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ANGUILLA'S REPORT TO THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

RE: ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL
CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

June 9th, 2010

At the Millennium Summit in 2000 the United Nations made a commitment in the Millennium Declaration to achieve by the year 2015 eight goals, now referred to as the Millennium Development Goals. Goal 3 is to promote gender equality and empower women. Setting gender equality as a millennium goal places human development at the nucleus of national development by ensuring—

that men and women are granted the best conditions under which they may develop their potential as human beings and citizens; and

that under no circumstances should they suffer discrimination or be disadvantaged as a result of their biological sex or socially defined roles and responsibilities (gender).

The Millennium Development Goal 3 links empowering women to gender equality because UNDP, since 2000, now refers to “poverty as a woman” or the “feminisation of poverty”. This focuses nations on the glaring fact that in every country across the world and in every sector of society women suffer disproportionately to men in terms of their economic, social and cultural well being. Therefore, in order for women to realise their full worth as equal partners in the human family greater attention in gender affairs must be put on the needs of women and development as a special group in gender equality.

However, it must also be emphasised that gender affairs is not synonymous with the condition of women in society. Gender and Development has at its heart a recognition and appreciation of the differences between men and women; differences that are based on physiological and biological realities, as well as social ones. A focus on gender and development is premised on the worldwide realisation that development strategies are more equitable when they consider the different needs, constraints, opportunities and priorities of men and women, and that such inclusive strategies are also far more effective and sustainable.

A Gender and Development Unit is the national machinery responsible for the advancement of gender equity and equality in all segments of society. The core roles of this unit would be:

to ensure that gender equality and equity is central to all development models thereby enhancing the possibility of successful, effective and sustainable outcomes; and

to endow citizens with the required conditions for actualizing human functioning, in other words, to provide them with necessary capacities and opportunities to develop fully as a human beings.

Strategic Objectives¹

- To incorporate a gender perspective in all development planning as the strategy for promoting gender equity and 'fairness' so that development planning itself becomes fundamentally gendered
- To integrate women's and men's concerns and experiences into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all political, economic and social policies and programmes
- To establish a system of gender mainstreaming which incorporates all sectors of government, community based organizations, women's and men's organization
- To provide policy makers and other key actors involved with human and social development, with reference guidelines for identifying and addressing gender concerns which will inform public policy
- To identify and establish an institutional framework with the mandate to initiate, coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate national gender responsive development plans
- To promote recognition and valuing of women's contributions as agents of change and beneficiaries of the development process
- To promote where necessary, evaluation of the sexual division of labour and women's and men's contributions as agents of change and beneficiaries of the development process
- To transform material conditions to achieve economic, social and physical security of men and women
- To facilitate legislative change and public awareness of relevant legislation and their implications
- To empower both women and men by ensuring new and equitable relations between the sexes

¹ Adapted from NATIONAL POLICY ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO DRAFT DOCUMENT, REVISED BY THE GENDER AFFAIRS DIVISION MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND GENDER AFFAIRS June 2009

Strategies to Achieve Policy Objectives

Short term

- Establish a physical unit within the Ministry of Home Affairs with the mandate to deal with gender and development issues only.
 - Budgetary allocations
 - Office space and equipment
 - One staff member
 - Floating staff/part time staff
- Establish contacts with national, regional and international agencies with view to receiving access to funding, training and technical expertise.
- Training programmes specific to gender and development for-
 - Committee Members
 - Members of the public service
 - Members of the private sector
 - Community groups and grassroots activists (including housewives)
 - Set up gender affairs committee with the mandate of developing a policy paper for advancing issues pertaining to gender and development in Anguilla
- Sensitisation on gender issues at all levels:
 - Promoting gender equity as key to sustainable development
- Establish a system of gender-based and disaggregate data collection and analysis in relation to all sectors.

Long Term

- Establish a Commission on Gender Affairs (with power to set up subcommittees)
- Seek out and secure scholarships at 3 levels with a view to working full time in Unit-
 - Associate in Gender Affairs
 - Degree in Gender Affairs
 - MA Gender Affairs
 - Courses in Management; project management etc
- Establish an Office of Gender Affairs

Strategic Relationships

Gender Affairs in the Ministry of Home Affairs works closely with a number of key agencies in the public and private sector in the furtherance of gender based activities.

These include:

- The Attorney General's Chambers
- The Ministry of Social Development
- Department of Social Development
- The National Council of Women
- The Soroptimist Club of Anguilla

Conclusion:

Given our global commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, it is highly desirable that the Government of Anguilla make a firm commitment to the formal establishment of a Gender Affairs Unit. This would be seen as an essential first step for Anguilla and would be a catalyst for garnering technical, financial and other assistance for training and other forms of support. It would send a strong message to regional and international agencies as well as the population of Anguilla that this Government is serious about its commitment to gender affairs.