

**PRESENTATION: AGENDA ITEM 6**  
**(Annotated Index of the Position Document for**  
**the XIV Regional Conference of Women)**

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**DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY**  
**EMPOWERMENT**

**TO THE**  
**FIFTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS**  
**OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN LATIN**  
**AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**HELD IN**  
**SANTIAGO, CHILE ON JANUARY 22 – 23, 2019**

## **PRESENTATION FOR AGENDA ITEM 6**

The annotated index suggests that the position document of the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Regional Conference on Women will be very comprehensive. In a general way, it points to an agreement that Grenada would be willing to participate in and endorse, of course, pending the details that would be deliberated on as the final text.

There are two sections, however, that we propose could be adjusted. They are:

- (1) The sexual division of labour and unjust social organisation of care, and
- (2) Changing Economic Scenarios

***Chapter 1, Section B, subsection 2: The sexual division of labour and unjust social organisation of care (Pages 8-9)***

We urge that research and positions on two issues be included. They are:

- Women and girls in the changing labour market
- Paid Care

### **WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE CHANGING LABOUR MARKET**

Due to the sexual division of labour, women are concentrated in some of the jobs that are reducing drastically. The Labour Force Survey in Grenada shows that women remain unemployed longer than men. It also revealed that unemployment among persons with secondary, post-secondary and university education is higher for women than men. The evidence is before us. Jobs such as clerical assistant and secretary are on the decline. On the other hand, national efforts at infrastructural development, climate resilience projects, introducing

new technologies to protect the environment, and so on are fields that do not traditionally attract women. The same is true for private investment in improving the building stock. It is therefore necessary, at this time, to change that tradition.

The change would require addressing both perception and preparation. Perception is based on the gender stereotypes of what is woman's work and man's work, and is linked to the other structural challenges identified. Preparation is about education and training for women and girls in the fields that would allow them to access jobs in those areas. Education and training should be for girls in the formal education system, and for adult women, whether employed, unemployed or under-employed, who are seeking retraining for new employment, career advancement or changing careers.

We encourage deliberation on this issue in the section on sexual division of labour.

## **PAID CARE**

The paid care sector/industry is an integral component of the discourse on the organisation of care, especially in the context of the right to care. It provides employment for many, and is growing as the nature of our societies change. The majority of persons working in the paid care sector are women. They provide services directly to families as domestic workers, babysitters and caregivers for the elderly. They staff Government programmes that care for children and the elderly. They are in residential institutions. They care for persons in other types of institutions that we do not always consider as having care staff, such as the

kitchen staff in schools, hospitals and prisons. Wherever they are, there seems to be a common issue: their poor conditions of work!

Their wages must be considered when examining the conditions of their work – is it a living wage (that allows them to provide their needs today and move them out of poverty)? Also consider their other benefits, such as hours of work, professional development, vacation and other leave, access to social security, social status, and the full range of workers’ rights. In short, does it fit the criteria to be classed as “decent work” using the ILO definition?

On November 12, 2018, Grenada ratified ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers, joining the short list of countries (27 so far) that have taken this step. It comes into force on November 12, 2019. This is the first major step for us, and we know that we have to take measures to fulfil the commitments in that Convention. We are to consider also how it would positively impact persons in the care sector who may not be addressed directly, but are in the same industry – providing care.

Economic stability and empowerment of workers in the care industry can reduce the category now known as “the working poor”, and allow them and their families to have a better quality of life.

It was agreed in the Declaration of Buenos Aires (Para. 5.4.) in December 2018 to: ***“Promote conditions of decent work, security, social protection and decent remuneration for public service workers in traditionally undervalued sectors with a majority of female workers, especially health, education and care sectors, including people who work in border services, community health workers and migrant workers.”*** We will bring this Declaration to the Commission on the Status of Women in March.

A discussion and recommendations on this issue of paid care at the level of the Regional Conference on Women would assist.

## **Chapter 2: CHANGING ECONOMIC SCENARIOS**

At the International Women's Day Activities for 2017 in Grenada, the Governor General Dame Cecile La Grenade delivered an address on the theme "**Women in the Changing World of Work**". She listed three issues. One is that there are many emerging professions in relation to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). This is mentioned in the Annotated Index (Structural challenges #5 page 10). The other two don't seem to be addressed thoroughly, though we appreciate the relationships that could be established with the issues within the section on "the Digital Revolution". Here are the other two issues.

- One is that there is greater demand for skilled personnel in the heritage, cultural and creative industries, particularly in response to the entertainment and tourism industries and the increasing interest by people in the recognition, education and preservation of their heritage and culture. This has caused an addition of **Arts** to the STEM, to make Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM).
- Secondly, less structured working arrangements are becoming more prevalent. These include flexible workday and workplace, and task related contracts. Today, employers, supervisors and employees may never meet face to face, as they may be in different parts of the world, communicating through a host of platforms via the internet. The challenge here is that women have been and are being socialised to value

some of the things that might deter them from those types of economic opportunities. Women and girls have been socialised to avoid risk, interact mainly with people they are familiar with, seek security and stability, always be beautiful and well-groomed, and separate home from work. I offer that these values may not be preparing us to work from home, have unsecured job contracts, or do jobs that challenge our image of beauty.

As examples, when we teach girls that they must not talk to or trust strangers, how will they become comfortable enough to take the risk of working with total strangers via the internet? Then too, we still have the notion that working in the home is the same as “doing nothing”, and are used to undervaluing work done by women; so how do we begin to value and demand payment for jobs and consultancies that are done for others from our own homes?

These aspects of the changing economic scenarios should also be considered.

## **CONCLUSION**

Given what we have seen in this Annotated Index, I look forward to the further development of the position document that would emerge from it.