

*National Report to the Twelfth session
Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean
Santo-Domingo 15-18 October, 2013*

The Government of Jamaica (Go) continues to signal its commitment to promote and defend women's rights towards the achievement of gender equality.

Achievements in fulfilment of the Brasilia Consensus

The Government of Jamaica (GoJ) continues on a path of gender mainstreaming, through the work of the national machinery for women and gender affairs. In this regard, the Bureau in partnership with key stakeholders implemented several initiatives to promote the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

Two (2) of the eight focus areas of the Brasilia Consensus that are most relevant to the review of two achievements over the period of review are as follows:

- ✚ **Attain greater economic autonomy and equality in the workplace** – *(To promote gender equality in the public and private sectors, with a view to non-discrimination in employment...and the prevention and elimination of all forms of gender violence in the workplace, especially sexual and other forms of harassment)*
- ✚ **Address all forms of violence against women** (*To adopt preventative and punitive measures as well as measures for protecting and caring for women that further the eradication of all forms of violence against women in public and private spheres... and those living in rural and border areas*)

Two (2) of the most notable achievements are as follows:

- **Gender Mainstreaming** in keeping with Government of Jamaica's **National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE)**:
- Actions towards eliminating Gender-based Violence in keeping with the draft **National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence (NSAP-GBV)**

1. Attain greater economic autonomy and equality in the workplace

i. Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Sector in keeping with the National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE)

The Bureau of Women's/Gender Affairs has been working with the public sector, through a series of training sessions conducted with Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) under "**The Way Out: Women's Economic and Political Empowerment**" (TWO) project funded by UN Women.

Through the project, the BWA conducted a comprehensive gender mainstreaming initiative which has benefited 71 ministries, departments and agencies MDAs of government with 106 GFPs trained. Four (4) Quarterly Monitoring and Evaluation sessions have been held for GFPs who completed their training in gender mainstreaming to track the timely implementation of the Gender Actions Plans.

Currently fifteen (15) GFPs have developed and received approval for their Action Plans and have now qualified to use the **Gender Equality Certification Stamp**. Certification is awarded to MDAs which have fulfilled the following prerequisites, namely: (a) appointed a GFP (i.e. a senior manager/policy-maker) (b) sustained participation in at least 80% of gender mainstreaming training (c) developed an Action Plan to implement aspects of the National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) and (d) approval from the respective head of ministry, department or agency.

Some of the Gender Certified MDAs have gone even further in their implementation of gender sensitization initiatives to develop newsletters and other public education materials as well as to facilitate the process of sensitization in gender mainstreaming for staff.

Additionally, selected MDAs have now incorporated the duties of the GFPs in the organization's operational plan along with a monitoring and evaluation component. Other entities such as the HEART Trust NTA and Edna Manley College for the Visual & Performing Arts have made commitments to develop training modules/programmes that are gender-specific.

ii. Gender Mainstreaming in the Private Sector

The BWA conducted a two (2) day **Gender Summit** in partnership with the Dispute Resolution Foundation (DRF) through funding support from the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality. Through this initiative, gender mainstreaming was promoted among private sector and civil society organisations to provide capacity-building and strengthen the gender knowledge of the participants.

iii. Gender Mainstreaming in the Service Industries

In keeping with the four guiding principles of the **National Policy for Gender Equality**, the Bureau of Women's Affairs in partnership with JAMPRO collaborated under the DFID

CARTFund project to operationalize the Jamaica Coalition of Service Industries (JCSI). The BWA conducted five (5) focus group discussions among representatives from service sectors, namely Medical Tourism, Wellness Tourism, Management Consulting, ICT and Creative Arts (Music). Through the nuanced contribution of the participants, the BWA contributed to the integration of a gendered perspective in the implementation of the Three Year Service Sector Strategy and Expansion Plan.

iv. Widespread access to Gender Mainstreaming Knowledge

In order to promote awareness on gender mainstreaming throughout the society, copies of the NPGE were disseminated to several groups including Permanent Secretaries, various heads of agencies and Gender Focal Point personnel. The Jamaica Information Service (JIS) also updated its website with the finalized version of the Policy.

On March 8, 2013, the BWA and the DRF, through the Way Out Project launched the public education campaign for the National Policy for Gender Equality which will be executed through the Jamaica Information Service. The Campaign is designed to facilitate the objectives of the policy and to use communications strategies to facilitate sensitization and information-sharing.

v. Political and Economic Empowerment of women through training

The BWA in partnership with the Dispute Resolution Foundation (DRF), through the Way Out project hosted the first Women's Empowerment Exposition and Career Fair at the National Indoor Sports Centre in Kingston on May 5-6, 2012. The two-day event attracted almost 3000 patrons, 7 percent of whom indicated that the Expo met or exceeded their expectations to the extent that they were able to access valuable information to assist them to establish businesses, further their career, establish networks or improve their well-being. Over 70 information booths were set up by government agencies, the private sector, community-based organisations CBOs, women business owners and women organizations. The Expo also featured motivational speakers and internationally acclaimed entertainers who also participated in the programme.

The BWA also conducted entrepreneurial mentorship and leadership training among thirty (30) women who expressed an interest in boosting their capacities and increasing their participation in socio-political processes. Several Entrepreneurial Mentorship Sessions were also held in Kingston for women from various communities in Kingston & St. Andrew. Two (2) consultations were held in Lucea and Kingston respectively with forty-three (43) women to gain beneficiary input towards the development of a Women's Resource Manual. The Manual is intended to provide comprehensive, detailed and engaging information for women and girls who are unable to access services and resources and as a guide towards improving health, wealth and well-being.

2. Address all forms of violence against women

The GoJ continues to address the issue of violence against women and girls, through legislation, and public education programmes and advocacy to improve the mechanisms and policies in place to eliminate the scourge. An Inter-disciplinary Committee was established in 2012 within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to address the issue of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation of women and girls and trafficking in persons.

A comprehensive compilation of recommendations served to guide a list of priorities to help reduce the scourge of violence against women and children in keeping with the draft **National Strategic Plan of Action to Eliminate Gender -based Violence (NSAP-GBV)**. The NSAP-GBV is designed to facilitate a coordinated programme to prevent and eliminate gender-based and other forms of violence within a human rights-based framework.

The Committee outlined a plan of action guided by four priority areas, namely:

- Public Education – to launch long-term national campaign to improve values and attitudes.
- Shelter – to establish shelters to facilitate victims of domestic and sexual violence as well as victims of trafficking, and greater access to legal and other services;
- Sustainable Livelihoods – to achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for survivors of violence and their families; and,
- Institutional Strengthening – to build capacity and broaden the reach of the institutions that investigate violence against women and children to improve the output of shelters and other places of safety.

1. Draft National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence (NSAP-GBV)

A draft **National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence (NSAP-GBV)** was developed in 2011 by the BWA in collaboration with multiple stakeholders to guide the implementation of a coordinated programme to prevent and eliminate gender-based and other forms of violence within a human rights-based framework.

Three (3) national consultations were facilitated by the Bureau on the **NSAP-GBV** in Kingston, St. Ann and Manchester (Mandeville) to facilitate a variety of views from multiple stakeholders.

A fourth consultation was held in June 2013 at the Office of the Prime Minister with multiple stakeholder participation comprising representatives from MDAs of government, representatives from the UN Theme group – (UNFPA & UNAIDS) and members of civil society including women’s groups and other human rights organisations. The findings from the consultations have

been incorporated into the final draft of the **NSAP-GBV** which has been submitted to the partners for feedback and recommendations.

A core working group (CWG) has been established to guide the finalization of the NSAP-GBV and one meeting has been held to date. A Senior National Consultant (SNC) will be contracted to facilitate the finalization of the NSAP-GBV ahead of the submission to Cabinet. The meeting facilitated the refining of the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the CWG as well as the TOR for the Senior National Consultant (SNC) and examined the findings from the fourth consultation.

In partnership with UNFPA, the Bureau also conducted training sessions to train relevant stakeholders on how to manage incidences of violence against women as follows:

➤ **Gender-Based Violence and Management of Sexual Assault**

A series of seven (7), workshops were held over a four day period to provide training for forty five (45) medical professionals including physicians and nurses. The main government hospitals were issued invitations to different disciplines, e.g. emergency medicine, pediatrics and gynaecology. The district medical officers (DMOs) who work closely with the CISOCA offices were also specially invited.

In order to facilitate capacity building and facilitate the storing and preserving of critical evidence in the management of sexual assault cases, on September 12, the GoJ in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) donated three (3) refrigerators to selected rural offices of the Centre for the Investigation of Sexual Offences & Child Abuse (CISOCA).

➤ **Sexual Violence Strategy Workshops**

Eleven workshops (11) were held in the parishes of St. Andrew, St. Catherine, St. James, Hanover, Clarendon, and Manchester. Over three hundred and ninety eight persons (294 females and 104 males) were sensitized on issues relating to sexual abuse and domestic abuse as major barriers to women's safety and empowerment.

2. Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (GEOLAC)

To facilitate the collection of sex-disaggregated data, Jamaica is a partner in the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (GEOLAC), which was created by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). This is in keeping with the UN Statistical Commission's role to promote the development of national statistics and improve the coordination of the statistical work of specialized agencies.

In addition to the capacity building for the BWA and partners, efforts were made to further the development of the Gender Equality Observatory for Jamaica (GEOJ) in line with the GOJs commitment to data collection and analysis, towards facilitating the creation of a gender database.

Through the UN Women funded project, the BWA partnered with ECLAC to convene a national training workshop on gender mainstreaming and the production and collection of reliable sex-disaggregated data in March 2012. The three-day workshop was held March 20 - 22 at the Wyndham Hotel, Kingston, and was organised as part of the gender mainstreaming efforts under the National Policy for Gender Equality.

One hundred and six (106) participants were trained to strengthen national capacity through the training of public sector workers, including the Jamaica Constabulary Force, planners, statisticians, policy analysts, researchers in MDAs in the collection of sex disaggregated data methods and analysis.

Jamaica Crime Observatory (JCO)

The Ministry of National Security facilitated the signing of a MOU on September 19 to operationalize the **Jamaica Crime Observatory (JCO)** and to signal the GoJs commitment to facilitate data-collection and data-sharing protocols among key stakeholders. The **JCO** is a primary data source in developing and cross-validating a set of valid statistical indicators on violent crimes i.e., sexual assaults, homicides, fatal shootings and suicides in parishes. The indicators are used as a measure of citizen security and peaceful coexistence. The JCO is also designed to further advance the collection of sex-disaggregated data as establish links between the victim and perpetrator as a measure of Intimate Partner Violence as well as facilitate evidence-based policy-making and violence prevention activities

Community Outreach & Public Education

Strategic partnerships and collaboration were key efforts in the successful execution of 25 public education activities and 13 Health and Information Fairs in partnership with key stakeholders. Areas of focus included financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence using a rights-based approach. The public education sessions were conducted in the parishes of St. Thomas, St. Elizabeth, Clarendon, Kingston and St. Andrew, St Catherine, and St. Mary an impacted a total of Five thousand, one hundred and forty five individuals.

The activities had a greater concentration in urban areas than in rural areas and deliberate efforts were made to include and involve men. Participants were made aware of a number of issues including healthy lifestyle, economic opportunities, positive sexual behaviour change, gender equality, justice and human rights.

Two (2) major challenges

1. Stereotypes and discriminatory practices

The UN CEDAW Committee in Paragraph 22 (c), Concluding Observations to the combined Sixth & Seventh Periodic Report (Fifty-second session - July 2012) recommended that Jamaica:

“Collect and compile comprehensive data on violence against women, disaggregated by sex, age and the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, and carry out an in-depth analysis of the findings and utilize them to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to combat violence against women;”

Plans have been advanced to create a unique Gender Equality Observatory for Jamaica to contribute to policy development and assess the impact of policies, plans, and projects on women separately from men. However, challenges exist regarding the synchronized collaboration among local statistical organisations/institutions such as Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), Ministry of National Security (MNS), Ministry of Health (MOH), Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ), private sector bodies, regional and international statistical agencies.

In addition, there are logistic challenges which impact on the plans to facilitate on-going training for users and producers of sex-disaggregated data including researchers, planners and policy-makers to strengthen systems for collecting and processing statistical data disaggregated by sex and other quantifiable indicators.

2. The UN CEDAW Committee in Paragraph 22 (g), Concluding Observations to the combined Sixth & Seventh Periodic Report (Fifty-second session - July 2012) recommended that Jamaica:

“Approve and implement the draft sexual harassment policy and consider urgently adopting comprehensive legislation to combat sexual harassment.”

Discussions are presently being held with the Ministry of Justice, Attorney General’s Department and Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade towards establishing time frames re: the drafting of **Anti-Sexual Harassment** legislation & the accession/ratifying of the **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

Prepared by the Bureau of Women’s Affairs, Jamaica
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