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THE BEIJING  
PLATFORM  
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# **The Beijing Platform for Action: Twenty Years of Implementation in the Caribbean**

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## List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIWIL	Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GDI	Gender Development Index
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPU	Inter Parliamentary Union
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCD	Non Communicable Disease
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NWM	National Women's Machinery
SADV	Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (now renamed UN WOMEN)
UWI	University of the West Indies
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organization

## INTRODUCTION

The year 2015 marks an important milestone in the international community's efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, namely the twenty year anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). Adopted unanimously in 1995 by 189 governments at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, the BPfA, is a blueprint for gender equality and women's empowerment. During the past twenty years, the BPfA has galvanized unprecedented global, social and political mobilization to end discrimination and inequality against women. The twentieth anniversary of the BPfA will take place amidst a number of other important global milestones, including the fifteenth anniversary of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which included a goal on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The twentieth anniversary of Beijing provides the Caribbean, as well as the rest of the global community "*with new opportunities to regenerate commitment, charge up political will and mobilize the public*"<sup>1</sup> to assess progress brought about by the BPfA. It is against this background that the decision was taken to prepare this occasional paper

The overall purpose of the paper is to draw on the near two decades of experience with the BPfA in the Caribbean subregion. It seeks to provide a review of the implementation of the BPfA in the Caribbean and the impact on the transformation of gender equality goals and women's empowerment during the last two decades. The terms Caribbean subregion and/or Caribbean countries for the purposes of this paper are used to refer to the Anglophone Caribbean States, which includes the independent English-speaking member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)<sup>2</sup> (includes the British dependent island of Montserrat), as well as the Associate member states.

At the outset it should be stated that Caribbean countries are defined as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and share a number of common development challenges, such as small population size, fragile economies and limited capacity for growth and development. These challenges which contribute to shaping development outcomes should be taken into consideration in any analysis which seeks to determine the achievement of development goals. For example, limited institutional capacity of the public institutions, namely the National Machineries for the promotion of gender equality, charged with responsibility for implementation of programmes and policies to achieve the strategic goals and objectives of the BPfA is common throughout the Caribbean.

The BPfA is considered a powerful agenda for women's empowerment, defining a policy framework aimed at removing obstacles faced by women in their efforts to become active participants in all spheres of private and public life for achieving women's right and gender equality. The BPfA "*calls for the integration of gender perspectives in all policies and programmes ... and, focuses on concrete measures to address the critical areas of concern worldwide*".<sup>3</sup> The BPfA provided an opportunity to transform national development goals with the shift from a focus on "women in development" to what was considered a more radical and transformational development agenda to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

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<sup>1</sup> UN WOMEN (2014) The Beijing Platform for Action: Inspiration Then and Now <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about>

<sup>2</sup> The member states of the Caribbean community includes Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Associate member states are Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands

<sup>3</sup> United Nations (2001). Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action *with the* Beijing + 5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document

Five years after the historic adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the international community reassembled in June 2000 during a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to assess progress in the implementation of the commitments made in Beijing. These commitments were reaffirmed and strengthened in the Political Declaration and outcome document on “Further actions and initiatives to implement the BPFA”, adopted at the 2000 United Nations Special Session.

The Beijing agenda contributed to bringing about worldwide visibility to the situation of women and girls and provided the necessary framework and guidance on how to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. The good news is that many more girls are going to school and are living longer and healthier lives than twenty or even ten years ago.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately almost twenty years later the situation of women and girls in many regions, including the Caribbean still needs to be improved to achieve gender equality. Far too many women still lack opportunities and face huge inequalities in all spheres of life. (Ibid)

The paper is organised in three sections. In the first section a background to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) is provided, with a brief assessment of the situation of women and gender equality. Part II provide an overview of the historical context of the BPfA in the Caribbean and reflects the framework within which Caribbean States sought to achieve gender equality. This section also provides a review of the achievements, challenges and impact of the BPfA in the Caribbean subregion with respect to implementation of programmes and policies to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. The final section provides a brief summary and conclusion and makes a case for a re-commitment to the critical areas of concern in order to realize the goals of advancing the human rights of women.

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<sup>4</sup> Jim Yong Kim, President – The World Bank Group, in *Gender at Work: A Companion to the World Development Report on Jobs*, 2013.



## BACKGROUND TO THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

In outlining the twelve critical areas of concern for the advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was clear that the issues were “a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women’s issue”. (UN: 2001:33)<sup>5</sup> The implementation of actions to achieve the critical areas at national and global levels was viewed as important in determining, in large part, the achievement of the important strategic objectives, deemed essential for promoting women’s full participation and empowerment<sup>i</sup>, and for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples.

The *BPfA* established a ground breaking agenda on women’s rights and galvanised unprecedented global social and political mobilization to end discrimination and inequality against women, but there are still many obstacles to overcome before the goals of the Beijing agenda are realized. While some progress has been made, Caribbean governments have neglected to address a number of problematic areas that impact on women’s empowerment and gender equality. As a result, there is need to accelerate achievements towards full realization of the ultimate goal of gender equality.

With the current attention being directed at the preparation for the “Beijing plus twenty” country assessments, an opportunity is presented for the undertaking of a Caribbean review of the gender equality environment, which is the impetus for this occasional paper.

Globally, the world has seen significant improvements in the status of women and in gender equality in most developed and developing countries, (World Bank, 2005:9). However, there is still concern that women constitute the majority of the world’s poor<sup>6</sup>. According to UNDP (Ibid), six out of ten of the world’s poorest people are women. Equally disturbing is the fact that in no region of the developing world are women equal to men in legal, social and economic rights, resulting from discriminatory laws and/or entrenched cultural practices. At least two Caribbean countries, namely the Bahamas and Barbados still have nationality laws<sup>ii</sup> which do not “*grant women equality with men in conferring nationality to their children*” (UNHCR 2014:1 & 6) on the same terms as fathers.

The continuing discrimination and constraints faced by women and girls serve to limit the choices available to them, and further exacerbate persistent underdevelopment and the capacity of developing countries to break the cycles of poverty. The gender gap in access to productive resources, including education, land, and financial resources has been shown to reduce productivity, and efficiency thereby constraining economic progress. Further, according to a recent report by the World Health Organization,<sup>7</sup> over 30 % of women globally who have been in a relationship report that they experienced some form of

### TWELVE CRITICAL AREAS

*Women and Poverty*  
*Women and access to education and training*  
*Women and health*  
*Violence against women*  
*Women and armed conflict*  
*Women and the economy, including access to resources*  
*Women in power and decision-making*  
*Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women*  
*Promotion and protection of the human rights of women*  
*Women and the media*  
*Women and the environment*  
*The rights of the girl Child*

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, (2001). Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with the Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document

<sup>6</sup>UNDP. Gender and Poverty Reduction:

[http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/focus\\_areas/focus\\_gender\\_and\\_poverty/](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/focus_areas/focus_gender_and_poverty/)

<sup>7</sup> WHO Fact Sheet No. 239, October 2013.

physical or sexual violence, and as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner.

It is within this context of mixed achievements and challenges that the United Nations will, in 2015, undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the BPfA to measure progress and identify challenges encountered. This global review is taking place at a historic moment, as it is the point of convergence of the anniversaries of several major international development frameworks to advance human development, gender equality and human rights.

### **THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN THE CARIBBEAN**

The Beijing Platform for Action outlined a series of strategic actions for addressing gender equality<sup>iii</sup> issues. In preparing for the Fourth World Conference on Women, CARICOM governments identified five critical areas of concern to be addressed by the region in pursuit of the goal of gender equality (CARICOM Secretariat 2003:3). While no rationale was identified for this selection, the assumption is made that this was based on the fact that these were issues of direct concern to women in the sub-region, because Caribbean governments had expressed particular concerns about three issues which affected women negatively, namely, poverty, violence against women, and political representation (CARICOM Secretariat 2003b::xx).

Caribbean governments committed to the empowerment of women, the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of pervasive gender discrimination in five areas, including violence against women; poverty and the economy; power and decision-making; sexual and reproductive health; and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. However, following the Beijing Conference, education was added as an area of concern, which resulted from a widely held perception that boys were under-achieving in the education system. As a result, it was deemed necessary *“to determine whether the apparently superior performance by girls and women in this critical area was contributing to a reduction in gender inequality in other areas”* (CARICOM Secretariat 2003:3).

In adopting the BPfA, Caribbean governments agreed to a common development agenda with gender equality and women’s empowerment as underlying principles. It is against this background that this paper will seek to provide an analysis of the achievements and challenges in the Caribbean in the post Beijing period in the six areas selected by the subregion for action.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AMIDST CHALLENGES**

The Caribbean region has realized undeniable gains in the improvement of women’s status and rights, the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality. These gains are evident in the improved social and economic status of girls and women, which has contributed to the reduction in gender inequalities<sup>iv</sup>. Perhaps the greatest and most significant progress can be seen in the area of participation in education, where many Caribbean countries are experiencing parity<sup>v</sup> in enrolment<sup>8</sup> at the primary level.

All Caribbean countries provide universal and equal access to education at the primary and secondary levels. Girls however outnumber boys at the secondary and tertiary levels of the education system. Enrolment however does not equate to completion or quality of education. Many children who are enrolled in primary school do not complete the full five to seven years, while drop-out rates are more pronounced at the secondary level (Mkandawire and Rodriquez 2000:13), particularly for Caribbean males.

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<sup>8</sup> See table on Net Enrolment rates at the secondary level for males and females 2000 – 2012 at Appendix III

During the past twenty years, the Caribbean has witnessed many changes in the lives of women and girls, particularly in the area of education. However as early as 2000, as part of the five year Beijing review process, the subregion had already identified the issue of education as one that presented major challenges in terms of gender disparities in achievement and the fact that the relative higher educational achievement of females was not translating into improved social and economic status as envisioned. As Bailey (2003:122) states

*the numerical dominance of women, compared to men, both in terms of participation and overall performance at the higher levels of Caribbean education systems has gained wide popular attention and has been used to fuel a 'male marginalisation' thesis with little attention being given to the more nuanced type of gender analysis that needs to be carried out to reveal the true situation of women.*

The higher educational participation rate of females is however not reflected in the labour market or in the private sector in the Caribbean subregion, where women's participation falls below that of men and where women tend to be concentrated in the low paying sectors of the labour force. This has been attributed to the fact that women often do not have the combination of education, vocational and technical skills and experience necessary to support the development of businesses, or to access high level employment opportunities<sup>9</sup>. The higher educational attainment is also not reflected at the level of political decision making, since few of the territories have achieved or have been able to maintain the thirty percent (30%) women in political decision making that was agreed to by member states in the BPfA. Sluggish progress in this area could be a contributing factor to the slow progress in other areas, such as policy making for the achievement of gender equality, since women and men bring different perspectives to policy making.

Lewis (2003) states that the turn of this century has brought about drastic changes to gender in the Caribbean; most of these changes lay in the material dimension<sup>vi</sup> of gendered life, namely that through legislation and other policies, women now have access to credit, property, land and other material resources on an equal basis with men. While the material dimension of gender relations in the Caribbean has evolved, the ideological dimension has not. "*The basic belief in a subordinate role for women still exists and is often reflected in state policy<sup>10</sup> as well as in cultural expressions*", (Barriteau, 2003:46).

## **THE CARIBBEAN "ENABLING ENVIRONMENT" FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY**

Adequately resourced institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and gender equality (often referred to as National Machineries), together with the passage of important pieces of legislation that protect the rights of citizens are the responsibility of governments as they endeavour to be in compliance with commitments made for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Caribbean Governments<sup>11</sup> committed through their adoption of the BPfA, to ensuring that the gender infrastructure and policies exist to realize gender equality and the empowerment of women.

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<sup>9</sup> World Bank. Female Entrepreneurship Resource point – Introduction and Module 1: Why Gender Matters? <http://worldbank.org>

<sup>10</sup> A number of discriminatory laws are still in existence in the Caribbean, e.g. the national laws of the Bahamas and Barbados, which do not grant women equality with men in conferring nationality to their children. Other discriminatory laws include the Marriage Acts of the Islamic, Hindu and Orisa faiths in Trinidad and Tobago, which permit the marriage of young girls at young ages than young boys.

<sup>11</sup> CARICOM Community Secretariat (2003). Plan of Action to 2005: Framework for Mainstreaming Gender into Key CARICOM Programmes

## NATIONAL MACHINERIES

National Women's Machineries (NWM), or National Machineries for Women's Advancement were established by the majority of Caribbean governments during the late 1970s early 1980s, as the institution mandated to operationalize programmes and policies to advance the status of women. Prior to 1995, these were variously designated as women's Bureaus, Women's Desks, Women's Commission, Advisory Committees or some model of a national government machinery to promote the advancement of women. (Mondesire and Dunn, 1995:33). Among the programmatic activities of National Machineries is the responsibility for policy oversight, advocacy, and direct responsibility for the planning and implementation of projects for women.

The hierarchical standing of the National Machineries as well as the limited resources allocated to them have always been deemed a reflection of the lack of an "enabling environment" for the promotion of gender equality goals at national level. This was addressed in the BPfA which recommended that governments establish national machineries for the advancement of women at the highest political level in *'order for the Platform for Action to be implemented and to improve their effectiveness'*. (UN, 1995: Para 296). The BPfA outlined the role of national machineries in gender mainstreaming as that of the central policy coordinating unit within government whose function is to support government-wide mainstreaming of gender equality perspectives in all policy areas (United Nations, 1995: Para.201). This was viewed as a comprehensive strategy aimed at achieving greater gender equality by integrating a gender perspective into existing and emerging programmes and policies. Mainstreaming was therefore established as the strategy for promoting gender equality.

The majority of governments adopted the agreed conclusions (1997/2) of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which established some important overall principles for gender mainstreaming. ECOSOC defined gender mainstreaming as:

*the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of 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.*" (Report of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997).

Most Caribbean governments took steps to implement a shift in the mandate of the national Machineries<sup>12</sup> which underwent a change in name and mandate, from one of integrating women into development to institutionalisation or 'mainstreaming gender' into the development process. Given the new focus on gender, the Machineries were mandated to focus attention on programmes for both women and men, and to establish multi-sectoral gender focal points throughout the government departments and ministries in order to mainstream gender and ensure that gender perspectives were included in all areas of government development policies. Mainstreaming was viewed as a transformative tool, which sought to institutionalise gender issues across all structures, ministries and departments as opposed to merely seeking to promote projects and programmes for women.

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<sup>12</sup> National Women's Machineries are the national level mechanisms, such as departments or Ministries, established by governments to provide leadership and support to government efforts to achieve greater equality between women and men.

Gender mainstreaming became a central pillar of gender and development work. As a strategy it entails bringing the perceptions, experience, knowledge and interests of women as well as men to bear on policy-making, planning and decision-making<sup>13</sup>. The implementation of mainstreaming tools requires that gender equality issues be situated at the centre of analyses and policy decisions, medium-term plans, programme budgets, and institutional structures and processes. A theme throughout the BPfA is that all government Ministries and agencies share responsibility for progress towards equality between women and men.

This conceptual shift however implied that there would be a corresponding transformation of the institutional structures of government, including the establishment of closer links between national women's machineries and other areas of government in order to ensure the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming. However assessments (ECLAC, 2004) have found that Caribbean governments experienced varying degrees of success with gender mainstreaming which many conclude has failed to bring about the transformative change envisioned at either the national or global level. This is in part due to the lack of a responsive policy environment for the integration of gender equality issues and perspectives. ECLAC undertook a review of the implementation of gender mainstreaming among ten Caribbean countries,<sup>14</sup> to ascertain the actions taken by *these countries to institutionalise ... the responsibility for gender equity throughout government activities, administratively and in policies and programmes*. The study uncovered a number of serious weaknesses, for example, gender was not always mainstreamed in analysis, design or implementation of development policies.

The study also found that there was a general lack of understanding of the meaning and consequences of gender and development due primarily, to the absence of an understanding of the concepts of gender mainstreaming and of the policies and practices necessary to ensure its effective implementation. It concluded that this was one of the factors contributing to "*a certain regression in the commitment to gender equity*".

National Machineries with few exceptions have however tended to be marginalised in what some deem as feminized ministerial portfolios, such as, social and welfare sectors associated with family, community development and the church, with duplicated responsibilities to provide social services. (Rowley 2003:3) As a result, the operations of the Machineries face numerous challenges, including limitations in their capacity to prioritize research and policy implementation. Among these challenges is the entrenched lack of resources, both human and financial, lack of qualified staff, low profile in government hierarchy and lack of coordination across government ministries. In 1995 the under-resourcing of NWMs was identified as a major limitation to realisation of their mandate and this remains a major challenge some twenty years later, although it is not necessarily at the forefront of all NWMs. This is due in part to lack of integration of gender mainstreaming into the budgetary and planning processes of government.

The results of a recent assessment undertaken by the UN Women Caribbean Office (Mondesire 2014<sup>15</sup>) revealed that capacity issues impacting the delivery of mandates were linked to clarity and scope of their mandate and to resource limitations. However, the majority of National Machineries indicated that their capacity to achieve their mandate was reasonable, which was deemed to be an improvement from previous years. In terms of hierarchial<sup>vii</sup> standing<sup>16</sup>, the government of Trinidad and Tobago is the

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<sup>13</sup> United Nations, 2002, Gender Mainstreaming – An Overview, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women.

<sup>14</sup> Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>15</sup> Alicia Mondesire, 2014. Institutional strengthening of National Gender/Women's Machineries: Bridge to Beijing + 20. A Review and Synthesis of the Status of Actions Leading to Gender Equality in the Caribbean. Power Point Presentation presented to the CARICOM National Women's Machineries meeting on 6-7 May 2014, Barbados.

<sup>16</sup> All of the NWM are located within other Ministries as government departments, Commissions or divisions.

only Caribbean country to have established a Ministry dedicated to Gender, (which includes related issues of youth and child development). This has been viewed as a milestone achievement for other countries to emulate. In Guyana, the government recently established a National Machinery for Men with responsibility for development and implementation of programmes for men. An emerging development in the Caribbean is to directly recruit males to the NWMs to assist with implementation of programmes for men, but also in response to public calls for gender balance in the machineries given their mandate for the achievement of gender equality goals.

The attributes of SIDS alluded to in the introduction, which includes limited human and financial resources, need to be seriously addressed in a manner to derive the maximum benefits, such as multi-sectoral planning and policy development and implementation to realize national goals, including the achievement of gender equality. Given the smallness of Caribbean countries, it is quite possible that these challenges will remain as has been found by the recent study (Mondesire 2014), where many of the National Machineries for women’s empowerment and the promotion of gender equality continue to function on the margins of most governments. This would more adequately facilitate the fulfillment of international mandates and improve women’s access to higher spheres of political, social and economic decision-making.

### **GENDER POLICIES**

Within the last decade, the development and implementation of national gender policies has increasingly gained prominence in the quest for promoting gender parity, equity and equality in the Caribbean as governments seek to establish national positions that are consistent with international agreements. They serve as a guide for the development of policies across sectors and projects and programmes based on gender equity. The existing gender policies identify critical areas for attention and assign responsibilities for implementation.

National gender policies were identified in the BPfA as essential in the strengthening of the role of institutional mechanisms in implementing gender equality programmes. The Caribbean policy environment has however been discouraging, when it comes to gender equality programming at national level. Despite the recognized and demonstrated limitations of the gender neutral approach to development, Caribbean policy makers are resistant to changing this ideology, which is based on the assumption that public policies will promote movement towards gender equality. However, public policies that do not recognise the different and unequal position of women in society tend to perpetuate and exacerbate gender inequalities.

Nonetheless, in recent years steps have been taken by the national machineries to develop and implement national gender policies to address this shortcoming. Table I provides information on countries that have gender policies, those that do not have a policy, as well as those that are in the process of preparing a national gender policy.

**TABLE I  
COUNTRIES WITH NATIONAL GENDER POLICIES**

Countries	National Gender Policies		
	Approved Policy	Drafting Policy	No policy
Antigua and Barbuda	----	----	----
The Bahamas	---	Yes	----
Barbados	---	Yes	----
Belize	National Gender Policy 2002 Rev. 2013	----	----
Dominica	National Gender Policy/2006 Rev. 2013	---	----
Grenada	----	Yes	----
Guyana	-----	-----	-----
Jamaica	National Policy for Gender Equality/2011		
Saint Lucia	-----	-----	-----
Saint Kitts and Nevis	-----	-----	-----
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	-----	-----	-----
Suriname	Gender Action Plan/2006	-----	-----
Trinidad and Tobago	----	Yes	----

Source: Compiled by the Author

Those that are in existence were developed through a process of consultation with the national community as a strategy to get public endorsement. It is also a way to garner legitimacy for the policy and for placing the policy in the public domain. This is important because policies are most effective when they are well known by the public or beneficiaries of that policy.

## GENDER AND WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMY

The Beijing Platform for Action (Paragraph 206) requested governments to put mechanisms in place to count women's unwaged work and to reflect the same in the GDP of the States. Among these actions to be taken by national, regional and international statistical services and relevant governmental and United Nations agencies, was the comprehensive development of all forms of work and employment by: *Improving data collection on the unremunerated work which is already included in the United Nations System of National Accounts, such as in agriculture, particularly subsistence agriculture, and other types of non-market production activities.*"

It also called for the development of methods for assessing the value, in quantitative terms, of unremunerated work that is outside national accounts, such as caring for dependents and the preparation of food, for possible reflection in satellite or other official accounts that may be produced separately from, but are consistent with core national accounts. The implementation of these actions was viewed as essential to recognizing the economic contribution of women and making visible the unequal distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work between women and men. Calls were also made for the introduction of policies to promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.<sup>17</sup>

Women face many obstacles that act as barriers to their attainment of economic empowerment. Among these obstacles, is society's dependence on women's unpaid work, either at home or the market, for example, in the agricultural sector, resulting in women's increased time poverty, which restricts their ability to fully engage in paid work in the formal sector. The unpaid care work performed primarily by women, underpins all societies, contributing to well-being, social development and economic growth. It is estimated that if unpaid care work were assigned a monetary value, it would constitute between 10 and 39 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)<sup>18</sup>. However, it is generally unrecognised by policy-makers.

Almost twenty years after Beijing, very little progress has occurred with respect to the recognition of women's contribution to national economies. This continues to contribute to the gender inequality because of the unequal sharing of reproductive work between women and men. A significant amount of unwaged (reproductive), agricultural and community work is carried out by women to maintain society and to support the productive work within the society. In addition, the Caribbean, with its high incidence of single female headed households, further places women at a significant disadvantage, since their income often has to be spent on members of the immediate and extended family.

Twelve years after Beijing, a significant milestone achievement took place in the decision of the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas to include gender statistics in its working programme. Unfortunately, many of the agreed actions remain to be implemented, especially in relation to time-use surveys in the Caribbean region. These surveys focus on the frequency and duration of human activities and attempt to measure the different ways in which people use their time during a twenty-four hour period. A primary motivator for the conduct of time-use surveys is a growing recognition that traditional statistical methods, such as national censuses, undervalue women's contributions to the economy<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Beijing Platform for Action.

<sup>18</sup> Francavilla Francesca, Gianna Claudia Giannelli, Gabriela Grotkowska and Mieczyslaw W. Socha (2011), Use of Time and Value of Unpaid Family Care Work: A Comparison between Italy and Poland. Institute for the Study of Labor, discussion Paper No. 5771, Bonn Germany.

<sup>19</sup> See Joyce Mary, Stewart Jay, "What can we learn from time-use data?" in *Monthly Labour Review*, Bureau of Labour Statistics of the U.S.

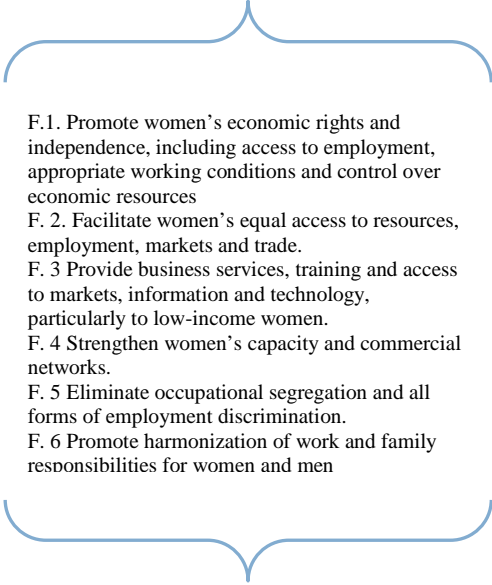
Although several states have sought to collect data on women’s unwaged work and time use in the National Census, Trinidad and Tobago is the only country in the Caribbean to introduce legislation in 1996, which calls upon the Central Statistical Office and other public bodies to collect and value the unremunerated work undertaken by both women and men. Moreover, legislative changes would need to be complemented by increased staffing and resources for country statistical offices to collect adequate data on unpaid work.

A number of national gender policies such as the 2011 National Policy for Gender Equality of Jamaica, and the Draft National Policy on Gender and Development of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago include policy recommendations on gender and care work. The Jamaica policy calls for the implementation of time-use surveys for understanding and measuring how unpaid work contributes to the national economy. It also calls for the creation of a system to capture, quantify and value unwaged/unpaid care labour and domestic work in the household and elsewhere<sup>20</sup>.

The Caribbean therefore remains the only region yet to carry out a full scale time use survey to quantify unpaid work undertaken primarily by women, but also includes unpaid work carried out by men. This is deemed to be another one of the major data gap in statistical systems in the Caribbean, where the valuation of unpaid work is statistically invisible. This is a serious omission because it means that unpaid work, despite its important contribution to economic development, is not reflected in the economic statistics used for policy making – namely the national accounts and the official labour market statistics.

## GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT

The role of women in the economy was identified in the BPfA as one of the critical areas of concern and six strategic objectives (see box) identified on “women and the economy” as areas for action at national level to bring about the empowerment of women and girls and gender equality in the world of work. These actions include facilitation of equal access to employment and the harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men. In addition to the BPfA, Caribbean states committed to the ILO Decent Work Agenda<sup>21</sup> (ILO, 2013), which is defined as not just the creation of jobs, but also the creation of jobs of acceptable quality. It made clear that the level of employment (quantity) cannot be divorced from its quality, including the different forms of work and different conditions of work, as well as feelings of value and satisfaction.

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- F.1. Promote women’s economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources
  - F. 2. Facilitate women’s equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.
  - F. 3 Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women.
  - F. 4 Strengthen women’s capacity and commercial networks.
  - F. 5 Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.
  - F. 6 Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men

The Decent Work Agenda *is based on an integrated and gender-mainstreamed approach consisting of four strategic objectives, which are: (i) Creating jobs; (ii) Guaranteeing rights at work; (iii) Extending social protection; and (iv) Promoting social dialogue.* These four integrated pillars are designed to support national actions: “to reduce poverty, encourage social inclusion and reinforce the rights-based approach to development by treating rights at work as Human Rights and also respect for international labour standards and national legislation. (ILO 2013:83)

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Department of Labour, Washington D.C., August 1999, pp. 3-6

<sup>20</sup> 2011, Jamaica National Policy for Gender Equality, Pages 77 – 78.

<sup>21</sup> CARICOM Member States signalled their commitment to the Decent Work Agenda during various Meetings of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) in the period 2000-2011.



Available information<sup>22</sup> on labour force participation rates in the Caribbean, reveal a very uneven playing field with respect to women's status and gender equality, showing that there are more males in the employed labour force than females, despite the fact that in most countries females comprise over fifty percent of the population. One of the challenges associated with analysis of the labour market in the Caribbean is the incomplete and often inconsistent collection of the data (World Bank 2005; ILO 2013).

During the past ten years there has been some narrowing of the gender gap in the labour force, as can be seen in table II, which has been attributed to a combination of factors, namely (i) an increased demand for female labour, which is cheaper; (ii) the pressure on women to seek paid employment in order to replace or complement the (falling) earnings of other household members, due to the 2008/2009 financial and economic crises; and (iii) the growing trend on the part of women to seek paid employment because of their increasing levels of education, decreasing fertility rates and changing aspirations. (UNRISD, 2012).

This is an interesting development when juxtaposed against the fact that unemployment rates for both males and females declined during the post-crisis period, however the data shows that while the male participation rate declined slightly in Guyana and Jamaica, the female participation increased marginally for females. The Bahamas, Barbados, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines all recorded high levels of females in the labour force.

The majority of women in the region continue to be positioned in the lowest sectors of the labour market, earn lower wages than men, experience greater levels of unemployment and poverty, are under-represented in decision-making positions at the meso and macro-levels of social and political institutions and lack real personal autonomy (Bailey 2001:24). The gender dynamics in employment is revealed in types of work that women do, as well as the conditions under which they work and their access to opportunities for advancement, which differ from men (The World's Women 2010).

**TABLE II**  
**LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION 2009 - 2011<sup>23</sup>**

Country	Total Labour Force			Labour Force (Female) (% of the Labour Force)			Participation rate 15 and older (%)					
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	Male			Female		
							2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
The Bahamas	202,249	207,327	211,650	48.3	48.3	48.3	79.3	79.4	79.3	69.2	69.3	69.3
Barbados	158,286	159,494	160,420	46.5	46.4	46.4	76.3	76.3	76.2	64.8	64.8	64.8
Belize	124,131	128,871	133,565	37.0	37.3	37.5	81.6	81.8	81.8	47.4	48.0	48.3
Guyana	293,237	295,504	299,189	34.4	34.8	35.1	80.1	79.6	79.1	40.8	41.3	41.8
Jamaica	1,228,523	1,222,906	1,233,691	45.0	45.1	45.1	73.1	72.0	71.8	56.7	56.0	56.0
Saint Lucia	90,741	93,083	95,095	46.7	46.7	46.7	76.7	77.0	77.3	63.5	63.9	64.2
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	53,436	53,907	54,219	40.8	41.0	41.1	78.4	78.5	78.4	55.2	55.5	55.7
Suriname	199,891	203,422	207,142	36.8	37.1	37.3	68.5	68.7	68.7	39.7	40.1	40.5
Trinidad and Tobago	686,124	692,788	698,723	42.1	42.2	42.2	77.7	78.0	78.3	54.3	54.6	54.9

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat. Small States: Economic Review and Basic Statistics. Vol.17

<sup>22</sup> Barbados Statistical Service.

<sup>23</sup> Data was not available for Antigua and Barbuda; Dominica; Grenada or Saint Kits and Nevis.

The gender divide in employment persists because women lack access to decent work and face occupational segregation, defined as the separation of women and men into different occupations, and gender wage gaps. Caribbean women are found mostly in the services sector as shown in table III. The data in table III shows a very high concentration of women in the services sector in the nine countries for which data was available. This data is also consistent with that found in the preliminary findings of a Global Report on Women in Tourism<sup>24</sup> where women were found to be “concentrated in low status, low paid and precarious jobs in the tourism industry. The Caribbean, where most of the economies are tourism based, not surprisingly, had one of the highest proportions of women in the tourism industry, who were found to be concentrated in the service (42.9 percent), and clerical areas (67.3 percent).

**TABLE III**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED LABOUR FORCE BY INDUSTRY GROUPS BY SEX, 2000**

Country <sup>25</sup>	Male			Female		
	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Agriculture	Industry	Services
The Bahamas	8	22	69	1	6	93
Barbados	5	31	64	3	11	85
Belize	37	19	44	6	12	82
Dominica	31	24	40	14	10	72
Grenada	17	32	46	10	12	77
Jamaica	29	25	45	10	8	82
Saint Lucia	28	24	49	15	14	71
Suriname	7	29	58	3	6	89
Trinidad and Tobago	13	34	53	4	13	83

Source: The CARICOM Secretariat

The earnings of females were reported to be between 10 to 15 percent less than their male colleagues. *Gender stereotyping and discrimination mean that women mainly tend to perform jobs, such as cooking, cleaning, and hospitality. Much tourism employment is seasonal and fluctuates according to the volatile nature of the industry*” (UN WOMEN/WTO 2010:i). This study also found that females in the Caribbean contributed a significant amount (84 percent) of unpaid work to family owned tourism businesses, compared to (51 percent) in other sectors.

Notwithstanding their overall higher levels of participation and performance at the secondary and tertiary levels of Caribbean education systems, many Caribbean women are either underemployed or unemployed. This situation is linked to almost all employment sectors, for example data on the level of education of women employed in the tourism sector suggests that many were graduates (50.3 percent) or had completed tertiary level education (66.2 percent). (UN WOMEN/WTO 2010)

Available labour market information for Caribbean countries that periodically collect such data<sup>26</sup> show repeatedly that unemployment among women is always higher than that among men and for the most part, women not only earn less than men, but tend to work longer hours. The rate of unemployment amongst Caribbean women, have for decades been higher than that of males, and this trend has not changed substantially during the last twenty years, even though the participation rates of females have increased. Given the high rates of female headed households in the Caribbean, *and therefore, extensive reliance on women on paid work to support children*, this finding is a cause for concern. *Women’s difficulty in securing paid work makes them dependent on men, the state, and kin to help make ends meet.* (Seguino 2003:1).

The high levels of unemployment amongst females have implications for poverty and improvements in the social situation of women and their families. For example, a review of the 2007/2008

<sup>24</sup> UN WOMEN and the World Tourism Organization (2010) Global Report on Women in Tourism.

<sup>25</sup> Data was not available for Antigua and Barbuda; Guyana; Montserrat; Saint Kitts and Nevis or Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

<sup>26</sup> Caribbean countries such as Barbados, Jamaica and Saint Lucia produce periodic Labour Force Information

Country Poverty Assessment<sup>27</sup> reports that the national unemployment rate was 49.6 percent of all poor females, in comparison to 25.3 percent for all poor males. Further, while the national unemployment rate was 24.9 percent, the unemployment rate among the poor was 34.9 percent. Data for Saint Lucia<sup>28</sup> indicated that 66.1 percent of all household heads were active in the labour force, of which 75.8 percent were males and 53.6 percent were females. Of the 53.6 percent females in the labour force, 39.4 percent were from amongst the poor. Amongst the unemployed 24.2 percent were males and 46.4 percent were females.

The changing economic conditions in the Caribbean brought about by the financial and economic crises of 2008/2009 has been linked to the increased rates of unemployment amongst both women and men, particularly in those economies that are services based. These trends are verified by the International Labour Organization (ILO)<sup>29</sup>, which attributed the lacklustre economic situation in the Caribbean to the post financial crisis situation. The crisis was credited with having a significant negative impact on the labour market in the Caribbean, where both women and men suffered job losses. However, as stated above, given women's responsibility for the survival of families, especially in circumstances where they are the sole heads of households, their participation in the labour force is critical to family income.

Another strategy used by women to enhance their economic situation is migration. According to the ILO (2006), the Caribbean subregion had the highest migration rates in the world, and women represent a significant share of all migrants from the Caribbean that go to the United States. "*The Caribbean has lost more than 50 percent of its labour force with tertiary level education and more than 30 percent of those with secondary education*".(ILO 2006:10). Seguino (2003) links the higher out-migration of women to the relative higher unemployment rates, and the difficulties experienced by women in securing paid employment.

The Caribbean subregion continues to be challenged by the problems of inequalities across class and gender and women continue to experience the highest incidence of unemployment and poverty. (CDB 2010:47). This is because they often lack the technical skills required to respond to labour market demands. The unequal gender division of unpaid household work "*has displayed a remarkable resilience and continues to shape the terms on which women are able to take up paid work*". It also serves to limit the *transformative potential of employment* for enhancing and improving the situation and status of women in the private sphere of the home, as well as the public sphere in the wider society. (Ibid)

## GENDER AND POVERTY IN THE CARIBBEAN

The United Nations 2010 World Women's Report, (DESA 2010:xi) indicates that women continue to be over represented in the poor, female-headed households, which average 40% of households in the Caribbean (Barriteau 2003:46). They are also over represented amongst poor elderly persons, are less likely to have cash income and have little power over their personal incomes in marital unions. Data from various country poverty assessments undertaken by the Caribbean Development Bank<sup>30</sup> indicate that women carry the burden of care in many poor households. For Caribbean women, being poor therefore means having to take care of a number of dependents both young and old, or not being able to work because of family obligations and lack of alternative care options. It also means working at the lower levels of the service industry where wages are low and often inadequate for supporting a family.

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<sup>27</sup> Caribbean Development Bank

<sup>28</sup> Trade Adjustment and Poverty in Saint Lucia 2005/2006. Final Report June 2007 Caribbean Development Bank

<sup>29</sup> International Labour Office. 2013 Labour Overview: Latin America and the Caribbean. ILO Regional Office for LAC

<sup>30</sup> Poverty data for most Caribbean countries have been collected through the conduct of country poverty assessments (CPAs) by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

The World Bank in its Gender Action Plan for the Fiscal years 2007 -2010 describes the economic empowerment of women as “smart economics”, in recognition of the finding that the increased participation of women in the labour force and the associated earnings are linked with a reduction in poverty and faster economic growth. Not only do women benefit from their economic empowerment, but also men, children and the society as a whole. According to the World Bank (2006), the lack of women’s empowerment, not only endangers economic growth and poverty reduction, but also creates a number of other negative impacts “including less favourable education and health outcomes for children”. (World Bank 2006:2)

The available evidence (CDB 2010: 46-47), shows that poverty in the region is an extremely complex phenomenon, with urban as well as rural pockets of poverty in existence, and high rates of poverty amongst employed persons. Inequalities of income and wealth (vertical inequalities), are likely to conceal significant differences amongst social groups, and tends to mask gender inequality. Ultimately, the general consensus is that on the one hand gender inequality exacerbates poverty but on the other hand poverty causes the gap between men and women to widen as well.

One of the contributory factors to poverty is the pervasiveness of the impact of the 2008/2009 financial crisis, which led to widespread unemployment, escalating food prices and declining economic growth. It has been argued (ECLAC 2009:8) that little attention has been paid to the social impact of the financial crisis and the ability of households and individuals to effectively cope with the dislocation brought about by increased transaction costs in the market. These include increased costs for goods, services and food.

**TABLE IV**  
**SOCIAL AND PERSONAL IMPACTS OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS**

Social Impacts	Stagnation or erosion of development indicators
	Decreased well-being and social security
	Increased marginalization of vulnerable groups
	Increased poverty
Personal Impacts	Loss of employment
	Decreased income
	Increased insecurity
	Decreased coping strategies

Source: Impact of the financial Crisis on women in the Caribbean LC/CAR/L.243 Page 9

Table IV illustrates selected social and personal impacts of the crisis, which contributed to a slow down, and in some instances a reversal of some of the social and economic gains in the fight against poverty (UN 2009 MDG Report). These trends also pointed to challenges in progress towards the eradication of poverty and the attainment of gender equality. The loss of employment resulted in higher levels of employment in the informal sector (acting as a cushion for unemployment in the formal sector).

There are some characteristic features of poverty in the Caribbean, revealing considerable variation and unevenness among the countries. For example, overall poverty levels are relatively high, with significant pockets also existing in countries with relatively low levels of poverty; and poverty is more prevalent in rural than in urban areas, but urban poverty is taking on greater significance in several countries (CDB, 2010:47). The Caribbean Development Bank (2010:50 & 53), reports that children in the age group 0-15 years living in poor households were more vulnerable to a number of risk factors, including poor nutrition, limited parental care- often because of migration - and absentee parents, and low educational attendance. As a result, these children do not receive sufficient parental supervision, stimulation or nurturing. *These impediments can have a lasting negative impact on children’s lifetime opportunities, making it impossible for them to break the poverty cycle.* The intergeneration cycle of poverty in the Caribbean is found mostly among women, particularly women in single headed households, which tend to be poorer (Ibid:49).

The CDB (2010:50) also reports that a growing number of males are considered vulnerable to living in poverty because of high school drop-out rates, low educational attainment and increasing levels of alcoholism and drug abuse. Further, males lack male role models because of absentee fathers, and experience high levels of unemployment rates. Given the persistent high unemployment rates throughout the subregion, youth without skills, especially early school-leavers, have very few opportunities for finding employment in the formal labour force. As a result, the majority of employed poor work in the informal sector, particularly in rural areas, where employment is irregular and social insurance is almost non-existent.

Poor women are also more likely to be vulnerable to gender based violence. For many poor young women it means the possibility of pregnancy. “Many teenage females become pregnant, with little or no resources to care for themselves or their infants.” Poverty may also mean facing increased vulnerability and risks of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV, because of weak bargaining position or power within intimate relationships, and having to cope with myriad lifestyle diseases (CDB 2010:49).

### **GENDER AND HEALTH ISSUES IN THE CARIBBEAN**

The BPfA states that women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The enjoyment of this right is considered essential to their life and well-being and to their ability to participate in all area of public and private life (UN 2001: para. 89). The World Health Organization (WHO, 1948) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Although women and men experience many of the same health issues, they are also known to have different health experiences during their life courses (DESA 2010:19). “*Gender norms and values, together with socio-economic status and the behavioural choices of women and men can also give rise to gender inequalities in health and access to health care*” (Ibid).

Much of the attention on women’s health in the Caribbean has focussed primarily on maternal and child health, as well as sexual and reproductive health (SRH)<sup>viii</sup>. While pregnancy and childbirth are not diseases, they are biological and social processes that embody potential health risks and therefore require health care (WHO, 2009:xii). These are conditions that only women and girls experience, therefore they are the ones who suffer from the potentially negative impacts. One of the leading causes of death among females is related to complications of pregnancy and childbirth. During the reproductive or fertile years,<sup>31</sup> the health of women impacts the health and development of the next generation.

The recent progress report<sup>32</sup> on Caribbean implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action shows that all countries in the subregion have increased women’s access to sexual and reproductive health services including information, counselling, educational and awareness programmes. National policies on SRH, which provide the legal framework, norms and protocols for the delivery of services have been developed by some countries. However challenges remain in the delivery of services in rural areas, to women living in poverty, and to adolescents. Other factors which prevent women and adolescent girls from accessing services include economic and religious reasons, lack of information, legal barriers and social and cultural norms.

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<sup>31</sup> Women are most fertile between the ages of 15 and 49, however women can become pregnant at either end of the age spectrum, with some young girls becoming pregnant as early as age 10/11 and some women at age 60-62.

<sup>32</sup> ECLAC (2013b). Implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action in the Caribbean: Evaluating Progress and Renewing Commitment.

## TRENDS IN FERTILITY

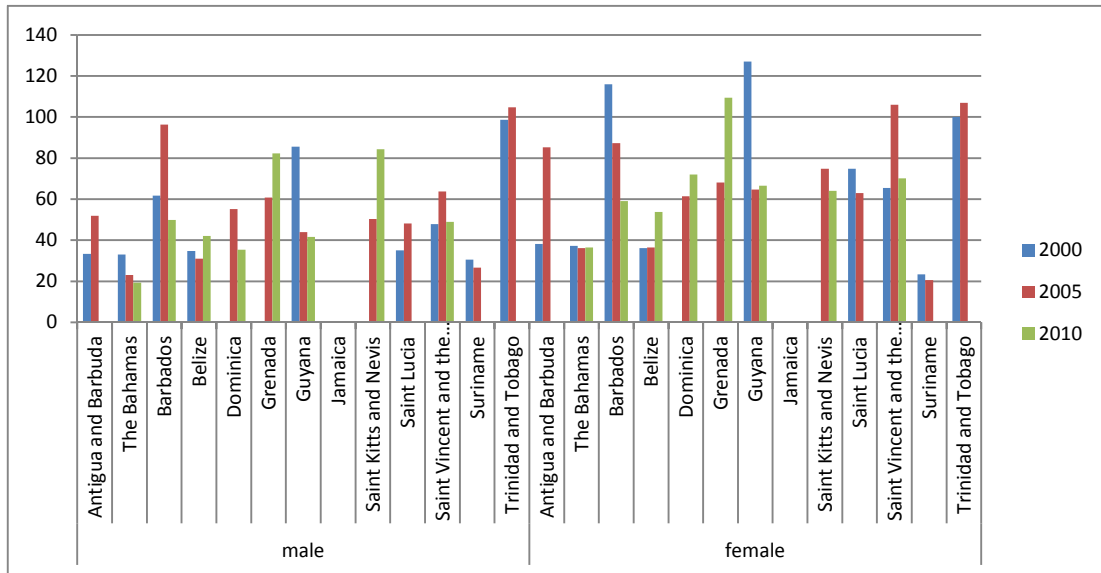
The Caribbean progress report records a considerable reduction in fertility, which has taken place more quickly than was expected. Total fertility is now below replacement level in more than half of all Caribbean countries, although at 2.36 children per woman, the average for the Caribbean as a whole remains slightly above replacement level. Reasons for this fall in fertility include higher levels of educational attainment, greater labour market participation, the general empowerment of women, and crucially, increased availability of family planning services and access to contraception.

The adolescent fertility rate has also been steadily declining in recent years. This reduction in teenage pregnancy was attributed to a combination of factors, including postponed births, contraceptive use, migration and the pursuit of a professional career by young women.

In addition to reproduction, females are especially vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV which is based on a combination of biological and social factors, as well as, gender based inequalities, (WHO 2009:45) particularly in situations where women are unable to negotiate for safer sex, because they are financially or otherwise dependant on their male partners.

Among the objectives of Caribbean countries is the prevention, reduction in the incidence of, and provision of treatment for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, with special attention to girls and women; and the provision of psychological and emotional support and counseling as part sexual health services. On the positive side, the Caribbean recorded the sharpest decline in the number of people acquiring HIV infection. Approximately 13,000 adults and children were recorded as newly infected with HIV during 2011. This represents 9,000 averted new infections when compared with 2001, when 22,000 new infections were recorded. New HIV infections among the adult population (15-49 years old) have been reduced by a half in a number of Caribbean countries.

**TABLE V**  
**ESTIMATED MORTALITY RATE FROM DIABETES MELLITUS (PER 1, 000 000 POPULATION)**



Source: Regional Core Health Indicator Initiative. Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). <http://www.paho.org>

Outside of reproductive health issues, women and men do experience a number of common health challenges, many of which can be considered emerging health and population issues. Among these issues are the demographic transition leading to ageing populations, with increasing demand for health services and the growing epidemic of non-communicable diseases<sup>ix</sup> (NCDs), including heart and cardiovascular disease, obesity, hypertension, asthma, cancer and diabetes, which are escalating in the Caribbean subregion.

The Caribbean epidemic of chronic NCDs is considered one of the worst in the Americas region and is one of the leading causes of premature loss of life, lost productivity and increasing health care costs (CARICOM/PAHO/WHO 2011:12), because morbidity and mortality rates from non-communicable diseases are extremely high in the Caribbean, and as seen in table V, women are the major casualties of NCDs such as diabetes mellitus.

Obesity<sup>33</sup> and other NCDs are associated with a number of risk factors, including unbalanced or unhealthy diets, including the harmful use of alcohol, and increasing sedentary lifestyles, amongst both the young and old population groups. Individuals who are obese are at increased risk for a myriad of other diseases and health problems, such as diabetes and hypertension. Barbados for example ranks amongst one of the highest mortality rates from diabetes, and is viewed as the amputation capital of the Caribbean because of the high rates of diabetic foot syndrome, including lower-extremity amputation (Hambleton et al, 2009).

According to the World's Women Report (2010:30), the rapidly growing diabetes epidemic also means that pre-gestational and gestational diabetes contributes substantially to "high-risk" pregnancies. Studies undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO),<sup>34</sup> show that a high percentage of Caribbean women are overweight or obese and may be more prone to suffer from chronic NCDs, many of which are related to lifestyle choices. Those suffering from these diseases often suffer high levels of morbidity, including disability and reduced quality of life and are more vulnerable to early death.

Among the other emerging health issues is the general improvement in life expectancy in favour of females who generally live at least eight to ten years longer than males. The populations of all Caribbean countries are ageing which means that there will be an increasing number and proportion of older persons. Female longevity means that older women outnumber older men. The relative imbalance between the sexes becomes especially marked among older age groups, for example those aged over 80. Males and females age in different ways and prevalence rates for some types of illness and disability can vary between them. For example, males are more likely to suffer the onset of coronary artery disease earlier than females and lung cancer is also more common among men due to higher rates of smoking. Women on the other hand experience a higher incidence of diabetes and musculoskeletal problems, and related to this, suffer from higher rates of disabilities. Older women with disabilities potentially suffer three forms of discrimination: gender, age and disability (ECLAC 2013:31).

## **GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

The BPfA urged governments to formulate and implement, at all appropriate levels, plans of action to eliminate violence against women (VAW). This is one of the critical areas that generated much action in the Caribbean, for example, almost all states undertook legislative reforms and introduced a variety of legislation and public policies to protect victims, sanction perpetrators and criminalize various

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<sup>33</sup> A person is considered obese if his or her Body Mass Index (BMI) defined as a person's weight in Kilograms divided by height in meters squared, exceeds 30 ( for an adult aged 18 years and older).

<sup>34</sup> WHO (World Health Organization) (2013), "Global health estimates summary tables: projection of deaths by cause, age and sex, by United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) region", July Geneva, Switzerland

acts of physical, psychological and sexual violence to protect both women and men<sup>35</sup> against gender based violence (GBV). Nonetheless, in all Caribbean states, physical and sexual violence against women continues to be an obstacle to women's full enjoyment of their human rights and remains a widespread threat to human and citizen security.

Gender based violence *takes many forms throughout the lifecycle* and includes *psychological, physical, sexual, and economic forms of violence*; intimate partner or spousal/domestic abuse (DV); trafficking for sex; forced prostitution; rape; sexual exploitation; sexual harassment; and discriminatory practices based on gender such as child marriages<sup>36</sup>. *GBV occurs in multiple settings, including at home, in school, at the workplace, and in public spaces.* (World Bank 2013:45). GBV is usually divided into two interlinked categories namely, interpersonal and structural/institutional violence. Interpersonal violence refers to an act of economic, sexual, psychological or other violence perpetrated by an individual against another individual. Structural/institutional violence refers to 'any form of structural inequality or institutional discrimination that maintains a woman in a subordinate position, whether physical or ideological, to other people within her family, household or community' (Manjoo 2011).<sup>37</sup>

GBV and its impacts on the wider community have received a great deal of attention during the last three decades, particularly its impact on women, girls and more recently boys and more fundamentally the social and economic development costs to Caribbean societies. For example, violence against women (VAW) is considered a serious public health issue, which leads to serious injury, disability or death (WHO 2009:55). The problems associated with violence against women have been identified as one of the major obstacles to the full realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and more fundamentally to human development. The agreed conclusions of the recently concluded United Nations fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) stresses, that in order to address the structural and underlying causes of violence against women and girls, that it is necessary to ensure women's economic empowerment and their full and equal access to resources, including their integration into the formal economy.

Gender based violence remains a fundamental violation of the basic human rights of women and girls as enshrined in many international agreements to which Caribbean States are signatories<sup>38</sup>. It has been identified as *a form of discrimination that seriously violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women and girls of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.* Among the conditions which deem women and girls more vulnerable to violence, are the entrenched cultural norms and gender stereotypes that view women as subordinate to men, as well as the ***"use and abuse of power and control in public and private spheres that underlie and perpetuate such violence"***. (Agreed Conclusions: 2013 CSW).

The availability of statistics on GBV is one method of measuring the extent of the problem, and in recent years more efforts have been mobilized at the global, regional and national levels to collect reliable and timely data on GBV. Available Caribbean data indicate that the region has one of the highest incidences of sexual violence globally, when calculated at the rate per population (100,000) as seen in table VI. According to the 2012 Caribbean Human Development Report (CHDR), *"while women are less likely than men to be victims of crimes generally, their vulnerability to sexual assault and domestic violence is dramatically higher than men's, and sexual offences is a category of crime that reflects their differential risk"*<sup>39</sup>. However, the extent to which men and boys are affected by GBV is not well known

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<sup>35</sup> Most of the legislation on domestic violence are gender neutral which allow for protection of women, men and children against GBV

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix II

<sup>37</sup> [Manjoo, R., 2011, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences', Human Rights Council, Seventeenth session, 2 May 2011](#)

<sup>38</sup> Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belem do Para), and the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on Human Rights

<sup>39</sup> Caribbean Human Development Report 2012. Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security. UNDP



in the Caribbean because of the unavailability of timely and reliable data, although there are some recent studies (Le Franc et al 2008; and Halcon et al. 2003), which are beginning to shed more light on this issue.

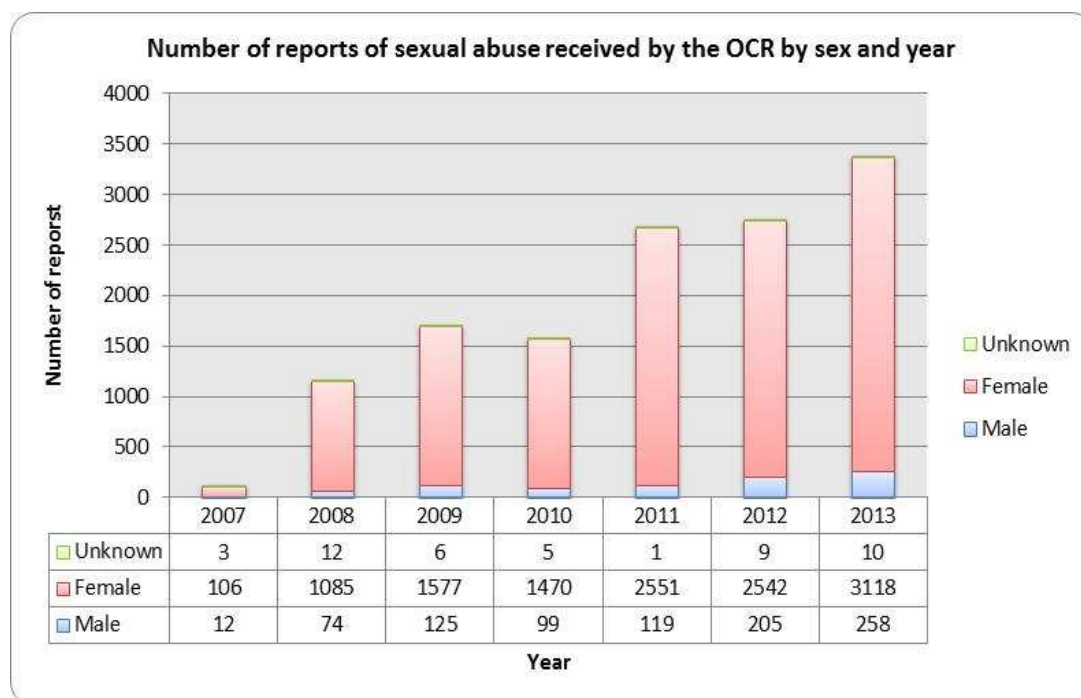
In terms of sexual and reproductive health, assessments from recent reports such as the fifteen year review of the Cairo Programme of Action, found that although fertility rates were declining, Caribbean female teenagers still experienced high levels of early pregnancy and sexual abuse. Prevalence rates for HIV were also very high amongst young females, who are often victims of sexual abuse. The BPfA recognized that social and cultural factors were responsible for increasing the vulnerability of females to HIV (DESA 2010:viii).

The diverse economic repercussions of GBV in the Caribbean are not well recognized because these issues are not widely investigated, but violence against women have been shown to carry significant economic and social costs, burdening not only the victims, but also employers, health care, judicial system, and other response agencies. For example, “*women exposed to partner violence have higher work absenteeism, lower productivity, and lower earnings than similar women who are not* because they suffer immense physical and/or psychological injuries. *Notably, even male perpetrators of partner violence also experience higher work absenteeism following a violent incident.* (World Bank, 2013:45). The health consequences of GBV includes, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, HIV infection and psychological trauma – something that is not given much attention in the Caribbean. It is a well documented fact that childhood sexual abuse often leads to risky sexual behaviour later in life<sup>x</sup> (Handwerker P. 1993).

In a study undertaken by Theodore et al (2008:1) it was found that the cost of sexual abuse and domestic violence (SADV) in Trinidad and Tobago in 2005 was estimated at TT\$487.7 million or 0.51 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Although the direct costs of SADV on productivity amount to approximately 0.03% of GDP compared to a corresponding 0.22% impact on pain, suffering and premature mortality, the overall implications for productivity, human potential and sustainable growth and development were found to be erosive in nature, thereby confirming the view that GDP is lost annually in many countries due to the social costs associated with violence against women.

The subregion has also been confronted with increasing rates of sexual violence and coercion against males, particularly young boys. One study on “Interpersonal violence in three Caribbean countries: Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago”, found that 40-54% of male respondents aged 19-30 reported experiencing sexual abuse at some point in their life (Le Franc, E. et al. (2008).

## REPORTED CASES OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN JAMAICA 2007 - 2013



Source: office of the Children’s Registry (OCR), Jamaica (*Preliminary data for 2013*).

In another study on “Adolescent health in the Caribbean: A regional portrait”, it was found that nearly 10% of adolescent males reported sexual abuse (defined as “when someone in your family or someone else touches you in a place you did not want to be touched, or does something sexually which they shouldn’t have done to you, or forces you to touch them sexually or have sex with them”). Almost one third of sexually active male adolescents reported that their first sexual experience was “forced” or “somewhat forced” (compared with 48% of sexually active females). (Halcón, L. et al. (2003)

The situation of young girls is especially worrying. For example, the office of the Children’s Registry in Jamaica indicated that in 2012 a total of 25,000 reported cases of child abuse had been received by that agency during the past four years, of which fifty-eight percent, 6 in every 10, involved girls. Table VII shows reports for sexual abuse of children by sex and year and confirms the findings of Le Franc, et al (2008) that an increasing number of males in the Caribbean are being subjected to sexual and other forms of abuse. Reports for males were only 12 in 2007, while preliminary figures for 2013 record a massive increase over the six year period to 258 cases. As is often the case, the increase in reporting represents only the tip of the iceberg, because there is also a culture of silence which leads to significant under reporting of cases of GBV.

Approaches to address GBV in the Caribbean have included justice-based approaches, health-based approaches and awareness building and sensitization programmes aimed at changing social norms and behaviours of both women and men. Although legislation on domestic violence and sexual offences exists in many countries, it is often limited in scope and coverage. One such limitation is with respect to the definition of rape as use of force rather than lack of consent. This is true of the CARICOM model legislation, which was developed to assist member states in meeting their international and regional commitments. While aspects of the model legislation remain relevant in terms of their substantive content, given the new and emerging issues, it is important that they be reviewed and revised.

In addition to the legislative reforms, it is also important to implement programmes and policies to address the real threat to the security and safety of women and girls and to the attainment of human rights and justice. It is therefore urgent for the Caribbean to adopt new approaches and strategies for prevention and response to GBV to provide the necessary protection and safety for women. A multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral approach is needed involving a wide cross section of stakeholders and interest groups to work towards implementation of the necessary solutions as *a matter of basic human justice and equality*. Gender inequality and existing cultural norms that encourage GBV need to be addressed in interventions aimed at eliminating this problem. There is need for more aggressive handling of sexual violence in a variety of public settings including the police; health care, and judicial system where cases are not dealt with in a timely manner

*It is very important ... for women's political participation at all levels and representation in public administrations to be strengthened so that they can have a strong voice in the setting of development policies and priorities."*

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, opening

## **GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS**

Women participate in the decision making processes through their positions of leadership in public, private and non-government organizations. In this regard, there are indicators which record some improvement in the number of women in decision making positions. However, there is still need for greater enhancement of female participation to ensure gender parity in the decision making processes. The journey to increase women's leadership and participation in decision making both in public life and in Parliament in the Caribbean has been one fraught with challenges at the individual, community, institutional and national levels.

The BPfA recognized that gender equality in any society must be premised upon the ability of both men and women to participate fully and equitably in the political and decision-making processes, to ensure transparency and accountability in governance. It reasoned that achieving balance in this area would accurately reflect the composition of society, strengthen democracy and leverage the integration of the gender dimension in government policy-making to ensure that the interests of women were well represented. It therefore called for the implementation of *measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making*. (Strategic Objective G.1).

One of the actions recommended by the BPfA was for governments to establish a target reserving 30 percent of seats in parliament for women. The proposed critical mass of 30 percent females in elected politics was viewed as the "critical minority" required for "women as a group to exert a meaningful influence in legislative assemblies", and as a first step towards the attainment of gender equality in political participation. This target could be implemented through either legal or voluntary gender quotas. The Platform also recognised that the political empowerment of women, and the commitment to promoting gender equality in political representation of both women and men at the national level was critical to national progress",<sup>40</sup> and to sustainable development. However, it is understood that gender equality and empowerment could only be attained through 50 percent<sup>41</sup> representation by women in political participation.

<sup>40</sup> Statement by Diane Quarless, Deputy Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations 2000

<sup>41</sup> The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) recommended targets for increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions as follows: 30% by 1995 and 50% by 2000 which was adopted by the BPfA Strategic objective G.1

While women are often the backbone of campaign organization within political parties (Dunn 2008:14), their success in accessing leadership positions within party organizations have been limited because of “*sharp sexual division of labour in many political parties*”. Although much advocacy has taken place to get support for the introduction of quotas as a temporary special measure to accelerate women’s participation in politics, Guyana is the only country in the Caribbean to pass legislation,<sup>42</sup> namely, Section 11(B:5) of the Guyana *Representation of the People Act Cap.1:03*, which provides for quotas in political representation. At least one third of the candidates selected by political parties contesting national and regional elections in Guyana must be women. The government of Suriname through the Ministry of Home Affairs has taken steps to host a series of national policy dialogues aimed at raising public awareness around the issues of the introduction of a quota system in that country<sup>43</sup>.

Training and sensitization programmes aimed at increasing female participation in elections as well as their access to resources, have been implemented in a number of countries by a mix of governments, international agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). One project on “democratic governance and popular participation” was implemented in 2003–2004 by the umbrella NGO, the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), with financial support from UNIFEM Caribbean Office.<sup>44</sup> This project targeted women who were already involved in politics and leadership positions, as well as directors of national gender bureaux, and focussed on two aspects of skills training, namely gender sensitive policy making and political campaigning<sup>45</sup>.

Additional training and support continues to be provided for females under the auspices of the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWIL), which was launched in 2009 as a networking institute, producing research, providing training and advocating for greater involvement of women in politics, leadership and decision making at all levels in the Caribbean. This initiative represent action on one of the BPfA objectives, namely for increasing women’s ability to participate in decision-making through training on leadership, public speaking and political campaigning.

The CEDAW Committee in recognition of the low participation of women in political and public life have recommended in its “concluding observations” to a number of Caribbean States, including, Saint Lucia,<sup>46</sup> Grenada,<sup>47</sup> Jamaica,<sup>48</sup> and the Bahamas<sup>49</sup> that they consider the adoption of temporary special measures, including quotas that guarantee women’s equal representation in parliament and government “*to increase the number of women in political and public life, and in decision-making positions*”.

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<sup>42</sup> Section 11(B:5) of the Guyana *Representation of the People Act Cap.1:03*, each political party is required to ensure that “*the total number of females on each party’s national top up list shall be at least one-third of the total number of persons on that list*”. If the list does not comply with the quota, the election Commission has a mandate to request that the party rectify it. Only when it is deemed correct by the commission, can the list be approved.

<sup>43</sup> In February 2010, ECLAC facilitated a workshop on the Quota System on behalf of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the National Women’s Machinery. This was also reported by the Inter Parliamentary Union in Women in Parliament in 2010: the year in perspective, page 6.

<sup>44</sup> Support was also received from the Canada Caribbean Gender Equality Programme, Barbados Office and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Jamaica Officer

<sup>45</sup> Catalysts for Change: Caribbean Women and Governance. [http://cfcportal.net/artman/publish/article\\_53.shtml](http://cfcportal.net/artman/publish/article_53.shtml)

<sup>46</sup> CEDAW/C/LCA/CO/6. CEDAW Thirty-fifth Session, 15 May - 2 June 2006. Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

<sup>47</sup> CEDAW/C/GRD/CO/1-5. CEDAW Fifty-first Session, 13 February – 2 March 2012. Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

<sup>48</sup> CEDAW/C/JAM/CO/6-7. CEDAW Fifty-second Session, 9– 27 July 2012. Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

<sup>49</sup> CEDAW/C/BHS/CO/1-5. CEDAW Fifty-second Session, 9– 27 July 2012. Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

**TABLE VII**  
**PROPORTION OF SEATS HELD BY WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS (LOWER OR SINGLE HOUSE)- %**

Country	Year								
	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Antigua and Barbuda	5.3 <sup>1994</sup>	---	10.5 <sup>2004</sup>	10.5 <sup>2009</sup>	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
The Bahamas	8.2 <sup>1992</sup>	15.0 <sup>1997</sup>	20.0 <sup>2002</sup>	12.2 <sup>2007</sup>	12.2	12.2	13.2	13.2	13.2
Barbados	10.4 <sup>1994</sup>	10.7 <sup>1999</sup>	13.3 <sup>2003</sup>	10.0 <sup>2008</sup>	10.0	10.0	10.0	16.7	15.9
Belize	3.4 <sup>1993</sup>	6.9 <sup>1998</sup>	3.3 <sup>2003</sup>	0.0 <sup>2008</sup>	0.0	0.0	3.1	3.1	3.1
Dominica	---	9.4 <sup>1995</sup>	18.8 <sup>2000</sup>	14.3 <sup>2009</sup>	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.9
Grenada	---	20.0 <sup>1995</sup>	26.7 <sup>2003</sup>	13.3 <sup>2008</sup>	13.3	13.3	13.3	33.3	33.3
Guyana	20.0 <sup>1992</sup>	18.5 <sup>1997</sup>	20.0 <sup>2001</sup>	30.0 <sup>2006</sup>	30.0	31.3	31.3	31.3	31.3
Jamaica	11.7 <sup>1993</sup>	13.3 <sup>1997</sup>	11.7 <sup>2002</sup>	13.3 <sup>2007</sup>	13.3	12.7	12.7	12.7	12.7
Saint Kitts and Nevis	---	13.3 <sup>1995</sup>	13.3 <sup>2000</sup>	6.7 <sup>2009</sup>	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7
Saint Lucia	0.0 <sup>1992</sup>	11.8 <sup>1997</sup>	11.1 <sup>2001</sup>	11.1 <sup>2006</sup>	11.1	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	9.5 <sup>1994</sup>	4.8 <sup>1998</sup>	22.7 <sup>2001</sup>	21.7 <sup>2005</sup>	14.3	17.4	17.4	13.0	13.0
Suriname	---	15.7 <sup>1996</sup>	17.6 <sup>2000</sup>	25.5 <sup>2005</sup>	9.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8
Trinidad and Tobago	---	11.1 <sup>1995</sup>	11.1 <sup>2000</sup>	26.8 <sup>2007</sup>	28.6	28.6	28.6	28.6	19.4

Source: Inter- Parliamentary Union Website- <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>

The governments of Grenada and Jamaica were further requested to (a) remove discriminatory practices and address cultural barriers that prevent women from moving into decision-making and management positions, and ensure proportionate representation of women and men in principal positions; (b) encourage political parties to nominate higher numbers of women as candidates; and (c) create an enabling environment for the political participation of women, by educating young women leaders and strengthening women's wings of political parties. (CEDAW/C/GRD/CO/1-5 2012:7).

During the last two decades, there has been some improvement in women's participation in politics in the Caribbean, but these achievements have been sporadic with regressions recorded in a number of countries. In 2010, the average improved only for Trinidad and Tobago where the first female Prime Minister was elected. As seen in Table IX, the number of elected females rose from 26.9 percent in 2007 to 28.6 percent, however both Suriname and St. Vincent and the Grenadines registered declines in the number of female parliamentarians. Barbados which had a 13.3 percent average in 2003, recorded a decline in its female seats in 2008, which moved to 10.0 percent, but regained some ground in 2013 to an average of 16.7 percent. Belize stands out as the country that recorded the least progress where no female was elected in 2008 national elections.

In terms of cabinet positions, during the past two decades, Caribbean countries have witnessed progress in the participation of women at ministerial level, although these improvements have been uneven with advancements and regressions in many countries. Caribbean women hold an average of 15 percent of Ministerial portfolios. Ministerial portfolios of female parliamentarians, shows that women are slowly gaining access to the higher status portfolios such as Finance, Energy, Justice and Immigration, Transportation, Legal Affairs, Trade, Physical Development and the Environment, National Security, Economic Affairs, Labour, Local Government and Technology. However it is still common to find women clustered in "soft" portfolios such as Education, Consumer Affairs, Gender Affairs, Health, Sport and Youth, Culture, Community Development, Tourism.

During the past two decades the Caribbean has had a number of female Prime Ministers in the Commonwealth of Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. There is also more equal representation of women at lower levels of political decision-making, including local politics.

Generally speaking, there has been some improvement in women's participation in the political and decision making positions but in every instance where the data were available, they showed a much higher presence of women in the Upper House where they were nominated as opposed to the Lower House where they were elected. This disparity can be considered to be a positive development because it indicates a willingness on the part of governments to improve on the status of gender equality in the Parliament by appointments. Nevertheless, on the downside this indicates an unwillingness by political parties to put forward sufficient female candidates who could be elected. Despite the training and sensitization activities, there is still a long way to go because most governments and more fundamentally political parties at national level are reluctant to implement a quota system. As a result, the majority of Caribbean countries fall well below the proposed 30 percent benchmark, with female representation averaging 19 per cent across all parliaments in the Caribbean (upper and lower houses). Only Grenada and Guyana exceed the 30 per cent threshold as can be seen in Table IX.

In 2010, fifteen years post Beijing the Inter Parliamentary Union<sup>50</sup> (IPU), reported that there was a pattern of slow progress in the number of parliamentary seats held by women worldwide, where women held 19.1 percent of seats, which was up from an average of 13.1 percent in 2000 (IPU 2010:1). In 2013 however, there was a "dramatic" increase in the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women which stood at 21.8 percent, increasing an average of 1.5 percentage points from 2012, which according to IPU was double the average rate of annual increases recorded. It is important to note that this was viewed as an achievement for the Caribbean, where the highest electoral gain of the year 2013 was achieved in Grenada's lower house with a 20 point increase up to 33.3 percent<sup>51</sup> (IPU 2013:1).

According to UN WOMEN<sup>52</sup> the participation of women is crucial to democratic governance because "*women are often dynamic leaders of change, galvanising women and men to get involved, claim their rights, and strengthen their communities.* However, as the BPfA is on the cusp of turning twenty, women globally still have a long way to go towards the realization of equal representation in positions of power and leadership. The available data shows that, "*just over 21 per cent of parliamentarians are women, up from around 11 per cent when the Beijing Fourth World Conference on women took place in 1995.*"

The target of gender parity in political decision making will not be realized by 2015, as most Caribbean countries will not be having general elections before 2015, and women's representation in the Parliaments and Lower House of the region as reflected in the table above is an indication that that target will be missed.

## WOMEN AND THE JUDICIARY

The Beijing Platform considered the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels as one of the critical areas of concern for the empowerment of women. It stated "*Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved*".

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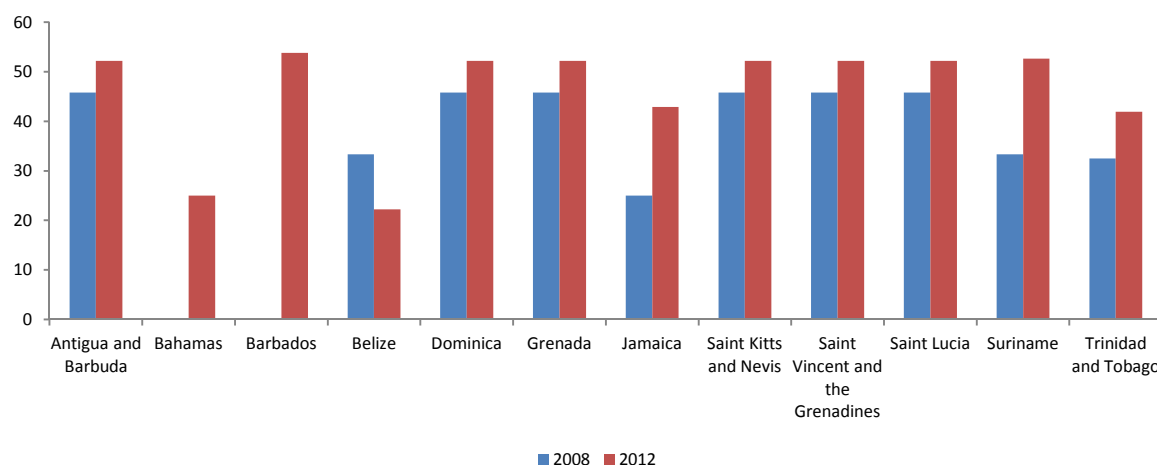
<sup>50</sup> Women in Parliament in 2010: the year in perspective. Inter Parliamentary Union

<sup>51</sup> Women in Parliament in 2013: the year in review. Inter Parliamentary Union

<sup>52</sup> The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20: Women in Power and Decision-Making. <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/in-focus/decision-making#facts>

The representation of women in the judiciary is viewed as critical for promoting greater equality, improving the status of women and ensuring a more gender-sensitive administration of justice. Within the last ten years, women’s participation in the highest courts of law has doubled. Although the judiciary remains a largely masculine domain, within the Caribbean, there has been some notable advancement in the number of female judges, most notably within the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, which serves the nine member States of the OECS, some 60 percent of judges in this court are women.

**TABLE VIII**  
**PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN JUDGES IN THE HIGHEST COURT OR SUPREME COURT IN THE CARIBBEAN**



Source: CEPALSTAT databases <http://interwp.cepal.org/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp?idIndicador=1704&idioma=i>

According to data from the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory<sup>53</sup> as shown in table X, gender parity has been reached and even exceeded in the Caribbean with percentages of women judges ranging from 30 percent to 60 percent in the highest court of law. The increase in women in the judiciary is linked to similar expansion across the executive and the legislature, as well as other decision-making spheres. (ECLAC, 2013).

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There is no doubt that there has been substantive progress in the advancement of women in the Caribbean subregion, and some limited success with “mainstreaming” gender equality concerns into development during the past two decades or more. As this review has revealed a number of assessments undertaken during the course of the past twenty years have pointed to the critical knowledge gaps regarding identification of programmes and policies that work with respect to gender mainstreaming. Despite two decades of gender mainstreaming many persistent constraints remain, to be addressed, including the seemingly entrenched conceptual confusion, inadequate understanding of the linkages between gender perspectives and other development work and gaps in capacity to address gender perspectives once identified.

<sup>53</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of official figures

While the Caribbean region sets an exemplary standard as signatories to international agreements and the passage of legislation, much more needs to be done to address gender inequality issues in the region. In order for policies and legislation to more effectively contribute to the achievement of gender justice and the removal of inequalities, they must be translated into government directives, budgetary allocations and the requisite institutional arrangements. (UNRISD, 2005:181).

As summarised by UN-Women “gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth. As a defining framework for change, the Platform remains a powerful source of guidance and inspiration, from which could be envisioned a world where each woman and girl child can exercise her choices and freedoms, and realize all her rights, including living a life free from violence, to go to school, to participate in decisions at all levels and to earn equal pay for equal work<sup>54</sup>.

Given the multidimensional nature of inequalities, it is evident that the Caribbean region must invest in gender equality programmes in order to maintain these gains, as they could be easily reversed. The realization of gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but is also a means of achieving the other development goals, since enhanced development could only be achieved and sustained when men and women share equally in every area of national endeavour.

Gender mainstreaming has not really delivered and certainly has not resulted in the development of an “enabling environment” for the implementation of gender equality goals in the Caribbean. One of the underlying factors in the inability and failure of gender mainstreaming as a strategy to effectively influence policy across all sectors in the Caribbean is because it stubbornly remains the responsibility of gender specialists. The reality is that gender issues need to capture the attention of high profile ministers, such as Ministers of Finance, to receive adequate priority in policy making.

As identified by Rowley (2003:3), three factors are required to facilitate the integration of gender perspectives throughout state machinery. These are the inherent authority of the national Machinery itself, with responsibility for implementation of the gender equity mandate; overriding political will as evidenced by Ministerial support and an enforceable policy environment; and thirdly, the implementation tentacles and distributive authority/influence of gender focal points throughout the state machinery. (Rowley 2003:3)

A major challenge for many countries however, remains the acquisition of a genuine commitment of all stakeholders to upholding commitments to international agreements, such as the BPfA. Another setback is the slow pace of conversion of these agreements into national law. In this regard, the gender mainstreaming process has been weakened by inter-ministerial committees and gender focal points that do not function. The Gender Focal Points have also suffered from insufficient training, weak supporting structures such as the absence of guidelines, lack of inclusion of duties and responsibilities in performance management systems as an expected outcome of performance, and lack of relevant information with which to function.

However, while it is possible to identify areas of progress with respect to the advancement of women and gender equality, it is extremely difficult to assess the contribution of the BPfA alone to these achievements. This is because the Beijing Platform is just one of the many international agreements which Caribbean governments have been implementing, thus making the BPfA one factor in a very complex development process. It is therefore quite possible to assume that much of what are identified as achievements attributed to the BPfA are not directly linked to Beijing but also to goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, (CEDAW), the Cairo Programme of Action on Population and Development, and similar agreements.

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<sup>54</sup> UN WOMEN 2014 – The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20



Arguments have been developed indicating that the Beijing Platform for Action became largely invisible in the development mainstream and remains marginal Eyben (2006). Eyben asserts that the central debate in development policy has remained that of growth versus equity. As noted by UNRISD (2005:9), given the many competing global development issues, there has been a loss of gender perspective within the international policy debates, resulting in a lack of “systematic appraisal from the point of view of gender equality”. In its critique of the achievements of the post Beijing global agenda, the UNRISD concluded that the climate was one of “ambivalent outcomes in the search for gender equality in an unequal world”. (Ibid).

The Caribbean subregion still face a number of challenges in its quest to realise gender equality goals, given some of the emerging issues, such as NCDs, the impact of the global financial crisis, and ongoing changes in population dynamics due to ageing and migration.

Expectations are high that the post 2015 sustainable development framework and processes provide an opportunity for the Caribbean.....to recommit to taking the necessary policy and programmatic actions towards the realization of women’s empowerment and gender equality, through the removal of all discriminatory legislation; more rigorous collection of data, ensuring that this data is disaggregated by sex; reduction in poverty amongst women and girls; more access to economic opportunities; measurement and quantification of women’s unpaid work in the reproductive sector – to reflect the economic contribution to the Gross Domestic Product; strategies to encourage and promote women’s participation in politics and other areas of decision making; and actions to redress and reduce the incidence of gender based violence.

The five transformative goals proposed by the United Nations High Level Panel (HLP), to eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development, all identify inequality and gender as key elements that need to be addressed to bring about true sustainable development in the post 2015 development framework. The HLP identifies the ending of poverty by “*leaving no one behind*” – that is: no one regardless of gender, disability, race or other status - must be denied universal rights and basic economic opportunities. But what does this mean for women, particularly Caribbean women, who are the major victims of poverty and economic disenfranchisement.

The allocation of financial resources at the global, regional and national levels, to promote women’s empowerment and gender equality must be treated as a priority issue in the post 2015 development process. There is also need for regular mapping of national financial/budgetary allocation and expenditure on women and gender is one strategy for measuring governments’ commitment to or lack thereof, to the promotion of gender equality.

Given the remaining challenges, not only in the Caribbean, but globally, there have been calls from the UN HLP, intergovernmental and related institutions, as well as civil society for a “stand alone” goal to ensure that gender equality is an objective in its own right and mainstreamed across all other goals to achieve women’s rights and empowerment and true equality for all.

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## WORKING DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTUAL GENDER ISSUES

**Gender:** The meaning ascribed to the concept of gender varies and has become one of the most contested terms in recent decades. This is because the terms “sex” and “gender” have become interchangeable. Unfortunately, gender is often used to mean women (Banda 2013:152), causing a great deal of confusion. Gender typically identifies the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female, as well as the relationships between women and men and girls and boys. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially and culturally constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable.

Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age. (United Nations, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, OSAGI).

*Equality is not something that UN Women, or any institution can achieve alone. Equality depends on each and every one of us. From the government that changes its laws, to the company that advances equal pay and equal opportunity, to the mother and father who teach their daughter and son that all human beings should be treated equally... We are all part of the solution.”*

Michelle Bachelet, UN Women Executive Director

*“Gender is a primary marker of social and economic stratification and, as a result, of exclusion. Regardless of one’s socioeconomic class, there are systematic gender differences in material well-being, although the degree of inequality varies across countries and over time. As a result, gender inequality is a characteristic of most societies, with males on average better positioned in social, economic, and political hierarchies”.* (UNDP, 2013:162).

**Gender equality** is defined as equality between women and men. It refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development. (United Nations, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, OSAGI). Without gender equality, there can be no progress – no true development.

### Gender Inequality

Inequalities based on gender<sup>55</sup> are entrenched in the Caribbean because the social and economic issues which impact on gender inequalities are very complex. In deconstructing such complexities, it is recognised that inequalities are embodied not only in income and wealth, but are intertwined into multi-

<sup>55</sup> **Gender inequality:** refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their **gender**. It arises from differences in socially constructed **gender** roles behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women.

dimensional factors. Ellis (2003) argues that gender inequality is a dominant aspect of reality that contributes negatively to Caribbean development.

Gender inequality identifies the unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their **gender**. It arises from differences in socially constructed **gender** roles behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women. The distinct roles and behaviour may give rise to gender inequalities, i.e. differences between men and women that systematically favour one gender, which can lead to inequities between men and women.

Among the causes of gender inequalities are (i) unequal access to, and control over material resources that generate income; and (ii) institutional factors which operate in three spheres, namely the household (family/reproductive), the productive sphere (labour and credit), and the broader institutional and policy environment. (Seguino, 2008:9). For example *“they are reflected in national political and economic structures (including labour markets) which generate specific types of exploitation and material deprivation. But they also reflect the way society is structured in terms of cultural values and social norms that are embedded across a wide spectrum of institutions in both private and public spheres of life. Inequalities in these areas can lead to the misrepresentation of women, subjecting them to discrimination, exclusion and violence.”* (UNRISD 2010).

The United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA 2009:5) identifies social norms, values and practices as contributory factors that help to shape and define not only the social relationships among different groups, but also the inequalities between women and men in societies. This is demonstrated in norms and rules which place some groups in positions of dominance over others and differentiate the choices available to them including access and control over resources, such as material resources.

## GENDER EMPOWERMENT AND INEQUALITY MEASURES

In 1995, two gender-related measures: the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) were introduced to measure gender inequality in the Human Development Report (HDR). The table below provides information for both the HDI and GDI over the ten year period 2003 to 2013. The GDI “measures achievement in the same basic capabilities as the human development index (HDI), but takes note of inequality in achievement between women and men,” while the GEM is “a measure of agency [evaluating] progress in advancing women’s standing in political and economic forums.”

GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX <sup>a</sup> FOR THE CARIBBEAN									
Country	2003 <sup>b</sup>				2013 <sup>c</sup>				
	Human Development Index		Gender Inequality index		Human Development Index		Gender Inequality Index		
	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	
Antigua and Barbuda	56	0.798	---	---	67	0.760	---	---	
The Bahamas	49	0.812	46	0.811	49	0.794	53	0.316	
Barbados	27	0.888	27	0.885	38	0.825	61	0.343	
Belize	67	0.776	64	0.756	96	0.702	79	0.435	
Dominica	68	0.776	---	---	72	0.745	---	---	
Grenada	93	0.738	---	---	63	0.770	---	---	
Guyana	92	0.740	74	0.730	118	0.636	104	0.490	
Jamaica	78	0.757	65	0.750	85	0.730	87	0.458	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	52	0.808	---	---	72	0.745	---	---	
Saint Lucia	71	0.775	---	---	88	0.725	---	---	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	80	0.755	---	---	83	0.733	---	---	
Suriname	77	0.762	---	---	105	0.684	94	0.467	
Trinidad and Tobago	54	0.802	50	0.796	67	0.760	50	0.311	

Source: Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World and Human Development Report 2003. Millennium Development Goals: A Compact among Nations to end Human Poverty. 2003 HDI rank placement out of 144 countries; and 2013 HDI rank placement out of 186 countries. a. A composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market; b. Based on 2001 values; and c. Based on 2012 values.

While measurements such as the HDI, GDI, and GEM provide useful insights on the status of human development and gender equality, there are several problematic issues with the structure of the indices, data collection and the presentation and interpretation of results. A study conducted by the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex to discuss the shortcomings of these gender-related indices shows how the “choice of indicators, data collection methodologies and statistical analysis techniques can produce not only different kinds of data, but also different results.

The GDI, for example, focuses on gross domestic product (GDP), thus favouring economic development over social development. Similarly, the focus of the GEM on the number of women in a country’s Parliament fails to provide data on the actual involvement of these women in decision-making processes.



Interpretation of the data presented in these indices is another critical issue. Academics, policymakers and activists have been warned against interpreting the GDI as a measure of inequality, for neither the GDI nor the GEM were structured to “measure gender (in) equality as such.” While the GEM includes measurements of relative empowerment and absolute levels of income, the GDI is a human development measurement modified for gender inequality.

### **Gender Inequality Index**

The GEM has been criticized for including indicators that are more relevant in developed countries than in developing countries and that express an urban bias. In an attempt to avoid the key drawbacks of the GEM and GDI, the 2010 HDR introduced the Gender Inequality Index (GII), which is a “measure that captures the loss in achievements due to gender disparities in the dimensions of reproductive health, empowerment and labour force participation. The GII measures three dimensions: reproductive health (indicators are maternal mortality and adolescent fertility), empowerment (indicators are parliamentary representation and educational attainment) and labour market (indicator is labour force participation).

The Human Development Report 2010, cites gender inequality as a major barrier to human development, and suggests that despite the fact that girls and women have made major strides since 1990, they still have not realized equity. The GII ranges from 0 to 1, 0 representing no inequality and 1 representing high levels of inequality. How does the Caribbean region fare in the area of Gender Equality on the new GII measure?

### **Gender Related Measurements of the Caribbean Sub-region**

In the 2010 Gender Gap Report six Caribbean Countries had a rank above forty five in a ranking of one hundred and thirty four countries to determine which countries had an equitable distribution of goods and services for men and women. Two countries in the Caribbean subregion Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados had rates that were higher than a number of developed countries. The five countries that were featured in the first forty five countries were Trinidad and Tobago- 21, Barbados- 31, Bahamas- 36, Guyana- 38 and Jamaica- 44.

It is obvious that the Caribbean region has made progress in the pursuit of gender equity and equality, and the Gender Gap report attests to this progress, however maintaining these gains and building on successes will necessitate progress in the ideological dimensions of gender to support the gains in the material dimension. The Caribbean region has a high participation and performance rate of women in secondary and tertiary levels of education; however, there is not the corresponding placement of women in decision making, in particular political decision making and in managerial positions in private sector. Women continue to be over-represented in the service sector, retail sales, and social service employment, which is an extension of women’s traditional roles in the family and the community.

## APPENDIX III

## TABLES

TOTAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE CASES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, NUMBER OF POLICE RECORDED OFFENCES

	Count										Rate per population (100 000)									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Bahamas		439	507	590	557	589	309	238				133.4	151.1	172.5	159.9	166.2	85.7	65.0		
Barbados	204	192	200	200	171	174	169	184	165		74.9	70.2	72.7	72.4	61.6	62.4	60.3	65.3	58.3	
Belize <sup>B</sup>						202	130	121							67.1	42.1	38.3			
Grenada		151	98	153	169	214	150	174	248			146.7	94.9	147.7	162.6	205.2	143.3	165.6	235.1	
Guyana		239	229	138	134	105	147	297	280			31.4	29.9	17.9	17.3	13.4	18.7	37.6	35.2	
Jamaica		1092	1142	1224	1472	1306	1486	1753	2664			40.7	42.4	45.2	54.1	47.8	54.2	63.6	96.2	
Saint Kitts and Nevis						56	62													
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	193	114	152	145	169	204	168	426			177.8	104.8	139.6	133.0	154.8	186.7	153.7	389.5		
Trinidad and Tobago	633	803	803	901	779	804	767	709	1028		49.1	61.9	61.6	68.8	59.2	60.8	57.8	53.2	76.9	
Suriname																				

Definition: Total 'Sexual violence' means rape and sexual assault; including sexual offences against children.

Please note that when using the figures, any cross-national comparisons should be conducted with caution because of the differences that exist between the legal definitions of offences in countries, or the different methods of offence counting and recording.

Source: UNODC; crime and criminal justice statistics <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime.html>

**NET ENROLMENT RATES –SECONDARY MALE AND FEMALE 2000 - 2012 (PERCENTAGE)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
	<i>Males</i>												
Antigua and Barbuda	72.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	88.0	86.0	..	72.0
Bahamas	...	...	...	...	79.2	82.8	84.5	85.5	84.7	82.4	79.9	...	...
Barbados	90.5	85.7	85.0	85.8	86.1	86.9	86.0	84.7	82.2	79.4	81.6	83.8	...
Belize	56.9	58.0	...	67.3	...	65.4	64.9	64.9	64.2	64.9	64.8	66.9	70.2
Dominica	78.2	76.7	85.8	86.8	87.5	86.8	...	82.9	83.7	72.3	79.0	79.2	...
Grenada	...	...	76.1	75.3	77.2	76.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Jamaica	76.5	75.6	76.6	76.7	82.0	81.4	...	...	...	...	...	72.4	...
Saint Kitts and Nevis	92.9	82.6	79.3	73.4	73.1	77.2	...	84.7	89.9	87.0	88.9	83.7	...
Saint Lucia	54.8	54.0	52.9	56.5	63.8	61.5	65.5	71.7	77.4	80.9	83.4	81.5	81.2
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	57.6	62.7	66.5	68.9	72.1	68.1	...	...	85.3	85.5	83.9	...	...
	<i>Females</i>												
Antigua and Barbuda	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	85.09	85.12	...	84.98
Bahamas	..	...	...	..	80.20	83.32	85.75	89.60	88.08	86.14	85.89	...	...
Barbados	95.53	89.63	90.78	92.03	97.36	93.63	93.13	95.19	90.63	87.28	88.50	96.32	...
Belize	60.14	61.82	...	70.27	...	68.47	69.87	70.19	70.42	71.14	71.33	72.82	74.52
Dominica	89.55	56.99	96.35	100.00	99.03	97.37	...	91.79	88.30	89.54	86.92	87.90	...
Grenada	...	...	91.23	76.03	83.51	77.12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Jamaica	78.74	77.77	78.74	79.51	88.83	85.49	...	...	...	...	...	76.14	...
Saint Kitts and Nevis	98.94	100.00	84.80	84.94	83.20	82.76	...	84.24	92.49	93.98	87.69	88.13	...
Saint Lucia	69.50	67.53	67.56	70.52	61.39	74.31	78.58	82.42	82.80	85.54	84.19	84.21	83.64
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	78.38	73.36	79.17	75.01	79.20	84.79	...	...	95.57	92.57	86.53	...	...

Source: Extracted from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

## LAWs THAT DISCRIMINATE BASED ON SEX IN THE CARIBBEAN

Bahamas	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Bahamas Constitution, 1973</b> <b>STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS 1973 No. 1080</b></p> <p><b>Persons born outside The Bahamas after 9th July 1973.</b></p> <p><b>8.-</b> A persons born outside The Bahamas after 9th July 1973 shall become a citizen of The Bahamas at the date of his birth if at that date his father is a citizen of The Bahamas otherwise than by virtue of this Article or Article 3(2) of this Constitution.</p> <p><b>Further provisions for persons born outside The Bahamas after 9th July 1973.</b></p> <p><b>9.-(1)</b> Notwithstanding anything contained in Article 8 of this Constitution, a person born legitimately outside The Bahamas after 9th July 1973 whose mother is a citizen of The Bahamas shall be entitled, upon making application on his attaining the age of eighteen years and before he attains the age of twenty-one years, in such manner as may be prescribed, to be registered as a citizen of The Bahamas:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Provided that if he is a citizen of some country other than The Bahamas he shall not be entitled to be registered as a citizen of The Bahamas under this Article unless he renounces his citizenship of that other country, takes the oath of allegiance and makes and registers such declaration of his intentions concerning residence as may be prescribed.</p> <p>(2) Where a person cannot renounce his citizenship of some other country under the law of that country, he may instead make such declaration concerning that citizenship as may be prescribed.</p> <p>(3) Any application for registration under this Article shall be subject to such exceptions or qualifications as may be prescribed in the interests of national security or public policy.</p> <p><b>Marriage to citizens of The Bahamas.</b></p> <p><b>10.-</b> Any woman who, after 9th July 1973, marries a person who is or becomes a citizen of The Bahamas shall be entitled, provided she is still so married, upon making application in such manner as may be prescribed and upon taking the oath of allegiance of such declaration as may be prescribed, to be registered as a citizen of The Bahamas:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Provided that the right to be registered as a citizen of The Bahamas under this Article shall be subject to such exceptions or qualifications as may be prescribed in the interests of national security of public policy.</p>
Barbados	<p><b>Constitution of Barbados- Citizenship</b></p> <p>The Constitution of Barbados states that every person born outside Barbados from 1966 would only become a citizen of Barbados if his father is a citizen of Barbados.</p> <p>Any woman who is or has been married to a citizen of Barbados shall be entitled, upon making an application, to be registered as a citizen of Barbados.</p>
Trinidad and Tobago	<p><b>Hindu Marriage Act</b></p> <p>The Hindu Marriage Act states that the age at which a person, being a member of the Hindu faith or religion, is capable of contracting marriage shall be eighteen years in the case of males and fourteen years in the case of females.</p> <p>Consent for marriage would be required if the intended husband (not being a widower), is under eighteen years of age or the intended wife (not being a widow) is under sixteen years of age.</p> <p>The required consent for marriage may be given by the father of the party under age, and if the father is dead by the guardian or guardians appointed or one of them, and in case there is no such guardian then by the mother of the party under age.</p> <p><b>Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act</b></p> <p>The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act states that the age at which a person, being a member of the Muslim community, is capable of contracting marriage shall be sixteen in the case of males and twelve in the case of females.</p> <p>In the case of an intended marriage between persons either of whom is under eighteen years of age (not being a widower or widow), the consent to the marriage, of the father if living or if the father is dead of the guardian or guardians lawfully appointed or of one of them, and in the case there is no such guardian then of the mother of the person so under age.</p> <p><b>Orisa Marriage Act</b></p> <p>The Orisa Marriage Act states that the age at which a person, being a member of the Orisa faith or religion, is capable of contracting marriage shall be eighteen years in the case of males and sixteen years in the case of females.</p>
Suriname	<p><b>Civil Marriage Law</b></p> <p>In civil law, the minimum ages were 18 years for males and 15 years for females.</p> <p><b>Asian Marriage Act</b></p> <p>The Asian Marriage act states that the minimum age at which males can be married is 15 and 13 years for females.</p>

Source: The Government of Bahamas; Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs  
<http://laws.bahamas.gov.bs/cms/legislation/consolidated-laws/alphabetically.html>, The Barbados Parliament Website  
[http://barbadosparliament.com/the\\_constitution.php](http://barbadosparliament.com/the_constitution.php), Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; Ministry of Legal Affairs  
[http://www.legalaffairs.gov.tt/Laws\\_listing.html](http://www.legalaffairs.gov.tt/Laws_listing.html)> <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Suriname%20Critical%20Issues.pdf>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> **Women's empowerment:** Since the mid - 1980s, the term empowerment has become popular in the development field, especially with reference to women. However, there is confusion as to what the term means among development actors. The concept of women's empowerment is the outcome of important critiques generated by the women's movement, which argues that the patriarchal power relations that result in women having less control over material assets and intellectual resource must be challenged and changed. The concept itself is rooted in inequalities of power and rights or entitlements. Batliwala (1994:129-130) defines power as control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes) and empowerment as "*the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over sources of power*". (see vi below).

<sup>ii</sup> In **The Bahamas**, children born in the country to either a Bahamian father or mother acquire Bahamian nationality; however, only children born abroad to Bahamian fathers, not mothers, can acquire Bahamian nationality. The same applies in **Barbados**, where children born in Barbados to either Barbadian mothers or fathers acquire Barbadian nationality, but Barbadian mothers cannot confer nationality on their children born abroad, whereas Barbadian fathers can. (UNHCR. March 2014).

<sup>iii</sup> **Gender equality** is defined as equality between women and men: refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development. (United Nations, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, OSAGI).

**Gender:** refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age. OSAGI.

<sup>iv</sup> **Gender inequality** is not perpetuated exclusively through differential access to and control over material resources. Gender norms and stereotypes reinforce gendered identities and constrain the behaviour of women and men in ways that lead to inequality.

<sup>v</sup> Gender Parity: Equal numbers of men and women at all grade levels.

<sup>vi</sup> Barriteau (2001:29) defines the Caribbean gender system as one that "comprise a network of power relations with two principal dimensions, one ideological and the other material". The material dimension relates to access to and the allocation of power, status and resources within a given community or society and is linked to how women and men gain access to, or are allocated the material and non-material resources within a state and society. The ideological dimension is based on the construction of femininity and masculinity, which define the gender ideologies operating in the state and the society. As a result, gender ideologies operating in a gender system reveal what is expected of or appropriate of the socially constructed beings "women" and "men". They also expose how gender identities are created within societies. The social expectations and the personal construction of gender identities form the core of gender ideologies and establish the sexually differentiated, socially constructed boundaries for "females" and "males". Prevailing gender ideologies construct men as superior and women as inferior (Barriteau 2003: 30-31; and 47).

<sup>vii</sup> ECLAC in establishing the Gender Equality Observatory in 2008, added an indicator on the "*Hierarchical standing of national machineries for the advancement of women:*" as one of the measures of government's commitment to the achievement of gender equality. Where possible, the analysis of this indicator should include other dimensions relating to institution-building (technically and in terms of budget) of machineries for women's advancement. In the medium term, this could involve exploring complementary indicators such as the mandate that establishes and gives legal status to each machinery (constitution, law, decree, administrative provision, etc.) and the characteristics of the budget allocation for machineries and/or governmental gender equality programmes (level of budgetary expenditure and other relevant criteria). (ECLAC, 2008:8)

<sup>viii</sup> Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is defined in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, as a general state of physical, mental and social well being in all aspects related to the reproductive system, its functions and processes. This includes the protection of SRH rights throughout the life cycle – free from discrimination is essential to the achievement of gender equality, social justice and sustainable development. SRH rights include the right to be informed through culturally relevant and comprehensive sexual education, and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning for the regulation of fertility. It also includes the right of access to appropriate health-care services to ensure that women enjoy safe pregnancies and childbirth.

<sup>ix</sup> The CARICOM Summit on Chronic non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), which was convened in September 2007, was a first-in-the world event in which Heads of Government took policy decisions to prevent and control the NCD epidemic.

<sup>x</sup> Based on a probability survey of 407 men and women in Barbados, anthropologist Penn Handwerker found that sexual abuse is the single most important determinant of high-risk sexual activity among Barbadian adolescents (Handwerker 1993a). After a wide range of socioeconomic and home-environment variables (for example, an absent father) are controlled for, sexual abuse remains strongly linked both to the number of partners adolescents have and to their age at first intercourse. Further analysis shows that the direct effects of childhood sexual abuse on a person's sexual behaviour remain significant into the mid-thirties. For men, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse in childhood is also highly correlated with failure to use condoms in adulthood, after controlling for many other variables.