

**NATIONAL REPORT FOR ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE
REGIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
JULY 13-16, 2010**

This report attempts to review the progress made by the Government of Barbados in implementing programmes for the advancement of women's rights under the framework of the Quito Consensus.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

The Bureau of Gender Affairs collaborated with the OAS Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM), and the International Organization for Migration in hosting two (2) national workshops on trafficking in persons in the Caribbean. The Bureau hosted two workshops in 2004 which sought to provide specific information on the differences between trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, how trafficking works, the causes and consequences for communities and individuals and the identification of vulnerable populations and victims. The IOM also undertook three (3) workshops for researchers who subsequently conducted research in seven (7) Caribbean Countries inclusive of Barbados on the situation of trafficking of women and girls to begin the process of data collection.

Through the Bureau of Gender Affairs, a coalition to raise awareness on trafficking in persons in the Caribbean was formed. A series of presentations were held in various communities where a number of leaflets and brochures outlining the issue were distributed to a captive audience. A capacity building workshop was also held to develop a protocol, policy and procedures manual in 2007.

A National Consultation on Human Trafficking was held with the aim of developing a national mechanism. This was followed the next year by a workshop with stakeholders on the issue of human trafficking where a draft protocol for the treatment of victims of human trafficking was presented and analyzed. In 2008, a representative from the American Bar Association conducted a Seminar to address the use or development of laws to fight the phenomenon of trafficking in persons for the Bureau's key stakeholders. At this Seminar a number of recommendations were made with regards to the Draft Protocol which has been incorporated into the current draft.

Work continued on the development of a protocol for the treatment of victims of human trafficking. Subsequently, the Bureau of Gender Affairs and the International Organisation on Migration (IOM) hosted a training workshop entitled "the Identification and Treatment of Victims of Human Trafficking in January 2010. Further discussions will be held with key stakeholders before the final submission to Cabinet.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

A number of initiatives have been put in place to facilitate women's participation in public life. In 2003, the Caribbean Policy Development Centre held a training course "**Engendering Political Participation in Dominica**". This course provided prospective female political candidates with training in political participation, aimed at increasing women's capacity to function in the political structures of their countries and increase their competence to exercise leadership at political decision-making levels.

The Bureau collaborated with the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Development Fund for Women on a Gender Mainstreaming Project aimed at strengthening the participation of Women in Politics in Barbados and the OECS. Coming out of this project, was the development of a web-based portal to serve as a focal point for discussion and dissemination of information on strengthening the political participation of women. In response to this, women in Barbados have made strides in the area of political participation and as they gain confidence, they are more willing to offer themselves for political office and participate in canvassing.

The Caribbean Policy Development Centre, an NGO, has been a networking partner to UNIFEM and the Bureau of Gender Affairs. There has been programming on women's political participation and women's economic security with a focus on the OECS. This project entitled "Gender mainstreaming: Strengthening the Participation of Women in Politics in Caribbean Political and Parliamentary Processes" aimed to:

- increase women's participation in political and governance processes
- enhance their capacities through strengthened networking of politicians and leaders
- increase gender commitments and eradication of gender inequality through an advocacy component by collating and documenting existing research and other resources to represent and illustrate gendered interests in governance processes and parliamentary processes in Barbados.

In 2003, five women from Barbados attended the Women in Politics Training course that was held in Dominica. In 2004 and 2005 the courses were held in Barbados and the same number of women had the opportunity to enhance their skills in gender policy formulation.

As part of this project, the Bureau of Gender Affairs (Barbados) held a **Regional Policy Dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals: A Framework for promoting Equality and Ending Poverty July 20 21, 2005**. The main objective of the Policy Dialogue was to strengthen integrated policy responses to the pressing social problems of gender equality and poverty within the framework of the MDGs.

In 2005, UNIFEM and UNDP Barbados in partnership with the Directorate of Gender Affairs in Antigua and Barbuda held a Regional Workshop on "Gender Youth and Political Participation" in Antigua and Barbuda from 11-13 April, 2005 for young men and women ages 18 -35. Barbados was represented at this workshop.

In recognition of the International Day of the Women of the Americas, February 18, 2008 which was immediately after National General Elections, the Bureau of Gender Affairs hosted a Panel Discussion entitled "**Women In Decision-Making, Success and Challenges**". This provided the opportunity for female Ministers and Senators to interact, exchange information, share experiences and best practices with the general public and the leaders of women's organisations. Approximately ninety-six persons attended this Discussion. The Discussion was later aired via the electronic media so that those persons who were not able to attend could have access to the information.

HIV/AIDS

In 2001 the Government of Barbados acquired a loan of US \$15.2 million from the World Bank to aid in the expansion of the National HIV/AIDS Programme and over the last four years \$26.9 million comprising Government and World Bank Funding was spent on the programme. By the end of December 2004 it has been reported that \$5.6 million was spent compared to \$7.7 million in 2003 and \$6.9 million in 2002. The focus of the interventions has been on prevention, control and care through a variety of strategies. There have been intensified efforts in disseminating information to increase public awareness of the associated risk of HIV/AIDS infection, especially among women and girls.

Examination of the cumulative reported cases continues to show a significant decline in the numbers of deaths reported since the start of the Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy programme at the Ladymeade Reference Unit (LRU). Total numbers of reported deaths from HIV/AIDS fell from 95 in 2001 to 40 in 2003. At the half-year point for 2004 there have been 11 recorded deaths.

Much effort and resources have been invested in the fight against HIV/AIDS over the years with more concerted action occurring in the last three (3) years through the expanded National HIV/AIDS Programme. It has been recognized that the increase resources invested have facilitated a paradigm shift in the response of the health care system to HIV/AIDS notably

The National Commission on HIV/AIDS embarked on a sustained and effective strategy, encompassing education, information and communication, with a view to altering changes in behaviour in an effort to prevent the further spread of HIV infection and reduce discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Nineteen HIV/AIDS Community committees have been established across the island to address the situation at the community level and new approaches have been introduced using drama and other performing arts to get the message across. During the period under review over twenty-five (25,000) thousand persons have been sensitized through community outreach. Another initiative has been the training of teachers and principles to assist with counselling and training in the area of HIV/AIDS in the school environment.

In 2003 The Bureau of Gender Affairs collaborated with the National HIV/AIDS Commission in the implementation of its Speak-Sister Campaign which sought to focus attention on women and HIV/AIDS, provide information on reproductive rights health, HIV/AIDS and gender issues. They also hosted a workshop on Gender and HIV/AIDS for women living with HIV/AIDS in 2004 in the hope of bringing about behavioral change and to make informed decisions regarding sexual practices.

Government through the Bureau of Gender Affairs continued the implementation of its Gender and HIV/AIDS Programme and conducted a number of workshops with various entities designed to:

- Integrate gender in all HIV/AIDS Action Programmes at the community level;

- provide information on gender relations and the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS to assist in providing education and understanding with respect to sexual and reproductive health;
- Examine women's and men's reproductive health, taking into account social and economic issues such as gender roles and relationships, socialization, social competence, cultural mores and economic dependences.

The Ministry of Health partnered with a local pharmaceutical distributing firm and the regional distributor for female condoms, to conduct a social marketing campaign for the female condom as a means of redressing the imbalance in the area of control of the use of protection during sexual intercourse. This initiative has been highly successful in raising awareness and in distributing female condoms for educational purposes, and as part of the safe sex campaign, women are also being educated in negotiating skills for the use of condoms.

Persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, through the domiciliary care programme, can have their needs addressed and can access housing, financial and legal assistance, monetary grants, clothing, food vouchers, educational assistance, utility and rent payments. And as a result, persons living with HIV/AIDS are being afforded the opportunity to return to a normal level of social function.

The physically challenged and senior citizens are not left out of the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS as AIDS does not discriminate. During the period under review these groups were sensitized and educated on the risks associated with unprotected sex.

Drugs are available at no cost to all suffering from HIV/AIDS. There is no distinction between male and female beneficiaries and provisions are also in place to supply anti-retroviral for post exposure prophylaxes such as accidental injury with a contaminated needle or rape cases.

The major achievement in the HIV/AIDS programme has seen the transformation of the treatment programme into a service that is very effective. The Ladymeade Reference Unit (LRU) facility represents a scaling up of the physical space, human resources and technical capacity for providing comprehensive quality care to meet the needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS at all stages of the disease process.

At present the laws of Barbados do not permit health professionals to perform HIV/AIDS tests on persons under the age of 18 years without the consent of a legal guardian. This is proposed to be changed as the age of consent is 16 years and this sends a mixed message; this is a concern as persons less than 18 years of age were identified an at risk group for HIV and AIDS.

During 2005, The Ministry of Health has tested thousands of persons from across Barbados as a result of their Voluntary, Counseling and Testing (VCT) Programme. A key principle of VCT is confidentiality. Information about the client and his /her test result must be kept confidential. Additionally, regardless of the setting, quality assurance mechanisms are put in place to ensure that clients receive high quality prevention counseling.

Capacity Building for Mainstreaming Gender Analysis in HIV and AIDS Programmes in the Caribbean

UNIFEM partnered with the Bureau of Gender Affairs to implement phase 11 of the UNIFEM led inter-agency project "Capacity Building for Mainstreaming Gender Analysis in HIV and AIDS programmes in the Caribbean – Building Sector Capacity. The project objective is to strengthen the understanding of the gendered causes and consequences of the HIV epidemic in the region and therefore to ensure more targeted and gender responsive programming in the health and education sectors.

A Gender Responsive Social Communications strategy for HIV Prevention Workshop was held 1-3 July 2009. The focus of the workshop was to bring together social communications persons who are working with the National AIDS Commissions in the five project countries (Belize, Barbados, Suriname, Grenada and Dominica) to explore the development of gender-sensitive prevention communications materials.

A Press Launch was held on August 25th at UN House to promote the project. Project activities also included building capacity of front line workers in the health and education sectors to deliver gender responsive and human rights based HIV/AIDS Services and interactions.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs facilitated training workshops for the health and education sectors on Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights in HIV. The Workshop for the health sector was held from September 8 – 10 under the topic **Gender and Human Rights in Health Sector Delivery** and the Education Sector October 14 - 16, 2009.

The expected outcomes of these workshops were:

- Increased participants knowledge of the links between gender, human rights and HIV;
- Increased participants knowledge in the basic skills of gender analysis in HIV/AIDS service delivery;
- Increased participants ability to provide gender responsive and human rights based HIV/AIDS Service Delivery.

The objectives of the workshop were:-

- To build understanding of the social and gendered causes and consequences of HIV;
- To generate dialogue on the social and gender dimensions of health care delivery in the context of HIV;
- To examine the human rights implications of HIV in the context of health care delivery.

The primary target group was the front line workers such as nurses, orderlies, social workers, mental health workers and guidance counselors in Secondary Schools.

HIV/AIDS Workshop

The Bureau of Gender Affairs held an HIV/AIDS workshop for twenty-five (25) female students ranging from fifteen (15) – nineteen (19) years. The workshop took place on August 19th 2009 at the H.V. Lewis Harcourt Training Centre Auditorium, Barbados Public Workers co-operative Credit Union. Participants were from the Guidance Counselors Work Experience Programme (2009).

The principle objective of the activity was to discuss topics such as sex and gender to sensitize females to the vulnerability of HIV/AIDS and to effect behavioural change. In so doing it is hoped to prevent the further spread of AIDS among the youth.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs embarked upon a programme entitled "Gender and HIV/AIDS Working Towards Change" for young men and women who were deemed to be at risk because of their present lifestyle.

In 2007, a similar programme targeted boys in the 15 -17 age groups from various secondary schools. This initiative was also undertaken in 2008 and targeted boys who were in transition from secondary to tertiary level.

Discussions were held with the Ministry of Education in an effort to incorporate a module on gender that was age specific into the Family Life Education Curriculum. A number of Guidance Counselors associated with the Family Life Education course were trained.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming represents one of the most important tools in Barbados' efforts to create an awareness of gender and gender related issues, address the sex stereotyping of women in our society, and in recognizing the commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action. As part of the process government the Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA) has adopted several initiatives aimed at bringing about such awareness.

One such initiative has been ongoing training for gender focal points through a series of Gender Sensitization Training Workshops and over 400 persons have received training during this period.

These workshops among other things sought to:

- Increase the understanding of the difference between sex and gender.
- Explain how gender is constructed and how it determines gender identity and determines gender roles and relations.
- Examine and identify strategies for addressing gender issues and for incorporating gender into national sectoral plans and projects.

There has been an increase in presentations to community based organisations and in participation in programmes of public departments and private. The Bureau continued its strategy of mainstreaming gender in 2009. Approximately fifty persons benefited from the workshop hosted in July, September and October.

Domestic Violence

The Government of Barbados remains committed to the eradication of all forms of violence against women and continued its multi-sectoral approach in pursuit of this goal. The Bureau of Gender Affairs continued to work closely with a number of Civil Society Organisations and other stake holders and during 2003, implemented a number of programmes to combat and eliminate violence against women including the provision of funding and technical assistance to engage in education, sensitization and support services.

The Bureau in collaboration with women's NGO's has sought to keep the public informed and mobilized on the issue of domestic violence, and other forms of gender based violence. In celebration of the United Nations Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, celebrated annually on November 25, the Bureau of Gender Affairs coordinates a series of activities to educate and

sensitize the public about violence against women and also to symbolically link violence against women and human rights.

During the reporting period, through the hosting workshops and community outreach programmes thousands of persons were sensitized on issues of Domestic Violence in Barbados. The launch of the White Ribbon Campaign in 2004 saw men being encouraged to support the elimination of violence against women and help to break the silence and vicious cycle of gender based violence.

A shelter for abused women which was established in 1999 provides vital accommodation for abused women and children and on a quarterly basis receives an average of 50 women including children. During the period 1999 to 2004 three hundred and fifty-nine (359) persons, women and children utilized the facilities at the shelter and some of them were repeat clients.

The programmes of the shelter has three (3) major components

- Shelter
- Empowerment
- Employment

The shelter also ensures that children coming to the shelter with their mothers continue to attend school and continue to receive their education.

The Victim Support Programme of the Royal Barbados Police Force was established in 1999 to provide a cadre of persons to provide counseling and assist victims of and traumatized by violent crime, domestic violence, robbery, sexual offences, and burglary. This programme provides one on one counseling and is readily available to victims. They also provide the assistance to relatives of victims who are mainly women and during the period under review many persons were assisted.

A key initiative has been engaging the Police to be an important partner in the fight against domestic violence. In this regard, training for members of the Royal Barbados Police Force in domestic violence intervention was seen as a crucial aspect in the fight to eliminate the practice.

Between 1999 and 2001 one hundred and five (105) Police Officers received formal instruction both locally and internationally on the handling of domestic violence situations and modules in domestic violence based on the Commonwealth Secretariat's Manual "Guidelines for Police Training on Violence Against Women and Child Abuse". This is now included in the training programme of all new police recruits. To further supplement their training a "Handbook on Domestic Violence" was published in 2004 by the Barbados Police Association and made available to the public. As a result of these initiatives, many positive changes have been observed in the manner in which police officers respond to and treat victims of domestic violence.

The National Organization of Women (NOW) hosts an Annual School's Programme in secondary schools. The objectives of the programme are:

- To raise the awareness of students to the importance and implications of gender;
- To expose students to issues of gender based violence;
- To introduce the topic of conflict management to reduce the incidences of violence among the school population.

The Welfare Department has responsibility for the supervision of the counseling mandated by the court under the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act. Once the Protection Order is in place and they assist clients in working towards a solution.

In an effort to address the issue of domestic violence and to realize its extent, a Domestic Violence Data Collection Protocol is being undertaken by the Bureau of Gender Affairs through a pilot project involving the major stakeholders. The statistical data garnered will inform government policy to address this problem holistically. The instrument to be used in the Data Collection Protocol on Domestic Violence has been completed and Cabinet has approved the launch of the pilot project. Training sessions were held with a number of key agencies and the data is being collected for an analysis of the issue by the departments that are part of the pilot programme.

The Government of Barbados remains committed to highlighting this issue in the public domain and to implement one standard form for service providers to obtain a comprehensive and holistic picture of the level of domestic violence within the country. In 2008 the services of the Caribbean Development Research Services Inc were commissioned to conduct a survey on the prevalence and socio-demographic characteristics of domestic violence in Barbados.

CADRES conducted focus groups with stakeholders to establish the dimensions of what is commonly referred to as domestic violence and has designed and executed a national survey that will convey information on the prevalence and scope of abuse. They are now in the process of redefining the data gathered in a way that would facilitate the development of an "abuse profile" for Barbados.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs will continue to advocate for policy change to reduce this violation of human rights. In this regard, there is collaboration with other relevant agencies and NGOS to implement a Batterers Intervention Programme.

In celebration of the Sixteen Days of Activism, a number of activities were held to keep the problem of domestic violence in the public domain. One of these activities was a public forum in 2007 under the theme "**Demanding Implementation, Challenging Obstacles to End Violence**" and a Symposium in 2008. The National Organisation of Women also undertook a domestic violence programme in the primary and secondary schools in an effort to effect behavioural change.

The Business and Professional Women's Club has also started a Teen Relationship Abuse Prevention Programme (TRAP) which is designed to sensitize hundreds of students at five primary and secondary schools to domestic abuse and sexual assault issues.

Government also provides technical support to NGOs through collaboration in the planning and implementation of programmes and activities which sensitize the public about the effects of domestic violence on families and the society at large.

Technical support has been provided to the establishment of the Services Alliance for Violent Encounters (SAVE) Foundation which is an NGO that focuses exclusively on Domestic Violence. Its aims are to advocate for policies to address domestic violence, monitor its incidence and increase awareness of the practice in an effort to sustain public action against it.

The Business and Professional Women's Club conducted a programme called 'Trim Abuse' for hairdressers to sensitize them to recognize signs of Domestic Violence among their clients. The Soroptimist International of Jamestown is building a residential multi purpose centre for girls, called 'Stepping Stone' specifically for girls who have been abused. The Government of Barbados will continue to formulate and implement plans of action in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders to address and eliminate violence against women, men, children and the elderly, as well as raise awareness to create a safe and accessible environment; the key elements in the eradication of violence from the society.

Type Of Economic Development And Democracy Needed To Achieve Equality Between Men And Women

The global financial crisis has impacted differently on women and men. Women continue to bear a disproportionate share of the burden arising from the crisis due to their gendered responsibilities in households and the community. There is a need for a change in men's attitudes and behaviours towards health, violence, and care responsibilities.

Given that women tend to head a disproportionate number of low income households and women tend to occupy the lowest paid and most tenuous positions, cuts in social spending will have a negative impact or disastrous effects on women. Governments need to ensure the continued creation of a stable political and economic environment and the creation of opportunities as well as conditions under which both men and women can participate in economic activities and labour markets. There should be access to credit for housing, commercial activities, creation of funds that focus on lending to women and women's micro and small businesses.

Economic development and gender are closely linked since more women are likely to be laid off than men. There is a need to continue to sustain the safety nets to reduce the impact of poverty on the most vulnerable groups. There is also the need to empower women in order to improve their conditions and positions, the need for the continued provision of adequate childcare, the implementation of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes and the need to create an enabling and legal regulatory framework whereby laws and regulations are applied uniformly and in a timely manner.

The challenges posed by climate change point to the need to put in place measures to ensure that women continue to have adequate housing and funding for their business and commercial activities further more in the wake of various natural disasters which have impacted heavily on women, Governments have to look at the issue of the impact of natural disasters and HIV/AIDs especially in terms of stigma and discrimination.. There is a need to look closely at addressing the issue of Human Trafficking as women and children become more vulnerable after natural disasters. As a result of the impact of the economic recession on globalization, government needs to look closely at diversification and entrepreneurship if the economy is to survive.