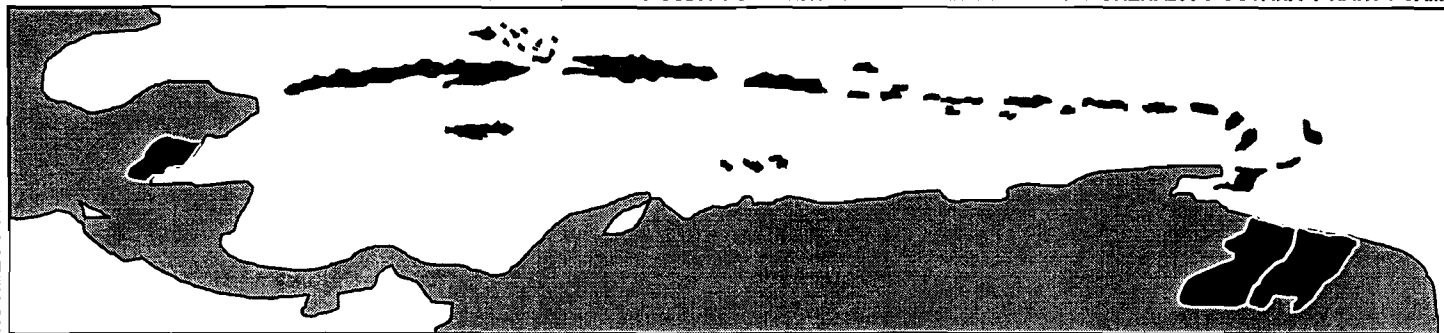# UN ECLAC/CDCC

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STUDY OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE CARIBBEAN

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE

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GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE CARIBBEAN

Background

The mandate for gender mainstreaming underpins the comprehensive provisions of the Beijing Platform for Action which itself finds continuity with the concern for the development of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women contained in the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies.

Governments in the Caribbean have attempted in various ways to advance gender equity not only through substantive policy but also through administrative reform. In these attempts, governments have both made progress and confronted conceptual and operational difficulties (see appendix). The United Nations mid-term review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action provides an opportunity to reflect on and assess governmental action in the mainstreaming of the responsibility for gender equity throughout the State sector.

In facilitating this review process, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean conducted a study on gender mainstreaming among 10 Caribbean countries, namely, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.[1] The study was funded and supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Gender Equity Fund.

This paper attempts to describe and analyze how the countries under study have sought to institutionalise or routinise the responsibility for gender equity throughout government activities, both administratively and in policy and programmes. The study also examines the effectiveness and impact of such gender mainstreaming initiatives.

The research process took the form of interviews with key informants in each of the 10 countries. Representatives from the national machineries for women (NMWs) were interviewed, as were representatives from planning and sectoral ministries and from relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This study draws on the reports of these interviews; on primary material produced by government departments; and on pre-existing research and analyses of government gender programmes and policies. The research process sought to elicit information on knowledge of the mandate to engage in gender mainstreaming, organizational capacity, applications of the gender mainstreaming processes and results in gender mainstreaming.

The socio-economic context

The post-independence period of the 1960s and 1970s in the Caribbean was marked by State commitment to social policies and programmes which were at the same time 'welfarist' and empowering. Throughout the region, States sought to extend universal access to education and health care and to establish social security schemes. The state was conceived as a major provider and creator of avenues for individual and community development.

The macroeconomic concerns of the Caribbean in the 1980s and 1990s have been centred around the need to balance State expenditure with State income, while at the same time promoting the market economy. The economic measures undertaken under the rubric of structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s included currency liberalization, trade reforms, freezing of public sector employment and wages and the privatization of State enterprises.[2] Studies on the impact of structural adjustment policies implemented throughout the region suggest that these policies negatively affected the capacity of governments to create and foster an enabling environment for social development[3] and that these economic reforms were accompanied by increasing levels of violence, including gender-based violence, poverty, unemployment, crime, drugs and environmental degradation.

In some countries, the ability of governments to provide adequate social services such as health and education free of charge was compromised as government expenditure was reduced or redirected away from the social sector[4]. The reduction in public expenditure on the social sector under these economic policies has widened social inequalities and contributed towards the decline in living standards[5]. In this context, there is a body of work which suggests that women have been disproportionately affected by this process. Le Franc and Lee[6] argue that female-headed households are more likely than male-headed households to fall below the poverty line. Female heads experience higher levels of unemployment, work in the lowest paid sectors of the economy and generally experience wage discrimination.

In addition to the macroeconomic policies which were pursued in the region, globalization and trade liberalization also had specific impacts on women. A significant number of women, for example, traditionally were involved in banana production in the Windward Islands. The decline in the banana industry as a result of the erosion of preferential trading arrangements has had a negative impact on these female agricultural labourers and consequently for a large segment of the population since women continue to carry the greatest responsibility for care-giving and social reproduction.[7]

The Beijing Platform for Action refers to the trends which have exacerbated inequalities between women and men as a result of the globalization of the economy and implicitly recognizes that there may be an incompatibility or contradiction between macroeconomic policies which prioritize the accumulation of capital on the one hand, and social development which prioritizes the eradication of poverty on the other. In this regard, the Platform reflects:

"The eradication of poverty cannot be accomplished through anti-poverty programmes alone but will require democratic participation and changes in economic structures in order to ensure access for all women to resources, opportunities and public services".

Institutionalization of gender within the State

Women in Development (WID) as a framework for advancing gender equality dominated the Caribbean governments' response to inequality between women and men in the 1980s and 1990s. The WID framework assumes that women had either been excluded from the benefits of development or had been included in ways that marginalised them. It identified women's lack of access to resources as the key to their subordination and therefore the policy response centred on the development of resources for improving women's economic opportunities. In this regard, the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies urged that national planning address poverty and unemployment.

"Governments should seek to involve and integrate women in all phases of the planning, delivery and evaluation of multisectoral programmes that eliminate discrimination against women, provide required supportive services and emphasize income generation".[8]

WID programmes typically focused on vocational skills training and the promotion of small-scale income generation projects, the aim of these activities being to increase the income of poor women by improving their capacity to enter the labour force either as employed or as own-account workers. Within the state sector these programmes were sponsored or run mostly by the national machineries for women and built on women's traditional skills. Reviews of such programmatic interventions have reflected that these projects did little to overcome poverty and economic marginalization among women.

By the mid-1980s the WID framework was criticized for its lack of attention to the role which gender relations played in restricting women's access to productive resources; for failing to take account of the connections between power, conflict and gender relations in understanding women's

subordination; for failing to make the linkages between economic structures of inequality and gender inequality and for failing to pay adequate attention to the link between women's productive and reproductive roles.[9] The framework was also criticized for its tendency to focus only on women and on women in isolation of men.[10]

In response to the limitations of the WID approach, feminist academics called for an examination of gender and gender relations as the source of women's subordination and referred to those dimensions of social relations that created differences in the positioning of men and women in social processes.[11] Gender within this paradigm refers to the social meanings given to biological sex differences. Gender, being culturally and ideologically constructed is therefore de-linked from the biological category of sex. Gender analyses of the causes of women's continued inequality and subordination argued that gender is not only maintained and reproduced through material practices but also influences the outcomes of such practices and therefore affects the distribution of resources and the access to and enjoyment of rights and entitlements in the public and private spheres. As such gender analysis allowed for an understanding of gender as a social stratifier similar to other stratifiers such as class, race and age.[12]

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach shifts the focus from 'women' to 'gender' and unequal power relations between women and men. As a consequence, social, economic and political processes and structures and development policies are subjected to gender analysis, (both in formulation and in impact assessments). In so far as the GAD approach critiques not only processes but the structures which maintain inequality, it is recognized that achieving gender equity requires transformative change[13] and not merely the integration of women into existing economic structures.

The move away from the WID approach is also accompanied by shifts (both semantic and strategic) from integration of women to gender mainstreaming within public administration processes. The WID framework operationalised, required or resulted in specially constituted machineries for women promoting programmes and projects often in isolation from other public sector work. The concerns for gender equity and equality were the responsibility not of the whole of the public sector but that of the unit established to look after 'women's affairs'. Gender mainstreaming on the other hand requires a decentralization of the responsibility for gender equality and equity concerns throughout the public sector in policy formulation, programme implementation and service delivery.

The focus on institutional mechanisms as an essential component of national strategies for the advancement of women can be discerned from the first major conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1975. Arising out of that conference was the recognition that:

> 'The establishment of interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery within government, such as national commissions, women's bureaux and other bodies, with adequate staff and budget, can be an effective transitional measure for accelerating the achievement of equal opportunities for women and their full integration into national life. The membership of such bodies should include both women and men, representative of all groups of society responsible for making and implementing policy decisions in the public sector".[14]

The World Plan of Action explicitly spoke to the need for a cross-sectoral response to ending gender inequality and also implicitly recognized that changing unequal gender relations was the responsibility of both women and men in the public sector.

Still the emphasis remained on the establishment of "appropriate governmental machinery for monitoring and improving the status of women". [15] The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies urged the establishment of these mechanisms at a high level in government with adequate resources, commitment and authority to advise on the impact on women of all governmental policies. Without using the terminology of gender mainstreaming, it is evident that the framers of the Forward-Looking Strategies considered that the advancement of women could only be assured through collaborative work between the machineries and various ministries and governmental agencies.

By the end of the 1980s, the need for new institutional and political strategies and arrangements became evident. Women's interests and the goal of gender equity remained solely the responsibility of national machineries, under-resourced and marginalised within the governmental structures.

The mandate to governments to incorporate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programmes, including development policies and programmes at all levels was emphasized in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The Beijing Platform for Action recognized that the primary institutional response for the promotion of the advancement of women had been the establishment of national machineries for women which by and large were

hampered by unclear mandates, lack of adequate staff, training, data and inadequate support from the national political leadership.

The Platform contains a number of recommendations aimed at strengthening these machineries and there is also a strong call for governments to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming. (Platform for Action: paragraphs 79,105,123,141, 164, 189, 202, 204, 229, 238, 252, and 273). The Platform specifies the actions necessary to integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects and the responsibilities of the national machineries. These include the facilitation and implementation of government policies on equality; the development of appropriate strategies and methodologies; and the coordination and cooperation within the central Government in order to ensure mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policy-making processes.

The first strategic guideline of the Regional Programme of Action for Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, urges gender mainstreaming as necessary for creating the enabling environment for gender equity. This guideline requires States to incorporate the gender perspective into development policies and planning at the highest levels in order to correct the inequality between women and men caused by the persistence of discriminatory cultural contexts and economic and social practices.

Definitions of gender mainstreaming

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines gender mainstreaming as [16]:

> *"Taking account of gender concerns in all policy, programme, administrative and financial activities, and in organizational procedures, thereby contributing to a profound organizational transformation."*

The mainstream is defined as an "interrelated set of dominant ideas and development directions and the decisions or actions taken in accordance with such ideas and directions". There are two aspects therefore to the mainstream: ideas (theories and assumptions) and practices (decisions and actions).

As elaborated by UNDP, gender mainstreaming then is a process which encourages or ensures:

(a) The legitimacy of gender equality as a fundamental value that should be reflected in development choices and institutional practices;

(b)   That gender equality is recognized not as a "women's issue" but as a societal one;

(c)   That gender equality goals influence economic and social policies that deliver major resources; and

(d)   Women participate as decision makers about social values and development directions.

Gender mainstreaming requires two levels of activity within the UNDP framework: (a) data collection and analysis of gender differences and relationships, most importantly with regard to the interaction of production and reproduction; and (b) the incorporation of this understanding into the work programme, principally by the deployment of strong skills in advocacy and in participatory and consultative policy and planning methodologies. Gender mainstreaming initiatives are strengthened by the existence of analytical skills (social and economic analysis) communication/advocacy; and decision-making skills within the bureaucratic mechanisms mandated to advance gender equity.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines mainstreaming a gender perspective as:

> *"the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."*
> *(Economic and Social Council, agreed conclusions, 1997/2)*

Without defining "gender mainstreaming", the CARICOM Post-Beijing Regional Plan of Action to the year 2000, requires governments to take a number of actions "in order to mainstream gender into the culture and organization of relevant institutions, including their policy-making and planning". Some of these actions are:

(a)   Strengthen the national machinery;

(b)   Develop the framework, methods and tools for incorporating gender into policy-making and planning, in collaboration with personnel involved in planning, including strategic planning;

(c)   Complete national action plans for women and to integrate these plans into national development plans.[17]

Elemental, therefore, to gender mainstreaming is the 'routined' incorporation of a regard for gender differentials at all levels of public policy development and implementation. Gender mainstreaming is transformative of structures, goals, processes and policies in that it requires the consideration of the distribution of resources within the State sector and of the benefits of State-sponsored activities in a manner which results in gender equity and not only equality.[18] Numerical equivalence between females and males is one indicator of gender equity and it does not define comprehensively the expectation of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming or the institutionalization of gender-sensitive policy should transform public administration because fully implemented, it should result in routinising gender equitable forms of social interaction and limiting the possibilities for choosing discriminatory forms of social organization and practices.[19]

The national machineries for women

A national machinery for women exists in all the countries in the study, save for Montserrat[20].   Most of the countries had established national machineries by the mid-1980s. The National Gender Bureau was constituted within the Ministry of Home Affairs in Suriname in January 1998 consequent upon a government commissioned gender and development policy statement. Within the English-speaking Caribbean, Jamaica established the first national machinery for women. The Bureau of Women's Affairs was first located in the Ministry of Youth and Community Development and since its establishment in 1976, it has been located in five different ministries. In most cases these machineries have been located within ministries of social affairs or social welfare.

The extent to which the establishment of the machineries signified profound State commitment to the advancement of gender equity concerns within public policy has been questioned. A Commonwealth Secretariat study of the women's bureaux in six Caribbean countries in the 1980s[21] concluded that the bureaux had been created by the political leadership reacting to demand from the international community and that the structural location of these agencies within the social sector of government bureaucracy reflected a welfarist desire to ameliorate the position of women. The location of the women's machineries within the social sector has been the subject of continued observation within the gender and development literature. It has been advanced that a fundamental contradiction exists between the objective of the

full integration of women into national life and the welfarist objectives of the social welfare ministries within which the women's machineries are located. In addition to the limitations of the mandate of these ministries, reference has been drawn to the fact that ministries of social affairs are seen as marginal ministries, traditionally lacking power, status and associated financial resources, all necessary for the challenge of advancing gender equity within the State sector.[22]

The Commonwealth Secretariat study on women's bureaux in the Caribbean found that the main achievements had been in the area of sensitizing the public and governmental bureaucracies to women's welfare concerns. However, these achievements were outweighed by the many constraints which inhibited the performance of the machineries. The women's bureaux were unable to persuade government bureaucracies of the fundamental need to link welfare concerns with the major economic, social and political concerns of their countries. The study concluded that the bureaux were largely weakly structured, ill-defined units whose ability to function as the sole implementing agency for the government's policy on women in development was compromised by the absence of appropriate support and resource provisions. The women's bureaux suffered from:

(a)   No or inadequate budget;

(b)   Lack of staff;

(c)   Inadequately trained staff;

(d)   No cooperation from sectoral ministries;

(e)   Unclear policy; and

(f)   Unclear status of bureaux.

By the mid-1980s there was a widespread international perception that the women's machineries were not equipped to fulfil their pivotal role in advancing gender equality and equity. Like the Commonwealth study, an INSTRAW assessment also identified a number of impeding factors: small budgets and staff, attitudes that legitimized female subordination, mandates that focused on welfare and not policy, the inability to influence other government ministries because of limitations of resources and time.[23]

At the Nairobi World Conference on Women, it was agreed that an appropriate government machinery for monitoring and improving the status of

women should be established where it was lacking and that to ensure effectiveness, the machinery should "be established at a high level of government, and should be ensured adequate, resources, commitment and authority".

Still in the lead up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the position had changed only marginally for most bureaux. A CARICOM study[24] reiterated that under-resourcing was the norm as were the limited availability of gender training and continued location of the bureaux within welfare ministries. Another study conducted in 1994[25] pointed to a number of other associated factors which severely hampered the effectiveness of the national machineries:

(a)   General absence of policy and gender analysis skills;

(b)   Ineffective inter-ministerial committees;

(c)   Absence of prioritizing of strategic objectives; and

(d)   Limited implementation of policy objectives although the majority had been accepted and approved at the highest levels.

At the close of the 1990s, the level of resources directed at the machineries varied between countries considerably. Six of the 10 countries (Barbados, Guyana, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname) have machineries with a staff complement of five and under, inclusive of administrative and other support personnel. Of those six countries, gender policy and analysis capability lie only with the directors of the bureaux.

The National Gender Bureau established in Suriname in January 1998 has five staff members. The machinery in Belize is staffed by 14 persons of whom only the director is equipped with the capabilities to make policy level interventions. While the staff appears large by comparison with the other countries, it is to be borne in mind that six persons function at regional level providing assistance on rural projects and programmes. Guyana which is geographically vast has no regional staff.

Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and St. Vincent and the Grenadines appear to have made the greatest strides in developing the technical expertise of the staff within the machineries. Gender analysis capacity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines can be characterised as strong, with the Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator having both pursued professional training in gender

analysis and planning. The Bureau of Women's Affairs in Jamaica has two policy analyst positions as well as two project officers. The Division of Gender Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago has 24 persons on staff of which 13 are assigned specifically to the Domestic Violence Unit. The Division is substantively staffed by a Director, a Deputy Director and four project execution officers, all of whom have technical competence in gender analysis. The Gender Affairs Unit of the Tobago House of Assembly is staffed by 11 persons, 7 of whom are attached to the Domestic Violence Unit. St. Kitts and Nevis has moved to strengthen its department by gaining cabinet approval for senior level posts.

STAFFING: WOMEN'S/GENDER BUREAUX[26]

Country	Bureau Designation	Nos. of Staff	Positions	Significant Staff Changes since Beijing Conference 1995	Ministry
Barbados	Women (to be changed to gender)	5	- Director - Research Officer - Secretary - Stenographer - Clerk (Temporary Project Staff)	-	Ministry of Social Transformation
Belize	Women	14	- Director - Human Development Coordinator - 6 women and Development Officers - Administrative and Clerical Staff	-	Ministry of Human Resources, Women's Affairs and Youth Development
Guyana	Women	5	- Administrator - 2 Women's Affairs Officers - Secretary - Clerk	-	Ministry of Human Services and Social Security
Jamaica	Women	18	- Executive Director - Policy Analyst - Community Liaison Officer - 3 Project Officers - Researcher - Librarian - Administrative and Clerical Staff	Yes, increased professional and technical staff	Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Sports
Montserrat	No specific Women's Affairs Officer	1	- Community Development Officer also responsible for Women's Affairs	-	Ministry of Community Development and Social Services
St Kitts & Nevis	Women	4	- Director - Executive Officer - Field Officer - Secretary	Expected by 2000	Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs
Saint Lucia	Gender	7	- Director - Research Officer - 2 Women's Affairs Officer - Secretary	Research Officer appointed	Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations

Country	Bureau Designation	Nos. of Staff	Positions	Significant Staff Changes since Beijing Conference 1995	Ministry
			- Office Assistant - Driver		
St Vincent & the Grenadines	Women	5	- Coordinator - Assistant Coordinator - Field Officer - Secretary/Clerk Typist - Office Attendant	-	Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture
Suriname	Gender	5	- Coordinator - Assistant Coordinator - 2 Admin/Prog Assistants - Violence Expert	Expected by 2000	
Trinidad	Gender	24 (13 of whom work in Domestic Violence Unit)	- Director - Deputy Director - 4 Project Execution Officers - Assistant Execution Officer - Admin and Clerical Staff **Domestic Violence Unit** - Coordinator - Research Officer - Secretary - Clerk - Hotline Supervisor/ - Counsellor and Listeners	Yes, increased technical staff	Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs
Tobago	Gender Affairs Unit	11	1 – Manager 1 - Gender Officer 2 - Support Officers **Domestic Violence Unit** 6 - Hotline Attendance 1 - Domestic Violence Coordinator	Unit established since Beijing	Health and Social Services Department (Tobago House of Assembly)

None of the machineries were originally constituted with a primary mandate as an advocacy unit to influence the planning processes across development sectors. Despite the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming, the machineries remain distant from the ministries of planning. Typically, most of the divisions are located with the social service sector or in ministries which have substantial responsibility for social welfare (Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, and Saint Lucia.). Alternatively, as in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, the division is placed in a sector with a range of concerns, such as culture, youth and sports. St. Kitts and Nevis was the first Caribbean country to have a full Ministry of Women's Affairs and Health. The Ministry is now renamed Health and Women's Affairs. Women's Affairs now functions as a department within the ministry and is expected to coordinate all aspects of gender planning and management.

The coordinators of the national machineries, by and large, understand their functions as straddling the areas of advocacy and policy oversight or monitoring on the one hand and on the other as units with implementation responsibilities. Even while the coordinators consider that the role of the machineries should be, in the main, ensuring the integration of the gender perspective in national and sectoral development planning, it has been articulated that the effectiveness of the machineries is hampered by the absence of clear powers to reject inappropriate policies emanating from other sectors of government bureaucracy.

In addition, although the units are expected to make advocacy inputs, they continue to be deficient in technical skills for policy analysis and the proposing of alternatives. A number of heads come from the background of social work and community development as opposed to economic and social planning.

There are areas, however, in which the machineries have been able to make strategic interventions at a policy level. One such area is that of violence against women. In a number of the countries, (Jamaica, Belize, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis) the machineries were and remain at the centre of the lobby for improved legal and social services for victims of intra-family violence. In Belize, the Department established a National Task Force on Domestic Violence to further its efforts in the development of a national plan on domestic violence. It has been critical to the review and monitoring of the Act and has produced a study on the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act.

Notwithstanding the preferred prioritization of planning, advocacy and monitoring, the WID framework still dominates the work of the machineries as a number of the machineries continue to be engaged in the development and implementation of skills training programmes and in the promotion of micro-enterprises for women entrepreneurs.[27] Notably many of these initiatives occur in isolation from the relevant ministries of industry, commerce or labour.

For Montserrat, the volcano crisis has meant an intensive concentration on service delivery although there is a willingness to undergo training in the rationale for and use of gender mainstreaming. The prioritisation of building technical capacity in gender analysis and planning over the extension of service delivery on the part of the bureaucracy responsible for gender is one which would have to be considered in the context of the country's current needs and resources.

The national machinery in Saint Lucia, like Barbados, is presently undergoing changes in leadership, ministry location and departmental name change. In this state of flux, a systemic programme of gender analysis and policy influence, or of select service delivery is not in place. The national machinery in Saint Lucia has been renamed the Department of Gender Relations and functions in the Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations. While it is accepted that a planning function should be a core element of the work of the machinery, this complex portfolio, though covering inter-related subject areas, risks the marginalisation of the work of gender mainstreaming in favour of service provision.

It is only in a few of the countries that the coordinators consider the resource base of the machineries to be adequate to meet the demands made on them at the political level.

A recent assessment of the Women's Affairs Bureau in Guyana drew attention to the wide range of services offered, including the operation of a loan fund and the provision of individual support to women. This wide demand was being met in the context of under-staffing, low core budget, heavy dependency on external funding and a low profile in the government hierarchy. The Bureau is characterised as "being a weak mechanism with a huge mandate".[28]

In Belize, for example, it was expressed that the staff are not able to do policy analysis and planning at the level and in all sectors necessary for the fulfilment of the gender mainstreaming mandate. The staff, as is the case in Guyana, come from a social work background. The department is expected, on the one hand, to develop policy and make policy inputs into sectoral ministries, and on the other hand, to provide the traditional services and programmes to

women across the country. The size of staff and the nature of their qualifications essentially limit the extent and effectiveness of both policy and service work. Indeed very few of the coordinators interviewed considered that there was sufficient capacity to collect and analyze data or to make policy inputs of sufficient depth and clarity in the national and sectoral planning processes. Such persistent limitations can be demotivating to staff.

At the Meeting of Directors/Coordinators of Women's Bureaux held in St. Kitts and Nevis in 1999 the problems which impede the national machineries continued to command attention[29]. The representatives from the bureaux called for a full discussion on and definition of the issues which are the responsibility of the women's affairs bureaux. They also expressed a need for clarity to be provided by the policy makers about what was expected of the bureaux in expediting their functions, bearing in mind the numerous constraints which these agencies faced.

Themes which emerged during the interviewing process are the chronic under-resourcing (staff and funding) of the administrative units; the ill-defined mandates of the units; the tension between resource allocation to policy analysis and formulation as opposed to servicing the "constituency"; the lack of awareness of and commitment to gender issues generally; the growing perception that men are the victims of unequal opportunities; the location of departments and low levels of power and authority associated with the machineries; the isolation from sectoral and planning ministries because of service orientation; and the ghettoisation and stigmatization of women's issues.

Within the last five years, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has engaged in institutional strengthening of the machineries in Barbados and in Trinidad and Tobago. As a response to structural inadequacies, in 1993 the Government of Trinidad and Tobago entered into a technical assistance cooperation agreement with the IDB for the purpose of strengthening the institutional capacity of the Gender Affairs Division. The programme included the provision of technological equipment and components in:

    (a)   Planning and management;

    (b)   Management information systems;

    (c)   Gender sensitization and training; and

    (d)   Publications and monitoring and evaluation.

As a consequence of the IDB programme, the Division was able to produce in June 1999 a training manual and video. The manual is designed to meet the training needs of other agencies involved in gender training throughout the country.

The institutional strengthening programme with the Bureau in Barbados focussed on expanding the Bureau's research and data gathering capacity to focus on policy oriented research and strengthening the capability of the Bureau for policy/programme coordination and for monitoring and evaluating gender-aware sectoral programmes. This proposal was implemented at a time when the existence, composition and mission of the Bureau was being reconsidered. Within the Ministry of Social Transformation in which the Bureau is located, the reconstitution of the Bureau has been the subject of ongoing dialogue.

A concept paper[30] prepared for the Ministry and submitted for consideration to the Ministry in October 1999 assessed the Bureau as having achieved only limited success. The problems which were identified as plaguing the Bureau were the lack of direction and sense of purpose, a lack of adequate systems and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation and the failure by the Bureau to embrace the current paradigm shift from WID to GAD.

This analysis made no mention of limited and highly inadequate human and financial resources with which the Bureau was obliged to carry out its mandate. In addition, it is not acknowledged that the Bureau, comprised as it is, of public servants, did not establish the policy mandate within which it has operated.

In this context, a series of six public consultations were held on the future of the Bureau[31]. These consultations which were attended by at the most 40 persons at each session, recommended the replacement of the Bureau of Women's Affairs by a new structure 'Bureau of Gender Affairs". In an ironic twist, it would appear that those who attended the consultations considered that women had achieved gender equality and that it was men who were experiencing crisis. This sentiment is also reflected in the above-mentioned position paper.

The position paper argues for the transformation of the Bureau of Women's Affairs into a Bureau of Gender Affairs, a bureau which would inter alia, advise government on gender related issues and support policy implementation. The position paper also calls for a focus on the needs of community and youth groups and the needs of the "lower class".

In response to the perception that the Bureau of Women's affairs had outlived its utility, the structural problems which plagued the Bureau were iterated[32]. These included:

(a)   Lack of clarity about the function of the bureau;

(b)   Inadequate human and financial resources;

(c)   Low administrative level within the public service bureaucracy;

(d)   Inability to gain the cooperation of senior administrators in the key sectors of the economy; and

(e)   Inability to develop or maintain monitoring mechanisms to forge appropriate linkages with the key sectors in economy.

Notably, in the final report on the Government of Barbados/IDB project on the Institutional Strengthening of the Bureau of Women's Affairs, the recommendation was made to upgrade the machinery and to develop the machinery's mandate within the gender and development paradigm. The report notes that the propagation of a gender and development framework should not be perceived as an abandonment of women's priorities but rather as an expansion of opportunities and legitimacy for the inclusion of Barbadian men in the fight against gender injustice.[33]

From "women" to "gender"

"It is a linguistic thing. They (government) see 'women's affairs' as threatening to patriarchal interest. Even though "gender" is a mystifying concept and few people understand it, they prefer that term." (Informant)

In the 1990s, the machineries in Saint Lucia and in Trinidad and Tobago have undergone changes to their titles, replacing references to "women" with "gender". The new machinery in Suriname refers to gender and it is intended in Barbados to substitute gender for women.

Certainly, in the last decade the focus has shifted away from integrating women into development to addressing "gender and development', a change which was based on the critique of the preoccupation with issues of access and the integration of women into established and inequitable development policies. It is to be assumed that the change of names of the machineries mirrors this philosophical shift.

The name changes, where they have taken place, provoked a negative reaction from some women's organizations concerned that the terminology change was a means through which governments could avoid the implications of responding to woman-specific disprivilege.

The research process highlighted that understanding of gender has been advanced at the level of the national machineries through participation of associated personnel in training programmes. Still definitional and conceptual ambiguities in the use of the term gender and therefore gender mainstreaming, exist, ambiguities which necessarily impact on the programmatic and policy thrusts of the machineries. While gender mainstreaming is understood in Jamaica as "ensuring that gender considerations are taken in the development of policies, plans and programmes", in other countries, the concept is interpreted as involving men in services and programmes so as to create balance or equality in the relationship between men and women and importantly in creating the conditions necessary for equality of achievement in education and employment. The legitimacy of a continued focus on women is increasingly being questioned given the widespread perception of 'male underachievement' in education. In this latter regard, there is distinct hostility discernable to a continued presence of a national machinery for women in some countries. A redefined machinery directed at "gender affairs", it is anticipated, will allow the flexibility of directing programmes and resources towards boys and men, seen as marginalised because of a confluence of factors.

In countries where this concern has been articulated, it is still not clear to what extent, if any, State practices and mechanisms are responsible for the marginalization of boys and men although the reorganization of the machineries is premised on the need to address the social and economic problems of men. In this regard, Barriteau poses the question "From what set of practices and ideologies do problems for men arise?"[34] The caution around the discourse of gender is based on the sense that the definition of gender can be and has been 'mistranslated' across institutional contexts.

In Trinidad and Tobago the proposal for the nomenclature change led to much discussion between the women's NGOs and the Ministry with responsibility for gender affairs. The concern of women's organizations was that the shift was not sufficiently considered and held the potential of displacing the analysis of power relations which subordinate women and maintain inequality in society. Despite the name change however, the work of the Division has remained largely unchanged. There is, however, a concerted

effort to engage male staff members and to include programmes targeted at men, such as programmes focused on men's health needs.

The research process elicited a general lack of clarity around the meaning and consequence of gender and development. Technical officers associated with the national machineries report that they are unable to articulate the policy advances which the use of 'gender' and 'gender and development' are supposed to represent. This finding mirrors the research done in five countries by Goetz[35] who concluded that as a result GAD had lost credibility as a policy concept given the policy makers' difficulties in understanding the discursive shift in the WID/GAD field.

Mechanisms for incorporating the gender perspective

National policy on gender mainstreaming has been developed formally in only a few countries. One example, however, of such a national policy is from St. Kitts and Nevis where the Ministry of Finance's Five Year Development Plan 1996–2000 refers to the integration of gender analysis and planning in its development programmes; identifying and removing any obstacles to women's and girls' equal participation in economic, social and political life and strengthening governmental capacity to implement the gender management systems programme.

Similarly in Suriname, a study was undertaken in February 1997 to evaluate the Government structures regarding women's policy. As a result, a shift from the WID approach to a gender and development policy approach was recommended. The policy statement called for the integration of a gender policy approach for Suriname. In the case of Jamaica, a CIDA sponsored assignment to mainstream gender analysis into government planning is ongoing and involves the development of a gender equity indicator instrument to guide the planning processes.

Beyond formal pronouncements of an intention to engage in the gender mainstreaming process, such policies, however, can be discerned in the initiation of a number of activities and the establishment of a number of mechanisms devised to comply with the mandate of gender mainstreaming. These include national advisory bodies or commissions, inter-ministerial committees, gender focal points, and gender-specific national policy statements.

Three broad approaches to gender mainstreaming can be discerned:

(a)   Gender-sensitization training;

(b)   Institutional mechanisms; and

[c)   Planning instruments and processes.

Gender-sensitisation training

Through gender training, public sector personnel are expected to recognize the importance of an analytical approach which looks at gender as a variable to be taken into account in the formulation and implementation of governmental policy.

In her review of gender training initiatives, Moser[36] notes three dominant approaches: gender analysis training, gender planning training and training in gender dynamics. Gender analysis training allows for the identification of gender-based divisions of labour and access to and control over resources in order to assess the differential impact of proposed interventions on women and men. The purpose of gender planning training is the provision of tools, not only for diagnosis but also for translation into practice. Gender planning is concerned with understanding the inter-relationships between the productive and reproductive roles and the nature of women's subordination. Gender dynamics training addresses the raising of consciousness and sensitization to women's experiences of subordination. It allows for the identification of gender biases at home, in the work place and in the community.

While there are no reviews of gender training programmes in the region, the research suggests that the programmes implemented have attempted to raise the awareness of public sector workers to concepts of gender and gender discrimination and can, therefore, be characterized as gender dynamics training. One example of this is from Tobago, where the Gender Affairs Unit has embarked on a series of gender training workshops aimed at increasing the understanding of gender issues on the part of public sector workers and non-governmental organizations.

An exception to this is the gender management systems (GMS) approach developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat which has incorporated the concerns for increasing public sector capacity in gender analysis and planning. The processes of the GMS include the setting up of structures and mechanisms for inter-sectoral coordination; the development of gender action plans; and mainstreaming gender in the national development plans and sectoral ministries.[37]

Gender management systems training has been undertaken at a regional level, particularly for persons associated with the health sector as well as with specific countries- St. Kitts and Nevis and Jamaica.

In St. Kitts and Nevis, the programme focused significantly on increasing the bureaucratic capacity for gender analysis and planning throughout the public sector. While it is perhaps too early to assess the impact of the training, it would appear that the issues of transformation, humanizing the development process and gender equity and justice are understood. As reported by one technocrat, "the impact of the sensitisation programme through the GMS can hardly be measured." The challenges to be overcome are the limitations in the technical or implementing processes. Capacity is difficult to measure at this stage as structures are still being put in place. Issues of leadership, authority and influence, vision and skill however also appear to be challenges during this period of the implementation of the GMS.

Another major training initiative piloted by the Commonwealth Secretariat was gender analysis of finance and budgeting initiatives. Both Barbados and St. Kitts and Nevis have participated in this initiative. In the case of Barbados, the Ministry of Finance was designated by the Commonwealth Secretariat as the lead agency and the Director of Planning within the Ministry of Finance was a key participant, as opposed to personnel from the Bureau of Women's Affairs. In this regard, personnel from the Bureau have interpreted this as indicative of the low level of influence and clout associated with the Bureau.

Since receiving the Commonwealth Secretariat-sponsored training on the budgetary process, there has been no implementation of the gender budgeting process and there is no plan for structured follow-up or implementation of the training process. Contrary to the Commonwealth Secretariat's rationale in its selection of the lead agency, it would seem that that the Ministry of Finance does not conceive of its role as spearheading the exercise but as providing technical support to the Women's Bureau in the process. The Bureau, on the other hand, is without the technical capacity to push forward the gender budgeting process.

In St. Kitts and Nevis, the piloting of the gender analysis of budgets within the sectors of health, education and agriculture is being advanced and an assessment of this initiative would be premature.

Ad hoc training programmes by gender consultants are another avenue through which public sector personnel are receiving gender training. In Belize,

for example, in November 1999 the Cabinet and permanent secretaries participated in a gender training seminar with a consultant over a two-day period. The workshop was advocated and promoted by the Minister with responsibility for women's affairs. A significant level of interest by the Cabinet was reported and this may be attributable to the fact that within the party in power, a lobby has developed around the implementation of a "Women's Agenda". A similar programme was attempted in Trinidad and Tobago where it is reported that the cabinet agreed to meet with the gender trainer for a half-hour session.

The research process did not elicit any systematic evaluation of the training programmes. However, typically, these training programmes last mere days and can hardly be expected to ensure competency in gender analysis or planning, particularly in an absence of commitment to understanding gender bias in its manifestations in the home, at work and in the society at large.

In addition, the efficacy of gender training is constrained by attitudinal obstacles and it is suggested that there are differences between the receptivity of women and men bureaucrats to the training. One informant to this study lamented that the popular understanding of gender is "woman" and patriarchal resentment of the gender equality means that when male bureaucrats "hear gender and they think that it means more power to women and they get turned off".

As has been pointed out elsewhere[38] another constraint in the effectiveness of gender training, as with efforts to promote gender sensitive planning, is the inability of the machineries to affect the incentive structures governing individual bureaucrats and bureaucratic units. The machineries, because of their limitations, cannot provide useful technical support, lack powers of sanctions over policy and programme proposals that fail to incorporate gender sensitive perspectives because of the low levels of respect accorded to many of them.

One area in which gender training continues to be institutionalized to practical effect is in the area of police training on violence against women. In both Barbados and St. Kitts and Nevis it is reported that components on gender and human rights are now part of the routine curriculum in the relevant police training college. In Barbados, it is speculated that the beneficial impact of this training can be witnessed in a dramatic rise in police prosecutions of domestic violence offenders.

Institutional mechanisms

National commissions or councils for women have been established in Barbados (National Advisory Council on Women), in Belize (National Women's Commission), Guyana (National Commission on the Status of Women), St. Kitts and Nevis (National Council on Women), St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago (National Council of Women). A Commission on Gender and Social Equity now awaits an independent review in Jamaica.

In all countries, the main function of the Commissions is an advisory one. The Commissions also have responsibility for the monitoring of the status or progress of women and in Belize this mandate includes meeting the reporting obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Typically, these bodies are appointed by the political directorate and are constituted by persons from the NGO and State sectors. In Belize, the wife of the Prime Minister headed the last two Commissions. A female parliamentarian presently chairs the Guyanese Commission. The Director of the Women's Affairs Department is an ex officio member of the Belize Commission and the Administrator of the Guyanese machinery is the Secretary to the Commission. The concern has been expressed that the appointment of Commission members by the political directorate may have alienating consequences if the appointments are perceived as politising the Commission in a partisan manner.

In Guyana and Belize, the research component of the Commissions' work has been emphasized. In Guyana, for example, the Commission developed a number of issue papers on areas of critical importance. Similarly in Belize, the Commission has conducted a study on women and health and has recently completed primary research on women's participation in the political process.
It would appear that in both Belize and Guyana, the Commissions have made strong commitments to providing strategic thinking on critical areas of interest to women. The extent to which the research has been used to inform the development of policies and programmes remains unassessed.

The Commission in Trinidad and Tobago is presently non-functioning. In the case of Barbados, after a three-year period of inactivity, a new council was appointed with effect from December 1997.

Inter-ministerial committees

The Beijing Platform for Action calls on governments to "give all ministries the mandate to review policies and programmes from a gender

perspective; to locate the responsibility for the implementation of the mandate at the highest possible level; establish and/or strengthen an inter-ministerial coordination structure to carry out this mandate, to monitor progress and to network with the relevant ministries".

Inter-ministerial committees have been established in Jamaica, Guyana, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. The major objective of the Jamaican Inter-Ministerial Committee is to monitor the implementation of policy objectives in various ministries, of particular significance being the ministries of education, industry and agriculture, housing, health and legal affairs. In St. Kitts and Nevis, the Committee is charged specifically with decentralizing planning and implementation and monitoring of the mainstreaming of gender and development policies throughout government. The Committee is further responsible for promoting the coordination within central government in order to ensure a gender perspective in all policy-making processes. Similarly, in Saint Lucia the Committee is responsible for the institution of focal points for the advancement of women in each of the technical ministries. Apart from the gender-mainstreaming objective, in Trinidad and Tobago the Inter-Ministerial Committee serves primarily as an advisory body to the Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs.

It would appear that in no country has this mechanism been particularly useful in advancing gender mainstreaming. The Inter-Ministerial Committee was established in Guyana pursuant to a Cabinet decision. The policy on its composition was that the representation from the sectoral and technical ministries should come from the highest decision-making levels within ministries. This has not occurred and the committee is comprised of persons two levels lower than the permanent secretary. Not only then is the Committee constituted of persons without the requisite decision-making authority, but it would appear that the members do not possess substantial gender expertise. To compensate for this deficit, the women's machinery has had to engage in gender sensitization training. Similarly in Trinidad and Tobago, the positions on the Inter-Ministerial Committee have been given to lower-ranking individuals who, despite commitment to the goal of gender equity, are not in positions of power and authority within the public service. Interestingly, these Committees are largely, if not exclusively, comprised of women. In Trinidad and Tobago there is no representation on the Committee of persons from the ministries of finance or industry.

Perhaps because a primary focus of the Committee in Trinidad and Tobago is to advise the Ministry as opposed to being the catalyst for or ensuring the incorporation of the gender perspective in the work of other ministries, the members on the committee do not see clearly a role for

themselves beyond responding to requests for assistance from the Division. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, therefore the Inter-Ministerial Committee has been unable to advance gender mainstreaming within the public sector.

Other inter-ministerial linkages

Apart from institutionalized inter-ministerial committees, another mechanism which has been encouraged is that of the task force on areas of critical concern, and in particular on violence against women. Through these task forces, such as exist in Belize and Guyana, the machineries are able to get the input of other sectors in the development of action plans. In a complementary fashion, the machineries may have representation on committees in other ministries such as health, education or family services.

Generally, however, the linkages between the ministries responsible for women's affairs and other ministries appear to be issue specific and ad hoc. Exceptionally, the Women's Bureau in Guyana does not sit on any committees in other ministries.

Gender focal points

Theoretically, gender specialists or focal points have a critical catalytic, advisory and monitoring role to play in their Ministry's change efforts and increasing their Ministry's effectiveness in programming for gender equity. Gender focal points are said to exist within all ministries in the Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname public sectors. However, the focal points tend to be individuals (and not units) who hold junior positions within the public sector, without decision-making authority and without institutional support for the responsibility assigned to them. In Barbados, the focal points have never met as a committee and are characterised as non-functioning.

Arising out of the Commonwealth Secretariat's programme, in St. Kitts and Nevis a National Advisory Council on Gender Equity/Equality (NACGEE) was established in 1999 whose functions are to provide information/advise Government on appropriate action in various sectors and play an advocacy role with the media. The research suggests that in its infancy, the Council is experiencing difficulties associated with an unclear mandate or focus and leadership. While the Council is expected to advise government, it has limited research capacity.

Planning instrument and processes

National development plans represent and express State policy on priorities for programming and transformation. Integrating gender into this process requires the securing of top-level commitment to gender and development priorities, agreeing to action programmes and resources for implementation, generating disaggregated data and designing targets and indicators at the macro and sectoral levels.

The achievements in the 10 countries in this regard are not encouraging and it would appear that, to date, only Guyana has attempted the advocacy and analytical task of mainstreaming gender within the national development strategy and planning process.[39]

The promotion of women's interests within the governmental sector has also been addressed through the formulation of gender action plans by the national machineries themselves. In the implementation of gender mainstreaming, the Beijing Platform for Action urges the development of gender action plans. The mission of the gender action plan is to put into effect the government's vision for women and to achieve the objective of gender equity. Through the vehicle of the gender action plan, gender analysis is incorporated into the whole cycle of formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and procedures. The Platform for Action calls upon governments to develop implementation strategies:

> "The planning process should draw upon persons at the highest level of authority in government and relevant actors in civil society. These implementation strategies should be comprehensive, have time-bound targets and benchmarks for monitoring, and include proposals for allocating or reallocating resources for implementation".[40]

National plans for women have been prepared in Guyana, Belize, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago. The plans aim to promote gender analysis, gender mainstreaming and gender planning. Typically, they outline the programmatic actions to be taken in each sectoral ministry and identify main agencies or actors responsible for implementation. It would appear, however, that the implementation of these plans remain by and large the responsibility of the national machineries which have produced them. As has been pointed out in the case of Jamaica,[41] these plans do not contain budgets nor do they address budgetary implications for the machineries far less for other government departments. Generally, it would also appear that the plans have been developed without effective participation and accountability from sectoral

or planning ministries. It may be that these plans remain essentially outside of the main planning framework.

Specific sector plans within a gender perspective are also being proposed in a few of the countries under review. These are being promoted in the health sector through the implementation of the Commonwealth Secretariat-sponsored gender management systems programme. The Commonwealth Secretariat held workshops in the Caribbean in 1998 and 1999, the purpose of which was to promote the development of national action plans for instituting gender management systems in the health sector.

A number of participants were invited from each participating country comprising a cross section of senior policy planners from the ministries of health, finance, planning and women's affairs. The workshops aimed to increase the skills of senior officials and policy makers in gender analysis and gender planning and secure the commitment of each national grouping to take forward the planning design and implementation of the gender management system for the health sector. Despite this initiative, specific gender plans for the health sector have yet to be developed.

This situation is to be contrasted with the experience of Belize. There the Ministry of Health works closely with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) which has instituted a "Women, Health and Development" programme emphasizing gender equity within the context of health equity. One of the roles of the subprogramme is to create gender consciousness within PAHO and within Belize through ongoing gender training. Through this collaboration, the Ministry of Health was able to conduct a health situation analysis using a gender perspective. The Ministry of Health is also at present developing a model of attention for family violence focusing on prevention, promotion, early detection and attention.

In reflecting on the progress made in gender mainstreaming in Belize, it was pointed out that constant and continual training in gender analysis is imperative to maintaining the commitment to gender mainstreaming. The Belizean experience suggests that critical factors in successful gender mainstreaming include: clear vision and understanding of the gender perspective; continual commitment to gender training; the presence of a gender expert, or at least someone committed to the gender perspective in the line ministry itself; and the commitment of an external agency with resources to support and further specific mainstreaming programming.

The absence of an operationalising procedure designed to translate policy into practice requires further examination and analysis. It has been contended

that policies, such as those contained in gender action plans, may be essentially symbolic, in the sense that there is no will or commitment to implement. Notably, some of these plans contain rather vague or ambiguous directives, and do not address clear performance indicators or targets. The fact that the national machineries develop these plans in isolation from other ministries ensures a less than complete understanding and agreement on the objectives to be attained.

In this context, Moser[42] notes that many policies on women and development are not intended to achieve real change but simply to provide "symbolic reassurance" that something is being done. Symbolic policy she argues is one of the biggest problems faced by those working with a WID agenda. That many of the gender action plans do not contain clear performance targets, are unaccompanied by budgetary provisions, are developed in isolation of the very agencies which are required to implement, suggests that the gender action plans an example of symbolic policy.

Conclusion: Limitations and challenges

Political will and commitment

There is no doubt that Caribbean States are concerned with gender inequality and its manifestations. Throughout the region, discriminatory laws have largely been removed from the statute books and legislative reform has redressed gaps in the laws, thereby securing a greater enjoyment by women of their human rights. Still gender relations remain particularly disadvantageous to women and inequities persist in the economic and social spheres. However, throughout the region, there is a perception of male marginalization and an uncritical acceptance that the problems which young men experience are based on gender constructs as opposed to economic and social class bases. These perceptions along with the real advances which girls and women have made appear now to be fueling a growing State reluctance to continue to extend expenditure on women and development/gender and development issues.

In her study on gender mainstreaming in five countries, Goetz concludes that there is an inadequate understanding of the term gender even though in the countries under study the shift has been made from women in development to gender and development. Often gender is used synonymously with women. This is equally valid for the Caribbean. In addition, the term 'gender' is increasingly being used to evoke concern for boys who are said to be in crisis without any analysis of the social factors or variables responsible for their economic marginalization and anomic behaviours manifested in increasing levels of youth violence.

<u>Lack of understanding of gender</u>

That gender, like class, is an analytical tool for advancing an understanding of the dimensions of social and economic problems and developing policy solutions is not clearly accepted in the region. Notwithstanding the best intentions, clarity on the content and meaning of gender as a diagnostic and analytical tool for the formulation of policy and programmes is imperative. Where public sector actors are insensitive or hostile to gender, it seems unlikely the commitment to gender mainstreaming would go beyond symbolism.

The country research suggests that the continuing rhetoric around gender and gender mainstreaming in the absence of a sufficient understanding of the concepts and of the policies and practices required may be contributing to a certain regression in the commitment to gender equity. While the machineries are required to be policy development and coordination sites, the under-resourcing of the units in this context of increased expectation of technical expertise, has had the effect of a further diminution in the status of the machineries within the public sector.

<u>Inadequate resources</u>

Structural adjustment programmes and cutbacks to the public sector have impacted significantly on the social sector. The national machineries are by and large located within the social sector ministries. While it is the case that the machineries are now staffed by greater numbers of persons than 10 years ago, they continue to be under-resourced to perform all the tasks associated with service delivery and with policy formulation. There has been growth in the technical capacity of the national machineries; many of them are now headed by persons with backgrounds in public sector management and gender relations. Still, this capacity is limited to the heads of these units.

Enabling factors for gender mainstreaming

The question, therefore, arises whether there are preferred entry points for advancing gender mainstreaming. The experience in the region suggests that mainstreaming initiatives are more likely to be sustained where there is political will, an adequate or enabling level of gender sensitivity and knowledge within the public sector; adequate institutional capacity through the commitment of resources (human and financial); availability of disaggregated data and research; and inter-sectoral commitment.

Political will, understanding and commitment are necessary for achieving concrete results. This political commitment has to exist both within the political directorate as well as within the national machineries for women. The manifestations of political commitment would include the formulation of policy statements with respect to gender-sensitive social and economic justice; clear institutional directives rather than discretionary guidelines for gender mainstreaming; resource allocation and concrete and measurable goals and benchmarks.[43]

Political will at the technical level of the national machineries is also required. Effectiveness in implementing the mandate of the national machineries seems to be enhanced by strategic understanding of gender power relations and structures within the public sector and of an understanding or vision of equity in society. Political will at the technical level will also be advanced by a clear appreciation of the constituency of the machineries, both population and thematic.

The constituency of women is not monolithic. Women, like men, have multiple identities and therefore while there are common gender interests which unite women, there must also be an understanding of the diversity of women as a group. The recognition that women have sometimes conflicting interests is vital to fostering genuine dialogue and participation in the definition of social development and equity. In engaging in a participatory dialogue with the constituency of women, the national machineries may be able to develop a core and common agenda, the implementation of which would be supported widely.

In addition to political will and understanding, the technical personnel charged with coordinating gender mainstreaming should be technically proficient in gender analysis and planning. The need for a continuous training in gender planning and analysis cannot be overstated given that a high level of staff turnover marks the state bureaucracies and political hierarchies in the region. In this regard, it is significant that a number of countries cited the absence of gender training and the lack of clarity of gender mainstreaming goals as impediments to the institutional advancement of women. (See appendix).

Throughout the research process the need for ongoing technical assistance from international agencies such as ECLAC was reiterated. It was expressed that such technical assistance was needed in the development of gender action plans, data collection protocols, processes for sustaining inter-sectoral linkages and gender analysis training.

The commitment to collaborative planning and analysis within sectoral divisions of government appears to be imperative in the full decentralization of the concern for gender equity within the public sector. Structural linkages are insufficient. Inter-sectoral linkages between planning units and national machineries which emphasize strategic thinking need to be strengthened. Such strategic thinking could be enhanced by and at the same time support a joint systemic data management system.

To move beyond symbolic implementation, adequate budgetary allocations and human resources are necessary to sustain implementation of gender action plans. These human and financial resources should be maintained not only within the national machineries but also within the sectoral ministries.

The establishment of instruments and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating is also required. The national machineries, as the gender focal point within the public sector, have a coordinating role. The United Nations[44] guidelines for its gender units are equally relevant to the machineries and they include:

(a)   Support for the development of gender sensitive policies and programme strategies;

(b)   Advice and support of ministerial staff in incorporating and applying the gender perspective;

(c)   Collection and dissemination of information on gender issues and on best practices;

(d)   Assistance in monitoring and evaluating progress in gender mainstreaming in policy, programme and budgetary terms; and

(e)   Networking and acting as liaison where necessary between the non-governmental sector and sectoral ministries.

The research has revealed that there is little exchange between governments and national machineries on implementation and evaluation of gender mainstreaming strategies. Here again, the national machineries are instrumental in the development of indicators of successful gender mainstreaming activity. Where the machineries do not have the capacity internally to develop country specific methodologies and indicators, the use of gender consultants should be explored.

The national machineries tend generally to concur that their role should be focused on policy oversight, monitoring and advocacy. Their responses in many respects echo the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on National Machineries for Gender Equity.[45] (ECLAC 1998) This meeting specifically recommended that the national machineries act as the catalyst for gender mainstreaming and that the mandate should include:

(a)   Policy advocacy;

(a)   Coordinating policy;

(b)   Monitoring policy for gender impact;

(d)   Reviewing legislative and policy proposals from all ministries to ensure inclusion of a gender perspective;

(e)   Initiating reforms to create more gender sensitive legal systems;

(e)   Coordinating gender audit of implementation of policies; and

(f)   Ensuring that constitutional and other framework debates include a gender perspective.[46]

In meeting their mandate, the meeting recommended that the functions of the national machineries should include:

(a)   Ensuring appropriate gender training for top level management;

(b)   Encouraging gender training at all levels of government;

(c)   Developing methods and tools for gender mainstreaming, such as gender impact assessment, guidelines for gender training and for gender audit across all government activities;

(d)   Collecting and disseminating of best practice models of gender mainstreaming;

(e)   Coordinating the development and regular updating of national action plans to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and reporting on their implementation to parliaments and international bodies;

(f)   Cooperating with the mass media to mobilize public opinion on gender issues; and

(g)   Departments should have research capabilities as auxiliary to the policy analysis and planning.

The Way Forward

The gender mainstreaming thrust within State bureaucracies can only be accomplished with the requisite political will and commitment to transforming administrative structures and modes of decision-making. Beyond commitment, however, is the recognition that gender equality policies and programmes need to be supported by an investment in capacity-building for all staff so that staff have the necessary skills and information to engage in gender analysis of public sector policies and programmes.

The research suggests that women's machineries see their primary role as contributing to planning and policy formulation rather than the provision of services for women at the community level. Effective participation in the planning processes can be enhanced where the national machineries have the requisite authority to examine sectoral policies and review and make recommendations that will be taken into account.

Ministries and the national machineries for women need to develop or further define tools and indicators to assess their results to date and their progress towards the goals stated in their action plans. Monitoring needs to be regular and reporting should be made to the highest levels.

Throughout the research process, the informants were careful to point to real achievements in advancing gender equity, in spite of the administrative and bureaucratic limitations which existed. Whatever the state of gender mainstreaming, there is no denying that the Caribbean has made significant progress in the elimination of many forms of discrimination against women. To a large extent, women have equal access to the education and health sectors. Labour force participation rates have increased, the numbers of women holding senior management positions within the public sector have improved somewhat over the last 20 years. Laws have been enacted to protect women's rights in the workplace and in the home. Most notably in the 1990s in this regard has been the Domestic Violence Acts.

Still a number of challenges remain as women continue to confront inequitable gender power relations in the home, in the workplace and the larger community. Inequality is very evident in women's vulnerability to violence, women's low levels of participation in decision-making levels, high levels of familial responsibility and high levels of under- and unemployment.

The task for governments is to firstly articulate a philosophy of social equity in which gender equity is a necessary and integral component and secondly to ensure system wide responsibility for the attainment of clearly defined targets.

Appendix

Matrix on the Implementation of Strategies on Institutional Mechanisms
(Source: National Reports submitted in response to the questionnaire from the Division on the Advancement of Women)

Country	Achievements	Obstacles	Future action
Anguilla	National action Plan developed 1996-2000	Limited funding available for women and development	Establishment of inter-ministerial committee and focal points in various departments
Belize	Shift from WID approach to a gender and development approach. Development of the Belize Equity and Equality Strategic Plan to integrate a coordinated, gender-sensitive approach to government policies and programmes	Limited human and financial resources	The implementation of a gender management system
Cuba	FMC National Action Plan	Resource problems	
Dominica	Investigation into the possibility of implementation of the gender management systems.	Lack of consensus/clarity on the gender and development approach as opposed to the Women in Development approach. Ad hoc cooperation between the women's bureau and other governmental departments Cooperation reliant on personalities and individual commitment Little systematic joint action	Proposal to implement the gender management Systems approach advocated by the Commonwealth secretariat.
Grenada	Re-establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee with main objectives of: 1) formulation of a national policy statement on women; 2) to assist the division of women's affairs in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of its programmes and projects.	Government has not recognized the importance of gender mainstreaming Inadequate and lack of trained personnel National goals, objectives not clearly defined	
Guyana	National policy on women; National Commission on Women; 1998 Inter-Ministerial committee mainstreaming gender in national development strategy Establishment of national resource and documentation centre	Stronger support required by senior policy framers in relevant ministries Financial constraints (hinterland)	Donor agency support Strong commitment on part of government

Country	Achievements	Obstacles	Future action
Jamaica	Increased Bureau staff (18); expanded accommodations; increased staff training; Improved coordination on gender focal points between BWA, the Planning Institute and The Office of the Prime Minister; Renaming of Social Planning Unit to Social and Gender Planning Unit	Inadequate human and financial resources; inadequate training and awareness; inadequate partnerships with society	National Plan of Action for Women Gender mainstreaming Commission on Gender and Social Equality Further strengthening of the Bureau
Netherlands Antilles	Gender sensitivity workshops for policy makers	Lack of human & financial resources	
Saint Lucia	The Division renamed 'Division of Gender Relations' to reflect focus on gender and development. Inclusion of a course entitled "Gender Management" for students pursuing the associate degree in management at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College.	Lack of clear public policy on gender equality and the advancement of women No inter-ministerial coordination	
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	National Commission on gender equality Focal points in government ministries	Absence of gender training necessary to the gender mainstreaming effort.	Gender training for focal points Monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action
Suriname	The establishment of a Gender Affairs Bureau The establishment of an inter-ministerial committee in which the Ministers of Home Affairs, Social Affairs, Regional Development and Planning and Development Cooperation coordinate activities.	No coordinator for the Gender Bureau for 10 months	Integration of gender into government policy. Establishment of inter-governmental body.
Trinidad & Tobago	GAD has representation on several technical committees and task forces. Training of inter-ministerial committees in gender sensitization and development Preparation of draft national policy on gender	Inadequate staff and financial provisions	Continued coordination between the national machinery and sector Ministries in integrating gender into policies and plans. Continued staff development National Policy on gender
Turks & Caicos	Establishment of a women's desk Inclusion of the desk in the national budget		Laws to be reviewed Work closely with NGOs

Endnotes

1. The research was conducted by ECLAC Consultant, Sonja Harris and by ECLAC staff members Asha Kambon and Roberta Clarke.

2. See Wedderburn, J and Levy, B: Globalization and Governance: A Study Prepared for UN-ECLAC. A paper presented at the Caribbean Subregional review of WSSD + 5 and the Status of the Older Person, 2-3 September 1999, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. See too ECLAC: The Caribbean in the 90's

3. Wedderburn and Levy: ibid;

4. See Wedderburn and Levy (ibid) for an analysis of the impact of SAPs on social service delivery in Jamaica.

5. ECLAC: Directional Plan of Action for Poverty Eradication in the Caribbean. Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication, 28 October to 1 November 1996 Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

6. Le Franc, E. and Henry Lee, A. : Poverty and Gender in the Caribbean. CDB/ISER. February, 1999

7. Babb, C: Situational Analysis: Gender, Women and Poverty in the Windward Islands. Paper commissioned by UNIFEM (Caribbean Office) and UNDP (Barbados). March 1998.

8. Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Report of the World Conference to review and appraise the Achievements of the UN decade for Women: Equality, Development and peace. A/Conf. 116/28Rev.1, New York: United Nations

9. See the analyses contained in Razavi, S and Miller, C.: From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse, Occasional Paper No. 1 UNRISD February 1995 and in Peggy Antrobus: Caribbean Women and Development: A Reassessment of Concepts, Perspectives and Issues in the Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs. Vol. 11, No. 2 June 1985.

10. Razavi, S and Miller, C.: From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse, Occasional Paper No. 1 UNRISD February 1995.

11. Razavi, S and Miller, C.: ibid.

12. For a discussion of the approaches see Razavi, S. and Miller, C. ibid. and United Nations: 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Globalization, Gender and Work. Report of the Secretary General A/54/227

13. This synthesis is taken from the 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Globalization, Gender and Work: ibid.

14. United Nations (UN): World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, para. 34. United Nations, New York, 1976

15. See paragraph 57 of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies.

16. UNDP Gender in Development Programme: Gender Mainstreaming Information Pack

[17] CARICOM Secretariat: Gender Equality, Social Justice and Development: The CARICOM Post-Beijing Regional Plan of Action to the Year 2000.

[18] The expansion of these elements of gender mainstreaming were discussed at a UNECLAC Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming held January 14-15, 2000, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

[19] Goetz, Ann Marie: The Politics of Integrating Gender to state Development Processes: trends, Opportunities and Constraints in Bangladesh, Chile, Jamaica, Mali, Morocco and Uganda: Occasional Paper No. 2, UN Fourth World Conference on Women, May 1995.

[20] It is reported that a gender desk is in the process of formation in Montserrat.

[21] Gordon, S (ed): Ladies in Limbo. The fate of Women's Bureaux-Case studies from the Caribbean. Women and Development Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1984

[22] Moser, C: Gender Planning and Development. Theory, Practice and Training, Routledge, London 1993

[23] Cited in Moser: op cit

[24] Mondesire, A and Dunn, L.: Towards Equity in Development: A report on the Status of Women in Sixteen Commonwealth Caribbean Countries. CARICOM Secretariat, Guyana. 1995

[25] The study on national machineries conducted by Dorienne Rowan-Campbell is reported in Mondesire and Dunn, ibid.

[26] This table was compiled and provided by the Women's Desk of the CARICOM Secretariat.

[27] ECLAC: The Caribbean Subregional Review and Appraisal Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Port of Spain, 1999. LC/CAR/G.583

[28] This finding is contained in a UNDP funded study conducted by Chandra Budhu: Mainstreaming Gender in the National Development Strategy. (unpublished). May 5, 1997

[29] CARICOM Secretariat: report on the Key Issues deliberated at a Meeting of Directors/Coordinators of Women's Bureaux. Basseterre, St. Kitts and Nevis. 22-23 April 1999.

[30] Grant, R: Towards a Bureau of Gender Affairs (A Draft Document for Discussion). Prepared for the Ministry of Social Transformation, Government of Barbados. (1999?) (Unpublished)

[31] Marshall, D.: Consolidated Report on Six Town Hall Meetings, 18 May- 3 June 1999. Prepared for the Ministry of Social transformation, Government of Barbados. (Unpublished) September 1999.

[32] Barriteau, Eudine: Submission to the Ministry of social Transformation from the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies on the decision to rename the Bureau of Women's Affairs. Unpublished (1998?)

[33] Burrowes, Toni: Final report of local consultant on the project for the institutional strengthening of the Bureau of Women's affairs. Prepared for the Bureau of Women's Affairs. March 1998

34   Barriteau, E.: Theorizing the shift from 'Woman' to 'Gender' in Caribbean Feminist Discourse: The Power relations of Knowledge creation. 1999 (Unpublished)

35   Goetz: op cit.

36   Moser : op cit. p. 175-177

37   Commonwealth Secretariat: Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Service. A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders. Commonwealth Secretariat. 1999.

38   Goetz: op cit.

39   In response to lack of incorporation of gender concerns in the national development plan, the ministry with responsibility for women's affairs in Guyana commissioned a study by Chandra Budhu on "Mainstreaming Gender in the National Development Strategy". A substantial document was produced which made recommendations aimed at key sectors of the government.

40   Beijing Platform for Action Para. 297

41   Goetz, Ann Marie: The Politics of Integrating Gender to State Development Processes: Trends, Opportunities and Constraints in Bangladesh, Chile, Jamaica, Mali, Morocco and Uganda: Occasional Paper No. 2, UN Fourth World Conference on Women, May 1995.

42   Moser, C: op cit.

43   The content of political will was discussed extensively in the Economic and Social Council document: E/CN.6/1999/PC/2: Framework for Further Actions and Initiatives that might be considered during the special session of the General Assembly entitled: "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

44   UN: Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations System

45   UN DAW/ECLAC: Report of the Expert Group Meeting on National Machineries for Gender Equality. Santiago, Chile 31 August – 4 September, 1998

46   UN DAW/ECLAC: Report of the Expert Group Meeting on National Machineries for Gender Equality. Santiago, Chile 31 August – 4 September, 1998

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