 -14%, in 1985 -15% and in 1992 -17%.

The table that shows women as employers and own account workers is an indicator of women as economic decision makers in the private sector. These figures showed that women represented 25% of the total in 1980, 29% in 1985 and in 1992 this figure increased to 35%.

The data that shows the role of women in business establishments suggests that in this field women play the greatest role in comparison to the other indicators in this section. In 1980 women represented 20% of the total, in 1985 - 25% and in 1992 women represented almost half of the total - 49%. The data may be misleading, however, due to data shortcomings in the availability of data in the various countries.

## 2. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women

The table that shows the mechanisms to promote the advancement of women reveals that in all but four countries a national machinery to promote the advancement of women was established. Cuba was the first country to set up such a mechanism, they did this in 1960. Some 45.8% of the countries that provided data had set up a focal point in their technical ministries that addressed the concern of women, and indicated the extent to which a coordinating mechanism had been set up. The data that was available suggests that 37.5% of the countries had a policy statement and 37.5% of the countries did not have one. Of the countries who reported the Bahamas seems to have the most women NGOs in the region-90 NGOs. About 45.8% of the countries conduct gender training exercises, 25% of these do not and 29.2% participate in other activities.

## 3. Lack of awareness of, and commitment to, internationally and nationally recognized women's rights

The data reveals that 11 of the countries reported equal rights between men and women as reflected in the constitution. Three of the countries had established a minimum wage, and Jamaica had established an Employment Act in 1975, the Dominican Republic reported no equal provisions for pay. Barbados reported a Legal act for sexual harassment. Some 5 countries reported a formal legislature a Domestic Violence Act. Six of the countries reported having a formal sexual offences act, 4 an Inheritance Act, 7 provisions for citizenship, 6 Maintenance Orders for women, 11 provisions for maternity leave and 10 had CEDAW ratification with St. Vincent and the Grenadines having had it signed but not ratified.

## 4. Poverty

The World Bank figures reveal that Haiti is the poorest country in the subregion having 86.3% of their population living in poverty in 1980. Guyana also had high levels of poverty in 1980 reporting a figure of 65%. The Bahamas reported the smallest poverty figure of 1.5% of their population living in poverty. Trinidad and Tobago also had low poverty levels in 1980 - 2.5%. With regard to unemployment the data implies that more women are unemployed than men. Data shortcomings did not allow a proper analysis of rural urban unemployment. Unfortunately more current statistics were not provided by country reports.

The proportion of female-headed households increased from 34.4% in 1980 to 35.1% in 1992. Because of data constraints one cannot clearly identify the relationship between female-headed households and income distribution as an indicator of poverty. The data also suggests that the countries do not adequately provide day-care centre facilities. This would impact on the quality of the family life and therefore on the society as a whole. The data implies that in the vocational field the training is dominated by men. On average the daily calorie intake for the countries reported was 2662 in 1989. Barbados reported the highest daily calorie intake of 3279 and Haiti the lowest of 2013. The data indicate that in almost all of the countries private access to water was most readily available, in the Netherlands Antilles 94% of the water supplied is accessed privately and 6%

through stand-pipe. In Anguilla, however, access to water was more readily available through stand-pipe facilities-30% rather than by private sources-18%. In both St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia access to water privately and by stand-pipe was almost equal - 48%-private and 42% stand-pipe in the former, and 42%- private and 43% stand-pipe in the latter.

#### 5. Inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and the productive processes itself

Data was not at all accessible in this area therefore no analysis could be carried out to determine the degree of inequality. (Only the Dominican republic reported).

#### 6. Inequality in access to education, health, employment and other means to maximize awareness of rights and the use of their capacities

##### Access to education

The countries of the region reported quite high levels of literacy - 90% in 1991 in Barbados, 98% in Cuba 96% in Guyana, 95% in the Netherlands Antilles. Haiti reported quite a low literacy rate of 35% in 1985 and St. Lucia reported 46% literacy rate in 1991. For the region, however, the percentage of the population of the region literate in 1991 was 84%. In almost all levels of education - primary enrollment and graduation, secondary enrollment and graduation and tertiary enrollment and graduation the levels between men and women were almost equal. This implies that in the region at these levels there is almost equal access to education. Only at the technical level was there some bias towards the men.

##### Access to health

The table suggests that the proportion of women affected by cervical cancer decreased from 1980 to 1991, from 20.13 to 19.38. This figure may be misleading, however, due to the paucity of the data received in this very important area. Guyana reported extremely high cases of anaemia in women in both 1980 and 1991 - 59% and 79% respectively. The average for the remaining countries was around 14%.

Life expectancy for women was higher than that of men in all of the countries where the years was not equal. Barbados and Dominica reported the highest life expectancy for women - 77 years and Haiti the lowest -55. Barbados reported the highest for men also as 77 years and Haiti the lowest also 55.

The infant mortality rate was the highest in Haiti 94/1000 and the lowest in the Turks and Caicos islands. The Dominican Republic and Guyana also reported quite high infant mortality rates - in 1980 74 and 44 respectively and in 1991 43 and 73 respectively. The infant mortality rate fell in all the countries except Guyana.

The total fertility rate fell in most islands from 1980 to 1991. The rate was quite high in Haiti - 6.4. Of the countries who reported there was an average of almost half of the percentage of women on contraceptives. In Cuba 88% of the women in 1991 was on contraceptives. Antigua and Barbuda and the Bahamas reported 100% of pregnant women immune to tetanus. Cuba and Dominica reported 98 and 90 per cent respectively. The Turks and Caicos islands reported only 20% of their female population on contraceptives in 1991.

The immunization rate in 1991 was highest in the British Virgin Islands, Cuba and Dominica. There was a dramatic increase in immunization rates in St. Kitts & Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines from 56% to 100% in the former and 40% to 90% in the latter. There was also an increase in these rates in Haiti. Haiti reported the highest cases of malnutrition in children under 5 years of age - 50%. In Barbados there were no cases of malnutrition in 1980 or 1991. In St. Kitts and Nevis the rate of malnutrition fell from 37% in 1980 to 1% in 1991. The Dominican Republic reported the second highest rates of malnutrition in 1991 - 43%. The data on the abuse of substances and mental illness was quite scarce and a proper analysis could therefore not be conducted.

The number of reported AIDS cases fell in 1993, from 1233 cases in 1992 to 1042 in 1992. The proportion of women reported with AIDS in the region in 1992 was 87 while the number of males was 225. The data shows that in 1987 the male/female ratio was 2.8, this fell to 2.3 in 1990 and then rose again to 23.5 in 1992. The percentage of women with AIDS therefore increased from 1990 to 1992.

#### 7. Violence against women

The issue of violence against women called for specific measures to be taken. In 7 countries there were specific legal steps taken - through Domestic Violence Act in the Bahamas and Belize, in Anguilla the setting up of in camera hearings and the establishment of a sexual offence unit in Jamaica. In Netherlands Antilles the criminal code condemns violence against women. Some 8 of the countries have set up training to protect women. There were 2 cases of shelters built for battered women in Belize and Jamaica.

In Antigua and Barbuda and Belize 50% of the total work force in the judiciary are women. The amount of women in the judiciary increased by 10% in Guyana, from 11% in 1980 to 21% in 1992.

#### 8. Effects on women of continuing national and international armed or other kinds of conflicts

The lack of data in this area was quite extreme and therefore a proper analysis could not be obtained. For the countries that reported in this area, however, the percentage of women in the military did increase - in Cuba from 2% in 1985 to 5% in 1992; and in Grenada from 8% in 1985 to 10% in 1992.

In almost all the islands there are more women than men. Only the British Virgin Islands reported a higher number of men

### SECTION III

#### Goal

The vision or goal for the subregion by women, as evidenced in their country reports is to ensure that there is growth with social equity and justice for all; and that governments and people alike pursue a development model based on sustainable human development without bias to gender, race, class, ethnicity, ability or disability.

#### Strategic objectives

1. Inequality in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels
  - (a) To enhance and facilitate women's participation at all levels of both private and public sector.
  - (b) To increase women's participation in the foreign affairs, management, administration and decision making bodies in proportion to their population.
  - (c) To set up quantitative and qualitative goals to promote and achieve women's equal participation in those still male dominated areas at all level.
  - (d) To achieve equal participation of women at international and national meetings, and public forum.
  - (e) To include gender perspective in all spheres of economic and social development.
2. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women
  - (a) To establish governmental machinery at the highest possible level to review all policies which have an impact on women's life.
  - (b) To build within the women's bureaux the policy and planning capacity and gender sensitivity skills.
  - (c) To establish women's departments or bodies at local, regional governmental level working in coordination with the national machinery.
  - (d) To increase and facilitate government and non governmental dialogue and information exchange in the design of community programmes.



- (e) To increase data collection capacity
- (f) To establish where not already in existence women's bureaux and focal points in technical ministries.

### 3. Lack of awareness of, and commitment to, internationally and nationally recognized women's rights

- (a) To put into practice the standards claimed in the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as other international instruments dealing with the prevention of discrimination based on gender, class, race, ability or disability or any other kind of discrimination.
- (b) To adopt legislative provisions guaranteeing women's equal rights at all levels.
- (c) To include and/or inform on gender issues in the educational programmes.
- (d) To analyze and redress critical issues limiting women's equality such as: equal pay for equal work, maternity leave, reproductive rights, health and violence.

### 4. Poverty

#### Reduction of poverty

- (a) To adopt the necessary provisions to achieve economic growth with social equity.
- (b) To include sustainable development approaches in all programmes ensuring gender sensitivity, and sensitivity to income distribution, resource use and the meeting of basic needs.
- (c) To make gender analysis a part of policy and project decisions at all government levels.
- (d) To provide for economic and social development in rural zones to reduce internal migration.
- (e) To increase job opportunities for women, and their income earning capacity.

#### Alleviation of poverty

- (a) To establish and facilitate provisions for care of the elderly and children under five, and provide supplementary feeding programs where necessary.
- (b) To implement and/or design support programmes for low income single mothers, women who are heads of households and pregnant and lactating mothers

- (c) To provide for and/or encourage adult education and retraining for women.

5. Inequality in women's access to participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and the productive process itself

- (a) To enact and/or enforce legislative provisions to ensure women's access to land, credit, and jobs without restrictions to their marital status.

- (b) To remove all gender based discriminatory legislation in terms of rural land ownerships, estate tenure in urban areas, and heritage.

- (c) To promote and implement the collection of disaggregated data based on gender.

6. Inequality in access to education, health, employment and other means to maximize awareness of rights and the use of their capacities

Education

- (a) To adopt the necessary measures and actions which would result in the reduction of women's illiteracy rate.

- (b) To increase women's participation at all educational levels, paying special attention to the reduction of the drop out rate of young girls.

- (c) To remove gender-based discriminatory practices and attitudes which limit the access of women to school and training in technical, and non traditional areas of studies.

- (d) To promote gender sensitive educational programmes at public and private school for males and females at all levels; and to make use of the formal and non formal education processes.

- (e) To improve and increase access and quality of the public school system, making possible the provision of resources and investment in human development.

- (f) To enhance and promote gender based training for teachers dealing with sexism in education at all levels.

- (g) To review and reform educational programmes ensuring gender sensitivity in text books and non traditional areas for women.

Health

(a) To implement integral and accessible programmes of health for rural and urban women dealing with specific health concerns in the subregion such as: undernourishment, pre-natal care, maternal mortality, cervical and breast cancer, reproductive rights, immunization, sexually transmitted diseases and anemia.

(b) To implement comprehensive health and social welfare programmes for pregnant women giving special attention to basic food needs, as a way to reduce infant mortality.

(c) To enact gender based provisions in health programmes in that rural and urban women can fully exercise reproductive health and rights.

(d) To pay special attention to maternal mortality and, unsafe abortion, immunization, domestic-intra family violence, and sexually transmitted diseases.

(e) To provide for and/or improve wide contraceptive and family planning services for women and men.

(f) To establish and/or improve public health education and community intervention programmes for teenagers both women and men, paying special attention to the increase of early pregnancy, drop out rate , and sexually transmitted diseases in young people.

(g) To increase immunization rates in the seven vacancies advised by the World Health Organization (WHO) for children ensuring gender parity.

(h) To establish where necessary and strengthen where already established public health education and sanitation programmes in order to improve quality of life and environmental conditions in marginalised communities and rural areas, paying special attention to water supply, clean atmosphere, nutritional habits and food intake and housing.

### Employment

(a) To enact proper gender based provisions in order to eliminate discrimination at the work place taking into account equal pay for equal work, maternity leave, minimum salary and those international conventions which protect the rights of working women.

(b) To reduce the incidence of girl child labour and its impact on the school dropout rate and social and intra-family domestic violence.

(c) To improve labor conditions and adopt protective gender sensitive provisions for women working in the informal sector and free zones.

## 6. Violence against women

(a) To collect data on and further research violence against women in order to take the necessary measures both to reduce the incidence of violence against women and to assist abused women, children and families.

(b) To eliminate gender based discriminatory legislation which reinforces women's unequal status in society and family

(c) To increase awareness and training of law enforcement officers, public officials, health staff and police forces on the elimination of domestic and social violence against women.

(d) To sensitize media on violence against women and the need to deal with it, eliminating the discriminatory image of women in public advertisement, television and radio programs and print media.

(e) To enact the necessary legislative provisions to classify all forms of domestic violence as a crime against women, family and society, and to re-educate individuals.

(f) To create emergency support mechanisms to assist abused women.

#### 7. Effects on women of continuing national and international armed or other kinds of conflicts

(a) To adopt the necessary measures and provisions in order to assist refugees and displaced women.

(b) To enact relevant legislative provisions in order to eliminate inter - racial, ethnic inequalities and conflicts and assist women survivors but at the same time provide the necessary formal and informal education which can influence attitudes and change behaviour.

(c) To reinforce gender awareness and sensitivity in the military and police as well as in specially created peace keeping forces.

(d) To respect international and national treaties and laws which guarantee self determination, sovereignty, independence, equity, social justice and cooperation which are necessary factors for women's full equality, and for the exercise of women's basic human rights.

#### **Regional strategic objectives**

##### **For technical cooperation**

(a) To increase the exchange and cooperation among policy makers and their technical

advisers, on women and development programs in the subregion.

(b) To adopt necessary measures and agreements inter-regionally and nationally to ensure the freedom of movement of women working in all categories either from the formal or informal sectors throughout the region.

(c) To reinforce and/or adopt measures to fully guarantee indigenous women's rights to social, economic and political sustainable development in an atmosphere of respect and solidarity for their indigenous values, cultures and practices.

(d) To strengthen subregional institutions whose function it is to link women and their work together throughout the region.

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