

**PRESENTATION: AGENDA ITEM 5
(Implementation of the Montevideo Strategy)**

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PRESENTATION FOR AGENDA ITEM 5

The Montevideo Strategy was developed and adopted to move the gender agenda from policy to action as the means to achieve substantive gender equality and women's rights. This is why we are pleased to be associated with the Strategy and to implement and adapt it in Grenada.

I will not attempt to deliver a comprehensive report in this presentation, as we intend to complete and submit a full written report later this year as part of the regional review process. I will therefore present some areas of progress, major challenges and priorities in three significant areas: Women in Leadership, Combating Gender based Violence and Gender Mainstreaming in National Plans. I will also share a strategy we intend to use to ensure that synergies among the national reports on gender equality and women's empowerment have an impact on progress to substantive equality.

But here I quickly summarise the context in Grenada during 2016, with regard to gender equality and women's rights and autonomy. Firstly, we had already had some major legislative reform regarding domestic violence, sexual violence and child abuse. More importantly, we had implemented a series of intensive activities to implement them, such as training for service providers, development of new standard operating procedures and public education for awareness and behaviour change. Secondly, we had approved a National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan in 2014.

PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

Overcoming Structural Challenges to Gender Equality and Women's Rights:

One of the structural challenges identified in the Montevideo Strategy is “the concentration of power and hierarchal relations in the public sphere.” Therefore, a critical mass of women in leadership and decision-making positions is an important target.

At this time, Grenada has as close to 50-50 as it can get in the House of Representatives of Parliament. From 2018, 47% of the fifteen elected Members of Parliament are women, and we are all in the Cabinet. This is an increase from 33% in the last Parliament. Furthermore, the Head of State, the Governor General, is a woman. This is critical mass. These numbers present evidence that the Prime Minister and the entire country have signaled that this is the time for equality between the sexes, for equal opportunities, for equity in access to the outcomes of development. We are also ensuring that there are women on every Statutory Board and Authority.

We have recognized that we must take action if this critical mass in leadership has to work for all. I intend to work along with my female colleagues and seek the support of our male counterparts to make this count for the women at every level of society. This should redound to the application of the Gender Policy, the Montevideo Strategy, and other normative instruments which Grenada is committed to, or has ratified, in the case of Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belem do Pará).

The first main message that I ask us to take away is that **achieving critical mass in positions of leadership and decision-making is a major milestone, but is not an end in itself. Substantive equality requires that all leaders, male and female, whether or not there is critical mass, must accept the challenge to take action to improve the lives of the women and girls who are not in those positions, as well as those who will come to those positions in the future.**

Another structural challenge I want to comment on is “discriminatory, violent and patriarchal cultural patterns and the predominance of the culture of privilege”. One component of that is confronting violence against women and girls.

Grenada has been taking steps to address all forms of violence against women and girls using a multi-sectoral approach and addressing three components of responses. Using the rights-based and gender-equality approach, the three components of the response are:

1. Protection and support for victims
2. Holding offenders accountable
3. Prevention of gender based violence

In recent years, the Division of Gender and Family Affairs of my Ministry, which is the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women in Grenada, has led a series of actions and worked with a wide range of partners to address domestic and sexual violence. I will just highlight a few of the most significant accomplishments of the last three years.

- The landmark success was the establishment of a Special Victims Unit in the Royal Grenada Police Force, and the setting up of a hotline. This Unit will now work along with the Gender-Based Violence Unit of my Ministry, the Child Protection Authority and the other sectors to create a more effective response to reports of intimate partner violence, sexual violence against adults and children and all forms of child abuse. The Officers attached to the Unit are not the only ones who respond to these forms of violence. It remains the duty of all Officers, but the Unit will strengthen the law enforcement response and lead the interaction with other partners.
- The Ministry of National Security has led the process of revising the Police Standing Orders in relation to police response to domestic violence, sexual violence and child abuse. These revised Standing Orders were approved as Statutory Rules and Regulations and handed over to the Royal Grenada Police Force in 2018 for implementation. These new regulations are important. We all understand that the Police have a crucial role to play both in protecting victims and holding offenders accountable by bringing them to justice. Now, Police Officers throughout the country, including the Special Victims Unit, have formal instructions that were revised to synchronise their actions with the laws and policies that were already in force.
- Another significant step has been the emphasis on prevention of gender-based violence by (1) educating the public on the laws, and (2) addressing some of the fundamental beliefs that drive the epidemic. The National Gender Machinery toured schools to sensitise students; held radio and television programmes, public forums, and delivered presentations to several faith based organisations and community partners. We collaborated with

many stakeholders for sensitization marches and other activities, and used other means to reach the public. A national Committee on the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse was formed and so far has held consultations and is conducting research to make recommendations on the way forward.

We have had to be creative and patient, as these are not topics that they always want to hear about, but it is necessary to chip away at the beliefs and patterns of behaviour that allow us to commit or tolerate violence against women and girls. Changing the status quo requires effort, patience and courage. As a result, so far, we are seeing an increase in reporting and a change in attitudes to victims, with less indication of victim blaming, coupled with an increase in public support.

- Finally, we are in the process of conducting a Women's Health and Life Experiences Survey, which is primarily a Prevalence Study on Violence against Women. The fieldwork is complete and the reports are being prepared. The results will assist in defining the work that lie ahead.

The Government of Grenada has decided on the Strategic Priorities for the Medium Term Agenda. One of these priorities is to “***Strengthen interventions to combat domestic violence and child abuse***”. Three main strategies are being considered for 2019-2021, the period of the implementation of the Medium Term Agenda.

1. One strategy is strengthening offender accountability. We are looking at creating an offender management system that includes the establishment of a

sexual offenders' register and a systematic rehabilitation programme for offenders of crimes related to gender-based violence.

2. A second strategy is to develop one coordinating mechanism to work at continually improving responses and services to victims and preventing gender-based violence and child abuse. Coordination would mainly entail increasing the capacity of the entities that respond directly to the clients, professional development for responders from those entities, establishing and monitoring application of shared standards, joint programming whenever suitable, advocacy for further law reform, and reviewing the network that provides comprehensive services to victims and their families.

Currently, the coordination of work on intimate partner violence and sexual violence against adults is carried out by the Gender-based Violence Unit which is part of the National Gender Machinery of my Ministry. Coordination of work on all forms of child abuse is shared between the Child Protection Authority, and the Social Services Division of my Ministry. By the very nature of gender-based violence and child abuse, there are overlaps and similarities and many of the stakeholders are the same. Furthermore, they share clients, especially those in which the violence and abuse happens within the home or among persons with domestic relationships. Lack of coordination is a challenge for victims and their advocates, responders and service providers, and the effective use of scarce human and financial resources.

In this regard, a Technical Working Group was established, chaired by the Head of the National Gender Machinery. The Committee has submitted a report that offers options for consideration.

3. The third strategy must be to expand the prevention programme by taking bolder action to confront the patriarchal beliefs and systems that encourage the use of gender based violence. Central is the belief in women's submission and male dominance. This allows both women and men to practice, accept and tolerate the notion that men and boys must exercise power and control over women and girls. Therefore, women's autonomy and empowerment will be one of the main interventions. The ripple effect will be felt in other programmes to achieve substantive equality by 2030.

Pillars for Implementing the Regional Gender Agenda

I now turn attention to one of the Pillars for Implementing the Regional Gender Agenda: the Normative Framework, and in particular “mainstreaming gender equality and women's rights in national development plans and planning instruments.

I have mentioned that Grenada has a Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (GEPAP) and is developing its Medium Term Agenda. We are also developing a National Sustainable Development Plan that will be aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be implemented from 2020 to 2035. The challenge is to use the Gender Policy and other norm-setting instruments to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment within the Medium-Term Agenda (MTA) and the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP). As we have agreed time and time again, and as embedded in the Montevideo Strategy, gender

mainstreaming requires an interrogation of the gender issues at all stages, including planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. What have we done to facilitate gender mainstreaming?

In 2017, we formed a National Council of Gender Focal Points. The Gender Policy describes their role as an extension of the gender machinery to facilitate gender mainstreaming within their Ministries. In addition, their status and role will be strengthened within the context of the MTA and the NSDP. Therefore, training and empowerment must be part of the process. We intend to focus on training and capacity building during this year.

The Gender Machinery has met with several persons at leadership and senior technical levels of various Ministries to sensitise them of the need and opportunities for gender mainstreaming. This process continues, and will be extended to leaders in other sectors, such as the private sector in the near future.

We have conducted and shared gender analyses of statistics, in particular on the Labour Force Survey. The results show that unemployment remains higher for women than men and is dropping faster for men than for women, that incomes are higher for men than women, and that the sexual division of labour continues. We also began to examine educational attainment and found that, unlike prevailing perceptions, both girls and boys are found at every strata of attainment, with the majority at the lower ends, and that among the highest achievers, there are both boys and girls in fairly equal numbers. They further highlight that the sexual division of labour starts with the sexual division of studies in secondary and tertiary institutions and skills training centres.

We also continue to make presentations at various fora, participate in consultations and sit on committees of major projects and programmes. The interventions made, along with requirements from the regional and international partners, have resulted in greater demands being made for input from a gender perspective.

Further, the Head of the National Gender Machinery has accepted the invitation to be one of the authors on the Writing Team of the National Sustainable Development Plan. Her specific role will be to ensure that gender equality is included.

Government's commitment to gender equality was expressed by both the Prime Minister and myself, as Minister for Social Development, during the Budget Debate (November 2018), and we will continue to spread this message. There are challenges and gaps but we are determined to overcome them.

The main gap is the limited capacity of the Gender Machinery to deliver technical assistance to the various Ministries to support mainstreaming mandate/efforts in policies, programmes and projects. In our assessment, the limited capacity is due to a combination of inter-related and mutually reinforcing factors.

- Firstly, there is small number of technical staff in gender mainstreaming within the Division of Gender and Family Affairs (Gender Machinery) and the Government as a whole. Moreover, there is a limited range of gender mainstreaming expertise within the Country. A wider range of expertise is needed to consider gender mainstreaming in a variety of sectors, such as climate resilience, gender budgeting, and so on. As it stands, specialized

services often have to be imported as consultancies, resulting in high costs and reduced sustainability.

- Secondly, there is still a narrow or restricted view or unclear perception of the mandate and role of the Division as the National Machinery for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Therefore, the institutional architecture, as described in the Montevideo Strategy and the Gender Policy, is not yet implemented.
- Thirdly, patriarchal norms and attitudes persist and are defended overtly and covertly by both women and men at all levels and sectors of society. This causes a constant push back against efforts at programming for gender equality, especially women's human rights and autonomy.

Of necessity therefore, the strategies to be implemented as priorities in the near future must address these factors that restrict progress to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Those priorities are:

- Strengthening the Division of Gender and Family Affairs as it is the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women;
- Gender mainstreaming through the Medium-Term Agenda and the Sustainable Development Plan;
- Economic empowerment of women;
- Combatting gender-based violence and child abuse; and
- Confronting gender stereotypes.

SYNERGY IN PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS

Grenada is committed to preparing and submitting the following three reports in 2019:

- Comprehensive Review for Beijing +25
- Voluntary Report on the implementation of the Montevideo Strategy
- 6th Periodic Report on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

These norm-setting instruments cover the theme of gender equality and women's rights. However, they have different areas of focus and can have somewhat different indicators. This year, Grenada proposes to make one joint assessment of these areas of focus, against the Gender Equality Indicators that CARICOM has agreed to work on for the SDGs, as well as the Indicators in our Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan. By aligning them to each other, we intend to develop the capacity to begin a formal system of continuous monitoring of the indicators of gender equality and women's empowerment.

This would allow us to conduct one set of research and consultations, as well as develop recommendations that can be applied to the implementation of all of the Instruments.

The findings and recommendations from these reports will also provide evidence for the identification of opportunities and strategies for mainstreaming gender in the Medium-Term Agenda and the National Sustainable Development Plan 2035. It may also assist in making the case, once again, for strengthening the institutional mechanism for gender equality and implementing the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan.

Ultimately, they will contribute to achievements of targets in the Sustainable Development Goals and the overarching goal of substantive equality by 2030.

PROPOSALS

As a Small Island Developing State, we seek the assistance of ECLAC and our partners in the larger States to develop and implement actions for gender equality and the advancement of women's rights. Through the Presiding Offices, we ask that consideration be given to using opportunities for gender sensitization in the other subsidiary bodies, the technical and financial support available through the Secretariat and other methods such as scholarship opportunities for our National and South-South cooperation to share good practices. This will assist Grenada and other small Caribbean States to adapt the Montevideo Strategy and the international agreements as we develop, implement and review our gender policies and national plans.

CONCLUSION

I trust that this oral report has demonstrated to you that Grenada is deeply committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women and sees its role in implementing the Montevideo Strategy among other instruments, to ensure substantive equality. We are making progress, but have to confront some challenges that are barriers to greater achievement. Therefore, we seek the support of ECLAC and the Regional Community in this auspicious Conference on Women, in our efforts at eliminating those barriers and taking progressive action for gender equality.