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**Twenty-Fifth Anniversary  
of the Fourth World Conference on Women  
and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration  
and Platform for Action (1995)**

**National Report**

**BARBADOS**

# **BARBADOS**

## **BEIJING +25 REPORT:**

**PROGRESS MADE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE**

**BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

**2014 - 2019**

April 2019

# Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	1
Executive Summary .....	3
Section One: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks.....	12
Section Two: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern .....	16
Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work .....	16
Poverty eradication, social protection and social services .....	21
Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes.....	43
Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions .....	57
Peaceful and inclusive societies .....	60
Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation .....	61
Section Three: National Institutions and Processes.....	63
Section Four: Data and Statistics .....	64

## List of Tables

Table 1: Employment and Unemployment by sex - 2014-2017 .....	17
Table 2: Female Clients of NAB's Home Care Programme & Day Care Centre 2014-2019...	20
Table 3: Barbados Vocational Training Board Enrolment in Skills Training 2015 & 2016..	40
Table 4: Reports of Incidents of Domestic Violence 2016-2018 .....	44
Table 5: Select Decision-making Positions by Sex.....	58
Table 6: Senior Public Officers of Related Grades by Sex.....	58

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Gender Component of Poverty, 2016.....	13
Figure 2: Gender and Vulnerability, 2016 .....	14
Figure 3: Male vs Female Heads - Strengthening Human & Social Development Project.....	22

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BECCS	Barbados Employment and Career Counselling Service
BEF	Barbados Employment Foundation

BGA	Bureau of Gender Affairs
BPW	Business and Professional Women's Club
BVTB	Barbados Vocational Training Board
BYBT	Barbados Youth Business Trust
CALC	Country Assessment of Living Conditions
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CDD	Community Development Department
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualifications
CTP	Community Technology Programme
FBO	Faith-based Organisation
FCIU	Family Conflict Intervention Unit
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IBP	ISEE Bridge Programme
IMPACT	Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean Project
ISEE	Identification Stabilisation Enablement Empowerment
JURIST	Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening Project
MIS	Management Information System
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Partner Relations
MPEA	Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
NCCC	National Climate Change Committee
NCCPF	National Climate Change Policy Framework
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NMDP	National MSME Development Policy
PARP	Poverty Alleviation and Reduction Programme
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PMT	Proxy Means Test
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RBPF	Royal Barbados Police Force
RDC	Rural Development Commission
SBA	Small Business Association
SPISE	Student Program for Innovation in Science and Engineering
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
T2S	Transition to Secondary School
UDC	Urban Development Commission
YES	Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

This report reviews the progress that Barbados has made over the last four years in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action that was adopted at the Fourth World Conference of Women held in Beijing, China in September 1995. The report also identifies challenges encountered in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls which the Governments considers as priorities.

The Platform for Action identified 12 critical areas of concern and Barbados signed on to the following five critical areas of concern in 1995 – Women and Poverty; Women and Health; Violence against Women; Women in Power and Decision-Making and Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women. However, this report also provides a review of the progress made in the other identified areas of concern.

## SECTION ONE: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

**Some of the most important achievements** over the period under review include work in the following areas: updating legislation in relation to domestic violence; trafficking in persons and sexual offences as well as new legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace; violence against women; women and health; social protection for poor women and women in power and decision-making. **Some of the challenges** experienced in implementing these include inadequate gender statistics; ambivalence (continued) towards the concept of gender; negative stereotypical gender norms that impact on how women and men relate to each other; not having a formal gender policy in place and limited human resources in the Bureau of Gender Affairs.

The following were **priorities for accelerating the progress for women and girls** over the review period: equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice; quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls; eliminating violence against women and girls; gender-responsive social protection and strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental stability.

The Government of Barbados has identified the following **priorities to accelerate progress for women and girls over the next five years** – equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice; poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security; eliminating violence against women and girls; unpaid care and domestic work/work-family conciliation and changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes. These will be addressed through public education programmes, ongoing review of discriminatory laws and policies and collaboration and dialogue with key stakeholders.

## SECTION TWO: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

### Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

During the period under review, Barbados faced an economic crisis with contracted economic growth, declining international reserves and high public debt, among other things. The economic crisis has resulted in relatively high levels of unemployment and underemployment and has had a negative effect on livelihoods. Historically, the unemployment rate among women has been higher than that for men but this seems to have levelled off from 2009/10 and was actually slightly higher among men in 2015. Unemployment rates among young people (15-24 years of age) are generally higher than among adults and this is more severe for young females.

### **Gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment**

Barbados has enacted a range of labour laws which address the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers. One example is the Employment Rights Act 2012 which confers new employment rights on employees. In relation to gender-responsive active labour market policies, the Ministry of Labour and Social Partner Relations always takes a range of crosscutting issues, including gender and vulnerability into account in developing labour market policies and also seeks to ensure that all training courses, such as technical and vocational skills training, are marketed to both women and men.

The Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act, 2017 came into force in December 2017 to make provision for the protection of employees from sexual harassment in the workplace in both public and private sectors. Brochures have been produced to educate workers about the provisions of this law.

There are presently a number of ongoing initiatives through which self-employed women can have access to credit and grants although these might not be aimed exclusively towards women. In addition, to encourage workers to transition from informal to formal work, the government encourages informal workers to register with the relevant governmental agencies so that they can access and benefit from the various social services offered to formal workers.

### **Unpaid care and domestic work and work-family conciliation**

During the period under review, the government introduced or strengthened initiatives towards the recognition, reduction and/or redistribution of unpaid work and domestic work. For example, all government buildings constructed over the last 4-5 years have in-built day nurseries in their design to accommodate the children of public servants although these are yet to be used for the designated purpose. The National Assistance Board continued with its mission of maintaining the dignity of elderly and indigent persons through the provision of an innovative range of social and recreational services thus ensuring support for frail, elderly and vulnerable persons who might need intense forms of care. During the period under review, approximately 1,000 elderly persons, the majority of whom have been women, benefitted from the home care services each year. Women also comprise the majority of clients at their day care facilities.

Legislated maternity leave of 12 weeks is granted to Barbadian women and the present government has indicated that they will be working towards legislating paternity leave during 2020. The Employment Rights Act also prohibits dismissal of persons who are responsible for the care and welfare of a child or dependent family member with a disability during an emergency affecting the child or dependent family member with the disability.

Barbados promotes the Decent Work agenda under the relevant International Labour Organisation convention and has developed initiatives, such as a Migrant Workers' Policy, to ensure safe working and living conditions for workers. Inspections are enabled under the relevant acts to ensure proper occupational and health standards, among other things.

### **Poverty eradication, social protection and social services**

During the period under review, both poverty and vulnerability continued to be gendered, with the majority of women falling into these two categories as identified in both the 2010 Country Assessment of Living Conditions (CALC) and the 2016 Barbados Survey of Living Conditions.

### **Reduction and eradication of poverty among women and girls**

Various initiatives were taken by both state and non-state actors to seek to ensure poor women's access to decent work. These include the Barbados Employment and Career Counselling Service

(BECCS) which aims to improve the employment potential of retrenched workers and other job seekers by helping them find decent employment through the provision of free and enhanced services. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) also financed a Strengthening Human and Social Development in Barbados project with the objective of contributing to the reduction of extreme poverty and unemployment. Educational institutions such as the *Barbados Vocational Training Board* (BVBT) continued to offer *training* to both unemployed females and males and persons already in the workforce. Slightly more females than males enrolled in and completed their training programmes, but they continued to focus on traditional female areas.

Non-governmental organisations working with poor women to ensure their access to decent work include Jabez House, which facilitates the transition of interested female sex workers from sex work through educational and vocational training, among other things.

The Government of Barbados continued its programmes to expand the access of its vulnerable, poor and disadvantaged citizens to assets such as land, housing, finance and technology through a number of agencies. One of these is the Community Development Department which provides free computer and telecommunications technology training through its Community Technology Programme (CTP) at Community Resource Centres across the island. Although information was not accessed on the numbers trained during the review period specifically, since its inception approximately 85 percent of persons trained have been women.

The Government of Barbados has placed strong emphasis on facilitating and supporting entrepreneurship and business development activities as one way of responding to rising levels of unemployment, retrenchment and to assist with the economy's recovery. While these activities are not specifically geared towards women, they are able to benefit from them once they meet the requirements. Included are incentives for micro and small businesses such as grants, loans, technical assistance and training in areas such as basic business management and entrepreneurship training; business counselling; marketing and promotion and tradeshows.

There are ongoing efforts to ensure a level of social protection for women and girls. The National Insurance Scheme, for example, offers benefits such as a maternity benefit or grant, old age contributory pension or grant, survivors' pension and invalidity benefits. During the period under review, the Welfare Department continued to carry out its mandate to provide a variety of services to families and individuals in need of assistance in coping with financial, personal and family problems and has strengthened its programmes by offering increased monetary and other assistance. Records at the end of March 2019 indicate that slightly more women than men were on the monetary assistance register. The department places a lot of focus on women clients since it is felt that when women are assisted, children are also assisted.

During the period under review, the Poverty Alleviation and Reduction Programme (PARP) section of the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs continued to oversee those activities that had a direct focus on poverty reduction at the household level and also assisted non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations and community-based organisations involved in poverty reduction and community intervention programmes.

A number of non-governmental organisations offer social protection assistance or provide referrals towards the reduction of poverty among women and children, including breakfast feeding programmes, distribution of school supplies and food items and financial and in-kind assistance for girls to attend the Barbados-based campus of the University of the West Indies.

### **Access to social protection for women and girls**

There were ongoing initiatives to ensure social protection for unemployed women during the period under review. The National Insurance Scheme continued to provide payment of unemployment

benefits for six months and worked closely with the BECCS to ensure that unemployed women had an equal opportunity to access the free services.

The Identification, Stabilisation, Enablement and Empowerment (ISEE) Bridge Programme attempts to tackle poverty at the household level and seeks to reduce poverty by transforming the lives of vulnerable households from a state of dependency to empowerment. This commenced in 2012 with a pilot project and a second phase in 2015, comprising 27 female-headed households out of 30 households. Women between ages 30 - 64 represented the highest age demographic in the first cohort. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) financed a loan for a further expansion of this programme in the Strengthening Human and Social Development in Barbados project. To date, the families in this expansion also comprise predominantly female-headed households.

The organisations for persons with disabilities (PWD) report that their challenges include access to transportation, accessible sidewalks and roads and limited employment options. Many PWD, including women, find it difficult to find employment commensurate with their educational background and, as a result, they are often forced to continue living at home under undesirable and harmful circumstances.

### **Health outcomes for women and girls**

The Ministry of Health and Wellness identified the promotion and protection of health of the population through improved performance of the health system and engaged and mobilised partners in health. Some of the identified health challenges were an increasing presence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs); the threat of new and re-emerging diseases; high investment costs for service delivery and an overall reduction in the percentage of total health expenditure.

There has been improved access to services for post-natal mothers and guidelines for ante-natal care with the expectation of reducing maternal morbidity and improving neo-natal health. NCDs affect about 40 percent of the population with a higher incidence in women; it was also identified that minorities such as Muslim women shared the same national profile regarding NCDs. During the period under review, NCDs received special interventions with a universal access approach in collaboration with other agencies working towards healthy lifestyle practices and preventative social determinants of health. A Strategic Plan for NCDs 2015-2019 was approved at the end of 2014, providing a roadmap for all national related prevention and control actions by governmental agencies, the private sector and civil society.

The preventative approach included a Childhood Obesity Plan supported by NGOs. It was inclusive of outreach to students at primary schools and the training of canteen operators and home economics teachers, most of whom are women.

HIV/AIDS awareness strategies also emphasised and promoted health seeking behaviours. NGOs and the state collaborated in promoting sexuality education both in schools and through community programmes. There is a continuous lowering mortality rates from HIV/AIDS and mother-to-child transmission as government continued to be committed to providing access to anti-retroviral treatments. The contraction rate is higher among men. The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine was introduced to girls in the first form of secondary schools in 2014.

The leading cause of death among women remained breast, uterus and cervical cancers which account for 49% of all cancer deaths. The Ministry of Health, the Barbados Cancer Society and Cancer Support Services have supported an enhanced national screening programme for breast, cervix, prostate and colon cancer.



NGO involvement in raising awareness and sensitisation to women's pelvic health concerns occurred via the Barbados Association of Endometriosis.

### **Education outcomes and skills for women and girls**

The Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training's strategic goals identify the provision of high-quality sound basic education at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels to every citizen to equip them to recognise and realise their potential for development.

During the period under review, budget allocation to pre-primary and primary education increased by 13%. There is equality of access for males and females to educational institutions. At the secondary level, the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) were implemented in some secondary schools.

The A Ganar Programme, which is under the Skills for the Future Project, was established through a loan and partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank focussing on improving the quality and relevance of secondary education and the effectiveness of technical and vocational education and training. This programme aimed to facilitate the school to work transition with three phases – Academic and Life Skill-Building, Technical Training and Internship – with the expected outcome of improving the level of success among both young women and men. The gender profile of students participating in the technical and vocational training reflects traditional choices, for example males in barbering and females in sewn products.

The National Cultural Foundation facilitated training in the new and emerging fields in the effective use of social media. To this end, forty-two persons were trained in digital photography. Efforts are being made to encourage more girls to participate in non-traditional technical and vocational subjects and the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines. The Caribbean Science Foundation organises a series of STEM-related training activities. Since 2015, it has organised an annual Junior Robotics Camp, the aim of which is to introduce basic technology and engineering concepts to children. The camps are targeted at children who are passionately interested in STEM subjects and enjoy hands-on work. Students from low-income households and girls are especially encouraged to apply.

Violence in schools has emerged as a challenge for both girls and boys and there have been increasing reports of bullying in Barbados. The response includes increase in guidance counsellors and social workers; however, the approaches do not include sensitivity or awareness of the gendered nature of violence and bullying in the school system.

During the period under review, teen pregnancies were down over previous levels. While it is not a legal obligation, the Ministry of Education's policy is to allow pregnant teens to return to school to complete their education. This policy is said to be challenged by the attitudes of certain school educators. Various organisations provide services in the area of sexual and reproductive health, including for adolescents. These services include school programmes, contraceptive and sexual health counselling and advocacy.

### **Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes**

The level of domestic violence in Barbados continues to be a major concern, particularly violence against women and girls. Data made available from the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) indicate that reports of domestic violence exceeded one per day for the years 2016 – 2018 which represent an increase from the previous reporting period. However, this increase in reports might partially be attributed to an increase in incidents of violence but could also be attributed to a number of other factors. These include related activities during the year and particularly around International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women organised by both governmental and non-governmental agencies that have helped to raised awareness about violence

against women and enabled survivors and the general public to have a better understanding of the related issues. Other factors that might be reflected in the increase include amendments to the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act and the Sexual Offences Act, increased training within the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) by the Family Conflict Intervention Unit (FCIU) and, according to the FCIU, the confidence of survivors to report matters to the police with a higher degree of expectancy of resolution, professionalism and confidentiality.

The Government of Barbados remains committed to eradicating violence against women and girls and, during the period under review, it prioritised legislation dealing with various forms of violence against women in an effort to ensure that the legislation is comprehensive and responds effectively to the needs of women and girls.

### **Addressing violence against women and girls**

The enforcement and implementation of the amended legislation on intimate domestic violence continued to be enabled by ongoing training of police officers, including recruits at the training school, conducted by the FCIU. The amended legislation requires police officers to respond to all reports of domestic violence but victims' failure to cooperate and follow up can hinder enforcement. However, the police officers can provide initial protection through their power to issue Emergency Protection Orders.

A National Task Force on Human Trafficking was established in 2011 but its work was interrupted by general elections in May 2018. It is now operating under the aegis of the Attorney General's office. A National Action Plan for Trafficking is to be updated and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval.

Some measures have been implemented towards increasing women's access to justice. These include training of the judiciary through the regional Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) project and the establishment of a Domestic Violence Bench Book to serve as the basis for domestic violence training as well as an easy reference for judges and magistrates hearing domestic violence cases. In addition to the training of police officers by the FCIU, the Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean (Impact Justice) project also organises training sessions for officers with the aim of enabling enhanced access to justice benefitting men, women, youth and businesses across the region.

In relation to trafficking, a lot of work was done in the area of training and sensitisation of the relevant personnel to the issue during the review period. These personnel included police officers, the Immigration Department, the Child Care Board (CCB), other government agencies and members of civil society organisations. The police force established a Sex Crimes and Trafficking Unit in 2013 and this plays a supportive role by conducting raids, surveillance and monitoring.

### **Services for survivors of violence**

During the review period, the Government of Barbados continued to work towards the provision of support services for survivors of violence, including collaborating with and supporting civil society organisations such as BPW Barbados in relation to the Shelter for Abused Women. Counselling is also offered through a number of government departments. The Child Care Board investigates child sexual abuse and the National Disabilities Unit works with women with disabilities who have been abused.

There are various services for survivors of trafficking such as temporary housing, including for children; health care; assistance in returning home; provision of social services through the Welfare Department and medical care through the Ministry of Health.

Various non-governmental organisations offer services for survivors including shelter, at present only for acute cases; crisis hotlines; counselling; education; referrals; support; advocacy around the issue and awareness-building.

### **Prevention of violence against women and girls**

The Bureau of Gender Affairs continued to work with its partners and stakeholders to organise activities as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women and to raise awareness about gender-based violence. During the period under review, there were various activities, primarily workshops and seminars, in relation to grassroots and community-level mobilisation. Ongoing work is also done with men and boys around the issue of violence against women and girls to increase their awareness. For example, the Bureau of Gender Affairs organises annual workshops with secondary school boys around the 16 Days of Activism looking at gender, masculinities and gender-based violence and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme targets adult males who have been violent towards women. The PfP is designed to encourage men to take accountability for their actions and to support them in achieving a violence-free lifestyle.

## **Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions**

### **Promotion of women's participation in public life and decision-making**

There are no legal barriers in Barbados for participation in elective politics and women's rights for participation and association are guaranteed under the constitution. However, women are generally underrepresented since they have tended not to participate in electoral politics, but they continue to play active supportive roles at the political level.

Barbados elected its first woman Prime Minister in 2018 and in 2017, the second woman Governor General was sworn in. There was a three percent increase of women elected to parliament and selected for Cabinet. The Upper House saw an increase of nineteen percent selected to be Senators.

The administrative decision-making positions in the civil service comprise fifty-five percent of women. Within the category of permanent secretary, the most senior civil servant, there are fourteen females representing fifty-six per-cent. Other related grade administrative decision makers represent forty-two percent; in this category there are ten females representing fifty-five percent. Within the judiciary, there are currently five female High Court judges compared to three males. Within the Court of Appeal, there are currently two females and three males. Women occupy senior positions within the trade unions and three of the major trade unions are headed by women. Most of the organisations of persons with disabilities are headed by women.

One major activity which provided mentorship for young women is the Barbados National Youth Parliament which was launched in 2014 to provide opportunities and platforms for young people to learn about politics, democracy, social work and the parliamentary system.

### **Women's access to expression and participation in the media**

There have been efforts to ensure that there is free wi-fi access around Barbados, but this has only been partially successful and is ongoing. A number of government community centres have fully operational free Wi-Fi networks and the National Conservation Commission has also started to work on ensuring free Wi-Fi access for beach and park users.

### **National strategy or action plan for gender equality**

A draft National Policy on Gender and a Gender Action Plan was developed and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers in 2016. The recommendations from the Cabinet have been incorporated and the revised policy has to be reviewed before resubmission.

### **National human rights institution**

Although there is no national human rights institution in Barbados, there is a Human Rights Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. In addition, the Office of the Ombudsman investigates complaints by Barbadians or persons residing in Barbados about the conduct of Government Ministries, Departments or Statutory Authorities.

### **Peaceful and inclusive societies**

#### **Discrimination against and violations of the girl child**

There are various efforts to ensure that girls have continued access to quality education, skills development and training. These include an Information Technology Summer Teens Programme for young persons in disadvantaged communities. Soroptimists International of Barbados continued to organise its New Horizons Project at the girls' unit of the Government Industrial School, which is a juvenile reform school for girls, which includes mentoring and a literacy programme. Another Soroptimist project entails equipping the students of the two female-only secondary schools with marketable skills as well as a mentorship programme.

### **Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation**

#### **Integration of gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies**

The Government of Barbados has drafted a National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF), which provides the country's overarching approach to adaptation. The NCCPF is monitored by the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), on which the Bureau of Gender Affairs is represented. The groups identified as most vulnerable to climate change include women and, as a result, gender plays a central role in the draft National Climate Change Policy Framework. A Gender Action Plan for the Environment has been developed.

## **SECTION THREE: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES**

### **Current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women**

The Bureau of Gender Affairs is the prime Government agency which exists to support and progress gender issues and has responsibility for incorporating a gender perspective into all of Government's plans and policies. The Bureau is located in the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs which delivers social protection and deals with social issues.

### **Institutional process for SDG implementation**

There is no national process for SDG implementation. However, in 2017, a Permanent Secretary located in the Prime Minister's Office was given responsibility for addressing the SDGs.

## **SECTION FOUR: DATA AND STATISTICS**

### **Progress in relation to gender statistics at national level**

The Barbados Government has not yet started using gender statistics at the national level. However, it has supported the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Gender Equality Indicators which are to identify, assess, measure and track the persistent gender equality concerns and disparities across the CARICOM region, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The IDB-funded Strengthening Human and Social Development in Barbados project has a component on enhancing institutional capacity through a Management Information System (MIS). The objective of this component is to strengthen public institutions involved in the project in terms of their coordination, monitoring and accountability capacities, through the installation of MIS.

### **Priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years**

The Barbados Government, through the Bureau of Gender Affairs, proposes a series of activities to build awareness about the linkages between gender indicators and the international conventions which Barbados has signed and ratified and to develop a strategy for storing information and data based on the gender indicators.

To this end, the priorities for the next five years will include the development of a project proposal for the establishment of a gender management system, the identification of funding to establish and implement the gender management system, sensitisation of all government offices and developing a centralised web-based database and/or dashboard on gender statistics and the identification of sources of data and access.

### **National set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs**

Barbados proposes to use the core indicators developed by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. Data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators has started but the indicators have not been prioritised as yet.

## SECTION ONE: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

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### **Most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past five years**

The Government of Barbados considers gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to be priorities. Consequently, the Government's strategies to achieving these centre around the articles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

The Government acknowledges the fact that although significant progress has been made towards achieving gender equality, a number of challenges and obstacles still exist in the process of implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Following are some of the most important achievements and challenges as well as some of the setbacks experienced in the progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past five years:

#### **Achievements:**

- i. The updating of legislation in relation to domestic violence, trafficking in persons and sexual offences as well as new legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace. These laws lay the framework for additional protection to survivors of violence in various forms and for the punishment of perpetrators. The amendments to the domestic violence legislation were enabled by a comprehensive process of review and public consultation. A National Task Force on Human Trafficking would also have enabled the review of the legislation in that area.
- ii. Violence against women – namely sensitisation and awareness building activities; technical support given to women's organisations; the continuation and strengthening of the Family Conflict Intervention Unit (FCIU); the establishment of a Sex Crime and Trafficking Unit; training of judges, magistrates and police officers.
- iii. Women and health in relation to HIV/AIDS – women's increased access to health services such as antiretroviral drugs and a reduction in the mother to child transmission of HIV facilitated by free access to drugs; a focus on stigma and discrimination; programmes organised by the National HIV/AIDS Commission such as the Man Aware and Transition to Secondary Schools (T2S) programmes; and the establishment of HIV/AIDS focal points and committees within each Ministry.

- iv. Social protection for poor women – the Country Assessment of Living Conditions (CALC) and Poverty Alleviation and Reduction Programme (PARP) related initiatives and their success, including the Identification Stabilisation Enablement Empowerment (ISEE) Bridge programme which addresses poverty from the household level.
- v. Women in power and decision-making – more women presented themselves as potential candidates for the 2018 general elections. In addition, political parties selected more women as candidates and two parties were led by women leading up to the elections. Barbados now has a female prime minister for the first time.

**Some of the challenges include:**

- i. Inadequate gender statistics – this is an ongoing challenge that the proposed gender management system will be seeking to address.
- ii. Ambivalence (continued) towards gender – the concept is often misunderstood and seen as representing women and as being in opposition to men’s issues.
- iii. Negative stereotypical gender norms that impact on how women and men relate to each other. These also impact on the progress that can be made towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment at the national level.
- iv. No formal gender policy is in place as yet although a draft policy has been developed.
- v. Limited human resources in the Bureau of Gender Affairs – this negatively impacts on the capacity of the Bureau to achieve its mandate of ensuring the integration of gender in all national development plans and policies to achieve gender equity and equality.

## **Priorities for acceleration of progress for women and girls over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programmes**

### **i. Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice**

The Government of Barbados addressed these priorities through amending existing legislation and enacting new legislation as follows: The Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) (Amendment) Act, 2016; The Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act, 2017; The Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act, 2016 and the Sexual Offences Act, 2016.

### **ii. Quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls**

Quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls continue to be ongoing priorities for Barbados which recognises the value of universal education. To this end, Barbados provides free access up to tertiary level for its citizens, regardless of sex. Young women's participation rate in formal schooling beyond secondary level is consistently high as is their performance at various levels of education. A focus must now be on ensuring that girls pursue STEM subjects to a greater degree as well as those technical and vocational areas that are considered to be traditionally male.

### **iii. Eliminating violence against women and girls**

The government has continued to prioritise the elimination of violence against women and girls in various ways, including the amendment of legislation and the introduction of new legislation. It has also continued to strengthen the work of the Family Conflict Intervention Unit and started a Sex Crime and Trafficking Unit.

### **iv. Gender-responsive social protection**

Various social protection policies and programmes have been introduced prior to and during the past five years. Although these might not be focussed on women, research has confirmed that poverty and vulnerability are gendered so that women will be the primary beneficiaries of these policies and programmes.

### **v. Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental stability**

The government has drafted a National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF), which is monitored by a National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), on which the Bureau of Gender Affairs is represented as the National Climate Change Gender Affairs Focal Point.



## **Measures taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination**

The government has taken a number of measures over the years to seek to address the issue of discrimination and promote the rights of women in the following categories:

- Women living with disabilities
- Women living with HIV/AIDS
- Younger women
- Older women

## **Priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls for the coming five years through laws, policies and programmes**

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Unpaid care and domestic work/work-family conciliation
- Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes

The Government of Barbados will address these priorities through public education programmes, ongoing review of discriminatory laws and policies and through collaboration and dialogue with key stakeholders.

## SECTION TWO: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

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Barbados signed on to the following five critical areas of concern in 1995 – Women and poverty; Women and health; Violence against women; Women in power and decision-making and Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. However, this reports also provides a review of the progress made in the other areas of concern.

### **Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work**

Barbados is a small open economy that is largely dependent on tourism and international financial services and, to a lesser extent, construction, food and agriculture. During the period under review, Barbados faced an economic crisis with contracted economic growth, declining international reserves and high public debt, among other things. Home-grown austerity measures were introduced from 2013 with steep spending cuts and layoffs of over 3,000 public workers. Despite this, the economy continued to contract. A new government came to power in May 2018 and developed a Barbados Economic Recovery Transformation (BERT) programme and successfully approached the IMF for assistance with its implementation in September 2018. BERT includes further job losses as well as additional austerity measures.

The economic crisis has resulted in relatively high levels of unemployment and underemployment and has had a negative effect on livelihoods. Table 1 indicates employment and employment in by sex between 2014 – 2017. Women continued to be overwhelmingly represented in areas where they traditionally dominate, namely the occupations of Clerks and Service/Shop Workers. Historically, the unemployment rate among women has been higher than that for men but this seems to have levelled off from 2009/10 and was actually slightly higher among men in 2015. Unemployment rates among young people (15-24 years of age) are generally higher than among adults and this is more severe for young females.

**Table 1: Employment and Unemployment by sex - 2014-2017**

Year	No of Persons Employed (000)			Unemployment Rate (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Both Sexes
2014	63.5	61.3	124.8	11.8	12.8	12.3
2015	63.9	64.3	128.2	12.3	10.3	11.3
2016	67.5	65.4	132.9	9.3	10.1	9.7
2017	66.2	63.7	129.9	9.8	10.1	10.0

Source: Statistical Service Labour Force Survey 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

## **Gender equality in relation to women’s role in paid work and employment**

### **Laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation**

Barbados has enacted a range of labour laws which address the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers. A draft bill called the Employment (Prevention of Discrimination) Bill will shortly go before Parliament. This will seek to ensure that a worker would not be discriminated against on the basis of colour, sex, political affiliation, religion or illness, among other things.

In 2012, the Employment Rights Act, which conferred new employment rights on employees, was passed. These rights include the right to a statutory minimum amount of notice of termination for both employers and employees; the right, at the commencement of employment, to a written statement of the particulars of the employment; the right to be consulted before being laid off or placed on short-time and the right not to be unfairly dismissed. Matters go before an Employment Rights Tribunal which has the power to award compensation and to order reinstatement or reengagement of an unfairly dismissed employee.

This Act is presently under review following concerns raised by workers, employers and other members of the public. The disabled community has also raised concerns about their rights under the Act.

There is no equal pay legislation in Barbados, but successive Governments have ensured that there is equal pay for equal work and equal opportunities in employment in the public service and that there is no disparity between the salaries paid to men and women doing the same job. In addition, the certification required for jobs does not differ based on sex. The private sector sets out its own terms of employment and there are not normally any challenges coming before the Ministry of Labour and Social Partner Relations (MSLP) in this connection.

Since 2004, the social partners have developed a Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and other Life-Threatening Illnesses in the Workplace which is still being utilised. This sought to address several critical issues facing employers and employees in relation to HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses in the workplace. Among other things, it provides guidelines to ensure that no discrimination exists in the workplace with respect to “job applications, hiring, upgrading, advancement, promotion, discharge, discipline, lay-offs, privileges of employment, compensation, training or other terms and conditions of employment.”

### **Gender-responsive active labour market policies**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Partner Relations always takes a range of crosscutting issues, including gender and vulnerability, into account in developing any active labour market policies. They analyse how all policies might have a differential impact on women and men.

The Ministry also seeks to ensure that any training courses, such as technical and vocational skills training, are marketed to both women and men particularly those courses that are traditionally dominated by women or men. This process has already commenced through most of the educational institutions.

### **Prevention of sexual harassment, including in the workplace**

The Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act, 2017 came into force in December 2017 to make provision for the protection of employees from sexual harassment in the workplace in both the public and private sectors (see p35 for details).

The Labour Department of the Barbados Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations collaborated in 2018 with the Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean (IMPACT Justice) project to produce and launch two brochures on sexual harassment: “Model Workplace Policy Statement Against Sexual Harassment” and “Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: What You Should Know”.

### **Financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women**

There are presently a number of ongoing initiatives through which self-employed women can apply for credit and grants although these might not be aimed exclusively towards women. These include:

- Enterprise Growth Fund Limited – provides grants and loans to micro and small businesses
- Rural Development Commission – there are three facilities through which persons can access loans: The Rural Enterprise Fund, the Livestock Development Fund and the Fruit Orchard Development Fund

- Ministry of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Commerce
  - o Small Business Development Unit – provides a loan guarantee cover for small businesses under the Credit Guarantee Scheme
  - o Trust Loan Fund Unit – a Trust Loan Fund for Small Businesses was launched in November 2018; persons engaged in or seeking to engage in a legitimate business activity can apply for a security free loan of up to BBD5,000 with a six month grace period; once repaid, they can qualify for a second loan of up to BBD10,000. Six persons, half of whom were women, received loans in November 2018.

### **Transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment**

The Government of Barbados encourages informal workers to register with the relevant governmental agencies so that they can access and benefit from the various social services offered to formal workers.

## **Unpaid care and domestic work and work-family conciliation**

### **Childcare services**

All government buildings constructed over the last 4-5 years have in-built day nurseries in their design to accommodate the children of public servants. Unfortunately, to date, most of the designated rooms are used for other purposes. However, there has been a recent directive that they should be used for their designated purpose.

### **Support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care**

The National Assistance Board (NAB) continued with its mission of maintaining the dignity of elderly and indigent persons through the provision of an innovative range of social and recreational services that are accessible, acceptable and readily available. It does this while enhancing the quality of life of older and vulnerable persons within their communities.

The NAB's services include a Home Care Programme; Community Nursing Project; Seniors' Recreational Activities Programme; Residential Care Facilities and the Helping Hands Volunteer Project. The Home Care Programme offers non-paying at home assistance to elderly persons with activities of daily living such as cleaning, cooking, washing and personal hygiene. The Community Nursing Project offers nursing and health care needs to clients who are bedridden, affected by strokes or otherwise incapacitated. The Helping Hands Volunteer Project aims to enhance the Home Care Programme by providing social and mental stimulation to elderly persons living alone. The NAB also has a Social Work Section that

provides services such as referrals to the Welfare Department and acquires welfare grants, food vouchers, beds and house rents on behalf of elderly clients.

As Table 2 indicates, during the period under review, approximately 1,000 elderly persons, the majority of whom have been women, benefitted from the home care services each year. The majority of clients at the Day Care Centre have also been women.

**Table 2: Female Clients of NAB's Home Care Programme & Day Care Centre 2014-2019**

Home Care Programme				Elderly Day Care Centre			
Years	Females	Total Recipients	% Females	Years	Females	Total Recipients	% Females
2014-2015	680	1,051	64.70	2014-2015	--	--	--
2015-2016	654	1,013	64.56	2015-2016	12	13	88.46
2016-2017	640	984	65.04	2016-2017	24	28	83.93
2017-2018	623	947	65.79	2017-2018	26	29	88.79
2018-2019	627	955	65.65	2018-2019	30	35	85.48

Source: National Assistance Board, Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs

### **Maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave**

Legislated maternity leave of 12 weeks is granted to Barbadian women. While paternity leave is not legislated, it does exist in some private organisations for periods ranging from three to five days, usually to be taken within one month of the child's birth. However, the present government has indicated that they will be working towards legislating paternity leave during 2020.

The Employment Rights Act prohibits dismissal of persons who are responsible for the care and welfare of a child or dependent family member with a disability under the immediate control of the employee, being a responsibility associated with an emergency affecting the child or dependent family member with the disability.

### **Decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers**

Barbados promotes the Decent Work agenda under the relevant International Labour Organisation convention. The Barbados Workers Union launched a Domestic Workers Division in 2017 to look after the right of domestic workers. The Ministry of Labour and Social

Partner Relations in 2017 also developed a Migrant Workers' Policy which covers safe working and living conditions. The Occupational Health and Safety Act enables inspections to ensure that occupational and health standards are being met. The Industrial Relations Department also carries out inspections to ensure that employees' rights are being upheld.

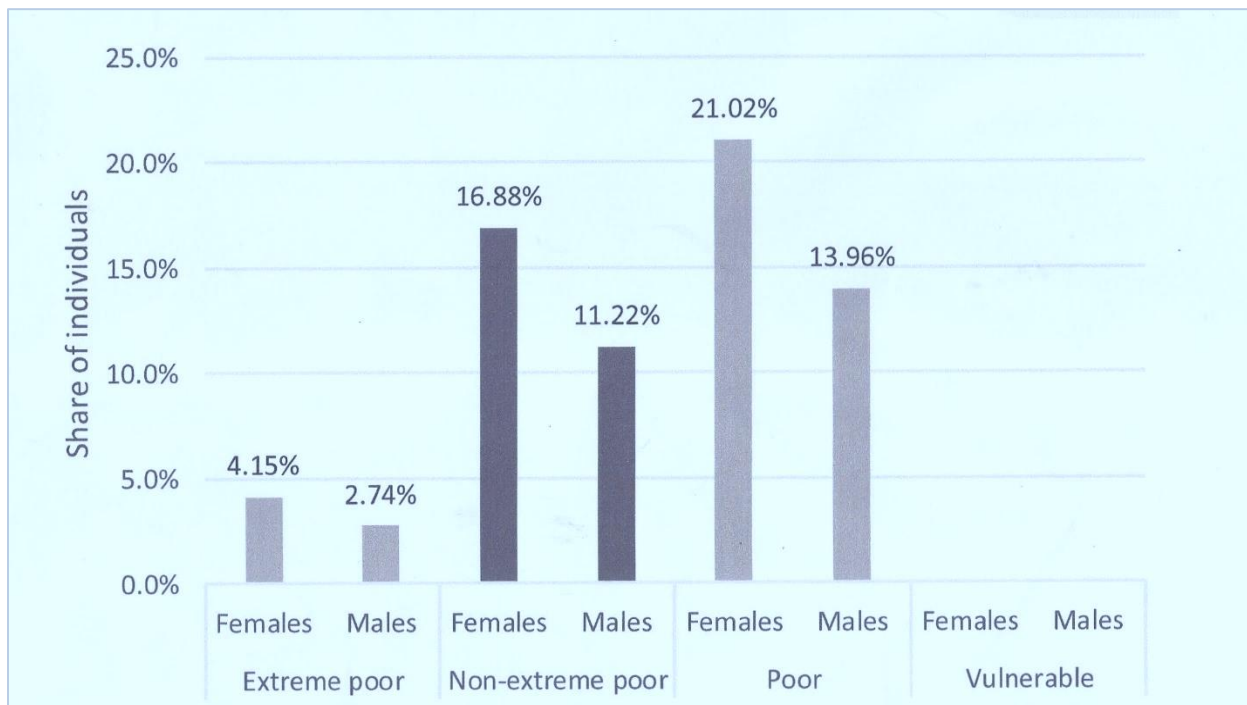
### **Austerity/fiscal consolidation measures**

Home-grown austerity measures were introduced from 2013, and in 2018 the Barbados Economic Recovery Transformation (BERT) programme commenced in September with assistance from the International Monetary Fund. BERT is ongoing until 2022.

### **Poverty eradication, social protection and social services**

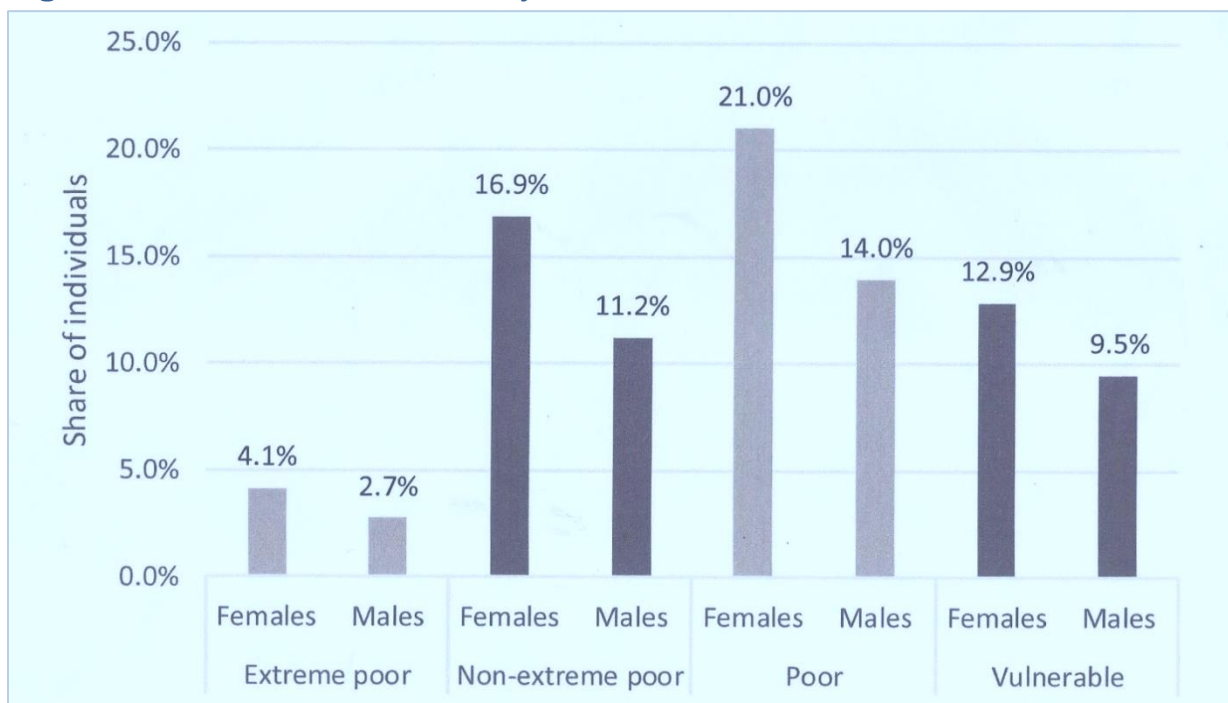
Poverty continued to be gendered (see Figure 1) during the period under review as noted in the last national review based on the Country Assessment of Living Conditions (CALC) conducted in 2010. The Barbados Survey of Living Conditions was subsequently conducted in 2016 and found, among other things, that in Barbados overall poverty levels, as measured by consumption per capita, have increased. Extreme poverty decreased in 2016 to 3.6% as compared with 6.8% in 2010. However, non-extreme poverty rose to 13.8% in 2016 from 8.4% in 2010. The vulnerability rate remained mainly stable with some non-vulnerable persons falling into vulnerability. This survey confirmed that vulnerability in Barbados remains gendered as was found in the 2010 CALC (Figure 2).

**Figure 1 - Gender Component of Poverty, 2016**



Source: Barbados Survey of Living Conditions, InterAmerican Development Bank

**Figure 2 - Gender and Vulnerability, 2016**



Source: Barbados Survey of Living Conditions, Inter-American Development Bank



## **Reduction and eradication of poverty among women and girls**

### **Poor women's access to decent work**

Following are some of the initiatives taken by both state and non-state actors towards promoting poor women's access to decent work:

- The Barbados Employment and Career Counselling Service (BECCS), formerly the National Employment Bureau, is the Government of Barbados' national employment service. It was rebranded in 2017 with the aim of improving the employment potential of retrenched workers and other job seekers. The BECCS seeks to find decent employment for all Barbadians through the provision of free and enhanced services, including career counselling; training in writing effective job applications and resumes; training in interview etiquette; referral of job seekers to local and overseas employment and facilitating the advertisement of vacancies and recruitment services for employers.

- The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) financed a Strengthening Human and Social Development in Barbados through a loan of US\$10 million. The project was signed in December 2015 and commenced implementation activities in June 2016. The objective is to contribute to the reduction of extreme poverty and unemployment in Barbados and it is structured in three components, with the following specific objectives:

- x To reduce extreme poverty through the expansion and consolidation of the Identification, Stabilisation, Enablement, Empowerment (ISEE) Bridge Programme (IBP) – (see page 25)
- x To reduce unemployment through improved employment services and demand-driven technical training and
- x To create an efficient Management Information System (MIS) that connects programmes executed by the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs (MPEA), the Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations (MLSP) and related institutions.

The project is being implemented by the MPEA in collaboration with the MLSP, the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, under the unified strategic “umbrella” defined by the Medium-term Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) 2013-2020.

The second component of the project, Strengthening of Active Labour Market Policies, aims to increase employability and employment of the unemployed, including adults participating in the IBP, retrenched public servants and youth. The role of the BECCS will be enhanced based on a strengthening plan already prepared by the MLSP. The plan includes the professionalisation of vocational counsellors for better career counselling and referrals to training opportunities and job vacancies, including efforts to promote gender equity; a comprehensive marketing plan to provide a rebranding of BECCS, with enhanced manage-

ment of stakeholder relationships and more direct interaction with employers at all levels and the development of links to labour market information.

- Technical training The programme will finance demand-driven technical training courses for 540 unemployed and vulnerable youth aged 16 - 30 years old while at the same time promoting gender equity. Beneficiaries will be selected using a Proxy Means Test (PMT) together with qualitative information to be gathered through interviews by vocational counsellors. Counsellors will develop a career plan with beneficiaries to ensure their effective job placement. Upon completion of the training course, the programme will finance skills standards certification, which will measure the programme's success through the skills learnt by participants. Priority will be given to training packages for the sectors with potential for job creation. Training will be competence-based with full-time dedication for 34 weeks. Participants will receive a stipend to cover transportation and meal expenses.
- Development of training package for an additional strategic sector In order to supporting the government's efforts to diversify its economy and open investment to new sectors, the programme will support the development of a skills needs analysis and a training package for a sector with the potential for job creation. This analysis will benefit from the methodological mechanisms developed for other strategic sectors and will finance the development of relevant training curricula, training materials and teaching methods for better learning outcomes.
- The Barbados Vocational Training Board (BVBT) offers training to the unemployed and persons already in the work-force through Skills Training, Evening, Apprenticeship and In-Plant training programmes. For the years under review where data were available, the enrolment and completion numbers for males and females were similar with slightly more females enrolling in and completing their courses. However, males tend to dominate enrolment in the Agricultural, Automotive, Machine and Appliance and other areas of skills training. On the other hand, female enrolment is generally higher in the Apparel and Sewn Product, Art and Craft, Beauty and Care Services, Hospitality and Information Technology areas of skills training.
- Jabez House is a non-governmental organisation that facilitates the transition of interested female sex workers from sex work through educational and vocational training. The organisation commenced in 2012 and has reached out to approximately 300 female sex workers, with several of them leaving sex work and finding alternative means of economic self-sufficiency. Jabez House's services include housing, vocational training, access to sexual and reproductive health care including tests for HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, pap smears and general health checks, individual counselling and group therapy and the provision of food and toiletries.

## **Access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services**

The Government of Barbados continued its programmes to improve the living standards and the quality of life of vulnerable, poor and disadvantaged individuals, groups and communities through agencies such as the Rural Development Commission (RDC), the Urban Development Commission (UDC), the National Housing Corporation (NHC) and the Community Development Department (CDD). These programmes are carried out in areas such as access to land, housing and technology.

The Urban Development Commission seeks to provide services that would assist in the eradication of poverty and enhance sustainable quality of life and high standards of persons living in the urban area of Barbados. Among other things, the UDC manages house replacement and repair programmes. The Rural Development Commission seeks to improve the lives of rural residents by assisting them with housing and bathroom facilities, among other things. The National Housing Corporation aims to find acceptable housing solutions for Barbadians at affordable prices.

The Community Development Department provides free computer and telecommunications technology training through its Community Technology Programme (CTP) at Community Resource Centres across the island. This is aimed at helping to overcome the inequities in access that result in greater challenges for individuals' access to employment, knowledge, learning, and active participation in society. The programme was implemented since 2002 with the aim of providing ICTs at the community level and was expected to increase academic progress, enable wider communication and expand career and business opportunities for persons at the community level.

In 2016, the Cabinet of Barbados approved a number of new courses under the CTP to make the programme more relevant and current to the needs of those persons without the necessary prerequisites to gain advancement in mainstream learning institutions. This shift from the initial objective of the programme was expected to enhance its original mandate of reducing poverty by giving women and young persons in communities equal opportunity in the job market and in learning institutions or to realise their dreams as self-employed small business owners.

Although information was not accessed on the numbers trained during the review period specifically, since its inception the majority of persons trained have been women. To date the CTP has trained over 50,000 persons with approximately 85 percent being women between the ages of 18 and 80+. The programme has been successful in closing the gap between those who have the financial means to access technology and those who do not, thereby opening up avenues for persons from low income communities to expand their employment opportunities and for small business persons to access additional markets in which to sell their goods or products.

## **Women's entrepreneurship and business development activities**

The Government of Barbados has placed strong emphasis on facilitating and supporting entrepreneurship and business development activities as one way of responding to rising levels of unemployment, retrenchment and to assist with the recovery of the economy. To this end, a number of initiatives are offered, some of which started prior to the review period (see Beijing +20 Report) and some during the review period. While these are not specifically geared towards women, they are able to benefit from them once they meet the requirements.

- During 2014, the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) of the then Ministry of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development established a National Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME) Steering Committee with a mandate to develop a National MSME Policy and Strategy.

- The Barbados Small Business Development Centre (SBDC) Network was launched in 2015.

- Available incentives for micro and small businesses include grants, loans, technical assistance and training in areas such as basic business management and entrepreneurship training.

- The Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (BIDC) offers a number of services to entrepreneurs, including financial assistance; advice and handholding; training programmes including general business development training, business start-up, financial management, product development, manufacturing practices and food handling and an incubator programme which includes facilities, training, idea development and overseas promotion of products.

- Fund Access offers business development assistance for micro and small businesses; technical assistance via training, workshops, seminars and short courses; marketing and promotion; tradeshows; consultancy and professional services.

- The Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) provides business counselling and mentoring services, entrepreneurial development training, direct technical assistance and access to financial assistance to young entrepreneurs.

Non-state actors also offer various services to entrepreneurs, including:

- The Barbados Youth Business Trust (BYBT) provides technical support in the form of business mentoring, training and general support.

- The Small Business Association (SBA) offers entrepreneurial training (in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, 70 and 82 per cent of the trainees were women); educational seminars, includ-

ing access to finance, proposal writing and E-Commerce; small business management training – this was for persons retrenched from the public sector to enable them to explore self-employment activities; competency-based training; online marketplace and free websites.

- In 2018, the Rural Development Commission re-commenced a start-up loan programme to assist persons who want to get involved in farming. The Commission will also be providing training where necessary so those who receive loans can be more successful in their ventures.

### **Social protection programmes for women and girls**

The standard pensionable age is 67, since January 2018. This was as a result of the National Pension Reform, which begun in January 2003; however from January 1, 2006, the pensionable age moved from 65 to 65 ½ years, with further increases of six months, taking place every four years until 2018.

<b>NIS PENSIONABLE AGES</b>	
Prior to 1 January, 2006	65 Years
1 January, 2006 to 31 December, 2009	65 ½ years
1 January, 2010 to 31 December, 2013	66 years
1 January, 2014 to 31 December, 2017	66 ½ years
1 January, 2018 and after	67 years

Government implemented a reform programme to ensure there is adequate funding for pensions for many years to come. This initiative was driven by the fact that Barbadians are having fewer children and are living longer. Pension reform also means that future pensioners have more options with retirement. Pensions can be taken as early as age 60 with a reduced benefit or at a later retirement age up to 70.

Other benefits offered by the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) to strengthen social protection programmes for women and girls include maternity benefit or grant, old age contributory pension or grant, survivors' pension and invalidity benefits.

During the period under review, the Welfare Department continued to carry out its mandate to provide a variety of services to families and individuals in need of assistance in coping with financial, personal and family problems. Its National Assistance Programme provides financial assistance monthly to the following categories of persons: children, disabled persons, unemployed and underemployed adults and elderly persons not in receipt of a pension. Assistance in kind is also provided in the form of food vouchers, clothing, dentures

and spectacles. Educational assistance in the form of school uniforms and payment or waiver of school fees is provided as well as payment of utility bills and house and land rent.

The Welfare Department has strengthened its programmes by offering increased assistance to families in need and also, because of recent increases in utility bills, will be starting to combine the monetary contribution to the amount for food into one payment to give persons more access to cash and greater flexibility. In addition, in 2016, the ceiling from electricity and water bill payments was removed. In 2018, the level of monetary assistance and the amount paid for rents were increased and arrears in rent were paid off in some cases.

Records at the end of March 2019 indicate that slightly more women than men (2,639 and 1,916 respectively) were on the monetary assistance register. The department places a lot of focus on women clients since it is felt that when women are assisted, children are also assisted.

The School Meals Programme serves a hot meal daily to government primary school children for a nominal cost of BBD1 per week during the school terms and to the children at the lone senior school as well as to private institutions catering to children with disabilities and other vulnerable children. Lunches are also served to selected students at some secondary schools.

During the period under review, the Poverty Alleviation and Reduction Programme (PARP) section of the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs continued to oversee those activities that had a direct focus on poverty reduction at the household level. The programme also facilitates the management of the Poverty Eradication Fund which provides one-off financial assistance to vulnerable, poor and indigent persons with rent or critical utility arrears, educational or medical challenges or housing repair needs. It also assists non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations and community-based organisations involved in poverty reduction and community intervention programmes, such as breakfast feeding programmes for children.

Constituency Councils, which were disbanded in 2018, provided educational assistance in cash and kind, general assistance to households and individuals in cash and kind and canned food drives for persons in need.

A Reverse Tax Credit is given to employed persons who earn less than BBD18,000 per annum. Women benefit from this since this category of persons comprises primarily women.

The National Organisation of Women directs women who contact them for monetary or in-kind assistance to one of their relevant affiliates or they purchase the item(s) as a one-off contribution.

The Young Women's Christian Association runs a national breakfast feeding programme currently providing breakfast for over 1,000 children; other NGOs and faith-based organisations throughout the country also run similar programmes.

Women of Purpose distributes school uniforms, bags, toiletries, stationery and secondary pupils as well as pay caution fees. Monthly packages of breakfast and other food items are also given to families.

The Association of Muslim Ladies notes that the level of poverty is increasing among Muslim families because of the economic downturn. They therefore raise funds to assist these families and also have an Educate Girls Fund to assist girls to go to the University of the West Indies. They offer loans, grants and in-kind assistance.

The Barbados Vagrants and Homeless Society's (BVHS) mission is to reintegrate vagrants and homeless persons into mainstream Barbadian society by providing a holistic rehabilitative housing programme that would enable them to develop into healthy productive citizens. It does this through programmes such as a Breakfast Programme, Direct Care Ministries and Women and Children Homeless Shelter.

### **Low-cost legal services for women living in poverty**

The Community Legal Services Commission administers a legal aid scheme through the Community Legal Services. Currently, legal aid is granted for cases of capital offences, manslaughter, infanticide, concealment of birth and rape, as well as for all offences where the person charged is a minor and in all family issues, except divorce. All applicants for legal aid are subjected to a means test to determine their inability to pay.

However, the IMF support programme that Barbados has entered into is expected to result in challenges to this scheme which is already facing "significant budgetary pressure". This will therefore impact negatively on the ability of women living in poverty to access legal services.

## **Access to social protection for women and girls**

### **Social protection for unemployed women**

The NIS provides for the payment of unemployment benefits for six months and this is linked to mandatory registration at the Barbados Employment and Career Counselling Service (BECCS) – formerly known as the National Employment Bureau) – every three weeks. The NIS works closely with the BECCS to ensure that unemployed women have an equal opportunity to access free services inclusive of technical and vocational training, career counselling, writing effective job applications and resumé, interview etiquette,

referral of job seekers to local and overseas employment and facilitating the advertisement of vacancies and recruitment services for employers.

The Identification, Stabilisation, Enablement and Empowerment (ISEE) Bridge Programme commenced in 2012 with a pilot project and a second phase commenced in 2015. ISEE Bridge is an attempt to tackle poverty at the household level and seeks to reduce poverty by transforming the lives of vulnerable households from a state of dependency to empowerment. (See below for more details).

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) also financed a loan for a further expansion of the ISEE Bridge programme (IBP), along with two other components, under a project titled Strengthening Human and Social Development in Barbados (see p14).

This first component will finance an expansion of the original ISEE Bridge pilot to cover 250 additional households over a period of four years, focusing on the following pillars:

- 1) Personal identification
- 2) Education and human resources development
- 3) Family dynamics
- 4) Health promotion
- 5) Employment

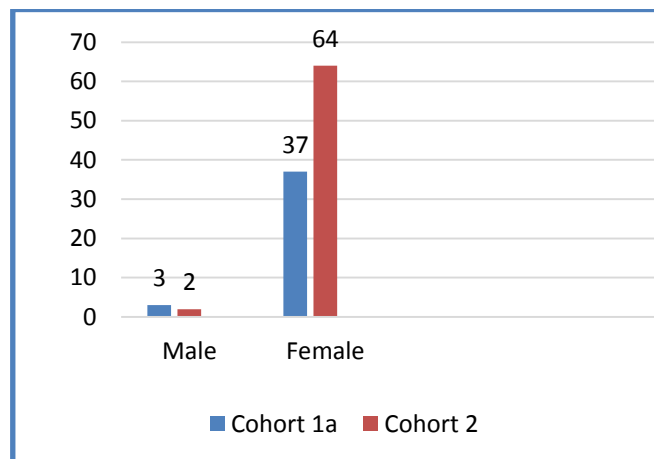
This component will include financing day care services, school meals, school textbooks and uniforms, remedial learning courses and selected health services. It will also finance the redesign of a targeting tool that will be used to better select households. This tool will combine a Proxy Means Test (PMT) with a revised version of the existing scorecard to eliminate criteria that may be open to subjective interpretation. The PMT developed will be used as part of the management information system to improve the targeting of other MPEA programmes targeted to the poor.

Wherever public supply of needed services are not or cannot be guaranteed, this component will fund the provision of such services by private providers. To address demand issues, as was done in the pilot and the follow-up phase, Household Facilitators will provide counselling on the importance of early childhood development, preventive health check-ups and labour market programmes. Stipends will also be provided for participation in remedial learning programmes. This component will finance a marketing and communication campaign to inform potential beneficiaries and stakeholders of the programme's advantages and results.

To date the programme has signed 106 households comprising 805 individuals. The families are predominantly female-headed households with only five male-headed households.



**Figure 3: Male vs Female Heads - Strengthening Human & Social Development Project**



Women are heavily involved in the families and there are several workshops and various activities that have been designed to target and empower these women. Some of the workshops include:

- x Workshops for the development of women in the family (women's forums)
- x Parenting and counselling workshops

A workshop is also being developed for females between the ages of 5 – 18 to expose them to life skills and coping mechanism to improve their relationships with their peers, teachers and their communities. Topics to be covered include:

- x Self-esteem building and self-awareness
- x Effective communication and conflict resolution
- x Motivation and attitude change
- x Team building
- x Drugs awareness and mental health
- x HIV/AIDS Awareness and abstinence
- x Anger management
- x Bullying
- x Spirituality

## **The ISEE Bridge Programme**

The Identification, Stabilisation, Enablement and Empowerment (ISEE) Bridge Programme was conducted from 2012 to 2014 with a pilot project comprising 30 families and recommenced during the period under review with a further 30 families.

### **Aims**

The ISEE Bridge Programme aims to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty in Barbados and is an interactive programme which focuses on targeted intervention at the household level addressing the needs of each household member and seeking to transform their lives with four areas of critical intervention.

### **Scope**

ISEE Bridge focuses on stabilisation, empowerment, moving households from poverty to independence and collaboration among agencies. The programme takes households through the following seven pillars: registration; education and human resource development; health promotion; family dynamics; housing conditions; employment and income/social benefits. Social workers are hired to serve as household facilitators who assess, orient and accompany the household for the duration of the programme.

### **Target Population**

A further 30 families were included in this phase which commenced from December 2015 to 2017 and comprised 27 female-headed households. The families were selected by the Welfare Department based on a range of criteria. Women between ages 30 - 64 represented the highest age demographic in the first cohort and this is likely to be the same for the second one.

### **Impact evaluations**

Some households began to be more proactive in dealing with their circumstances and a few undertook training courses.

Some of the results –

- 5 persons were awarded scholarships to attend the University of the West Indies Open Campus
- Some received excellent results in the examinations and at least one further scholarship was awarded in Electronic Document Preparation and Management (EDPM) and Mathematics
- Attendance at Erdiston Teachers' Training College's Continuing Education Programme in Early Childhood Education
- Barbados Vocational Training Board – one person pursued a sewing course and received an internship at a manufacturing company
- One person moved from being unemployed to employed and is in the process of getting her own home
- ISEE Bridge's recommendations for the jobs were accepted

### **Lessons learned**

These include the length of programme; ways of coping with challenges; the need for more support; the need for the six-month follow-up phase to be more structured.

## **Non-contributory social pensions**

Non-contributory old age pensions have increased over the last five years (2014 to 2019), based on the annual actuarial indexation of pensions, related benefits and the insurable earnings ceiling or mandated by government as follows:

- x 2014 to 2016 - \$145 Barbados dollars weekly
- x 2016 to 2018 - \$155 Barbados dollars weekly
- x 2018 to present - \$225 Barbados dollars weekly

The increases in 2014 and 2018 were a result of government's need to protect pensioners. With the latest increase, the Prime Minister announced in the Budgetary Proposal and Financial Statement 2018 that government will raise the minimum non-contributory old age pension. The previous government did the same in 2016 in its Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposal.

## **Reform of contributory social protection schemes to strengthen women's access and benefit levels**

The minimum old age contributory pension has also increased within the last five years (2014 to 2019), via the annual actuarial indexation and mandated by government. It is as follows:

- x 2014 to 2016 - \$179 Barbados dollars weekly
- x 2016 to 2018 - \$190 Barbados dollars weekly
- x 2018 - \$235 Barbados dollars weekly
- x 2019 - \$239 Barbados dollars weekly

Along with the increases for both categories of pensions, the maternity and the funeral grants have increased during the time period. The most recent rise in January 2019 saw the funeral and maternity grants increased from \$2,120 to \$2,150 and from \$1,220 to \$1,240 respectively.

## **Access to the above for specific populations**

Social coverage is extended to all insured persons, including women, who are between 16 years and pensionable age (currently age 67), with provisions made from inception. Access is available for all occupation sectors, including:

- x Self-employed Persons
- x Voluntary Contributors
- x Foreign Service Help

- x Foreign Embassies
- x Apprentices
- x Private Sector Employees and State-owned Enterprises / Statutory Corporations
- x Private Sector Employees Over Pensionable Age and Under 16
- x Government Permanent Employees
- x Government Temporary Employees
- x Government Employees Over Pensionable Age and Under 16

In terms of social protection, the organisations for persons with disabilities (PWD) report that their challenges include access to transportation, accessible sidewalks and roads and limited options in relation to employment. Many PWD, including women, find it difficult to find employment commensurate with their educational background and, as a result, they are often forced to continue living at home under undesirable and harmful circumstances.

### **Health outcomes for women and girls**

The mission of the Ministry of Health and Wellness is to promote health, provide comprehensive health care and ensure that environmental concerns are considered in all aspects of national development.

In the 21st century, the challenges facing the health sector of Barbados are:

- A demographic shift – an aging population with over 13% above the age of 65 years and expected to rise to 20.4% by 2025
- An epidemiological shift resulting in an increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) which account for 7 out of every 10 deaths in Barbados. One quarter of all adults have an NCD and another quarter (140,000) are at risk
- The threat of new and re-emerging diseases such as Ebola, Zika and Measles
- Injuries due to accidents and violence and the impact on service provision including rehabilitation
- Consumer demands – increasing demands for the latest in medical and care interventions
- The high investment costs for service delivery, i.e. rapidly changing medical technologies, trained health professionals
- A broken health infrastructure – an aging plant not easily adaptable to new technologies
- Health financing – reduction in the percentage of government spending on health care from 55% in 2012-2013 to 51% in 2016-2017; increasing “out-of-pocket expenditure” from 39% in 2012-2013 to 43% in 2016-2017
- An overall reduction in the percentage of total health expenditure to GDP from 8.5% in 2012-2013 to 7% in 2016-2017, below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) standard of 9%.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness has identified the following four strategic goals to address these challenges:

1. Promote and protect the health of the population
2. Provide safe, quality centred services
3. Improve the performance of the health system
4. Engage and mobilise partners in health.

### **Women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services**

Public health care is delivered through eight primary care polyclinics strategically located across the island. These polyclinics provide a wide range of preventive and curative services, including Maternal and Child Health, Immunisation, Dental Health, General Practice Clinics and Environmental Health Services. Acute, secondary, tertiary and emergency care are provided by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Psychiatric Hospital and a halfway house rehabilitate persons with psychiatric disorders for entry back into the community. Women have access to all of these services.

### **Specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services**

A document titled "Comprehensive Overview of Services Offered to Post-natal Mothers" was created. This spoke to improved access to services by post-natal mothers, with the expectation of reducing maternal morbidity and improving neo-natal health. Guidelines for ante-natal care in Barbados to reduce morbidity and mortality were also produced in 2016 for dissemination.

To achieve the programme budget targets, actions included the development of health education materials; training and advocacy activities; community outreach; development of the Barbados Childhood Obesity Plan as well as support to NGOs. In addition, there was outreach to students at primary schools and the Childhood Obesity Plan included training of canteen operators and Home Economics teachers, most of whom are women.

Included among the efforts identified above, special attention was paid to NCD interventions including support to the Maria Holder Diabetes Centre and the Heart and Stroke Foundation. The emphasis on interventions in NCDs takes a universal access approach with no specific consideration to women and girls. However, the Health of the Nation Survey in 2015 showed that 40% of the overall population are hypertensive and that this is higher among women.

A Strategic Plan for NCDs 2015-2019 was approved at the end of 2014. This plan provides a roadmap for all national efforts related to NCD prevention and control and is based on collaboration among governmental agencies, the private sector and civil society. In November 2014, the Cabinet of Barbados approved the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on NCDs to further enhance policy and programme development, harnessing the work of several Ministries that represent the social determinants of health. This is important in relation to women's health because being a woman rates high among the risk factors for chronic NCDs. For example, in 2015, the prevalence of obesity was almost twice as high in women (43%) as in men (23%). One out of 10 women and 1 out of 20 men had a body mass index (BMI) equal to or greater than 35.

The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine was introduced to girls in the first form of secondary schools in 2014 and continues to be a part of the Ministry of Health's vaccine programme. HPV testing was also introduced at the Ladymeade Reference Unit Laboratory.

The National Disabilities Unit and the Council for the Disabled report that they refer women with disabilities to the health services offered by government and civil society organisations. However, medical information is often not in an accessible format and medical equipment is not accessible to PWD. Two recommendations are for the government to have official interpreters accompany PWD to doctors' visits as well as a psychologist specifically to work with PWD.

### **Gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns**

A community-based programme was set up to address low levels of physical activity in communities, particularly by women. Eight persons were trained to lead the sessions in six community-based programmes. The programme reached 1,005 of the targeted audience.

Barbados continues to show lowered mortality rates from HIV/AIDS as the anti-retroviral treatments are prolonging the life of affected individuals and mother-to-child transmission has been virtually eliminated. The HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Project showed reduction in expenditure from BBD17.1 million in 2014/2015 to BBD10.9 million in the period 2016/2017. This was nevertheless a significant increase from ten years earlier when reports indicated that BBD5.7 million was spent in the 2004/2005 period. Barbados is reported to show a contraction rate that is now higher among men than women which is contrary to international contraction rates.

Two areas in which the Bureau of Gender Affairs has made progress in mainstreaming gender have been in HIV and AIDS and sexual and reproductive health for women, girls, men and boys. In partnership with a number of NGOs, faith-based organisations and the public service, the Bureau has conducted gender sensitisation workshops with a special focus on HIV. These sessions explored sexuality, the power imbalances between women and men

and stigma and discrimination. There was also an education programme on gender and HIV in schools that specifically targeted boys aged 13–15.

The leading cause of death among women remained breast, uterus and cervical cancers which account for 49% of all cancer deaths. The Ministry of Health, the Barbados Cancer Society and Cancer Support Services have supported an enhanced national screening programme for breast, cervix, prostate and colon cancer.

The National HIV/AIDS Committee started a Man Aware Programme in 2016 to promote health seeking behaviours among a wide cross-section of men through a series of targeted activities using elements such as sports, music and culture. The first intervention consisted of a number of elements, including Behaviour Change Messages using Public Service Announcements dealing with issues affecting men such as condom use and the fear of getting tested or refusal to get tested; treatment with a girlfriend or spouse; a masculine décor; a series of information booths in the form of a barber shop setting, tyre shop and condom corner and a Condom Booth.

The National HIV/AIDS Commission also introduced a programme in 2016 called Transition to Secondary School (T2S) for first formers to prepare them to cope with issues such as bullying and conflict. The programme entails the staff of the commission going into all 22 public secondary schools to conduct half-day sessions with the first form students. The sessions consist of the following topics – HIV and AIDS, peer pressure, bullying, drug awareness, human sexuality and gender issues. The programme commences with an orientation session for guidance counsellors and principals.

The Barbados Association of Muslim Ladies reported that their community shared the national profile regarding the significance of NCDs. The organisation was discussing how to raise consciousness among women about sedentary life styles and high flour and salt diets. The BFPA, formerly the Barbados Family Planning Association, and polyclinics work with young adolescent females who access services from polyclinics to assist them to make informed decisions about sexual health and issues of HIV and domestic violence.

The Barbados Association of Endometriosis and PCOS was founded in 2016 to raise awareness and sensitise the public about endometriosis and polycystic ovarian syndrome. It also seeks to provide support to and be an advocate for women in Barbados who have been diagnosed with these and other debilitating but often invisible pelvic conditions. The association does this by visiting schools to talk to students and has also published a book, with UNFPA's support, to be donated to government and private agencies as well as educational institutions through school-based tours. They have trained members of the Youth Advocacy Movement of the BFPA to assist with the school tours. Public awareness and sensitisation are also done through an annual walk. The association operates on a volunteer basis and faces a number of challenges such as low retention of personnel to assist, limited resources both human and financial and limited understanding about the condition and the related illnesses.

## **Gender-responsive training for health service providers**

The BGA has partnered with the Barbados Community College to build awareness of gender issues among healthcare providers during the review period.

## **Comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes**

State and non-state organisations offer comprehensive sexuality education both in schools and through community programmes. One example is the Youth Development Programme of the Division of Youth Affairs which, in 2016, collaborated with schools' guidance counsellors to offer guidance in sexual and reproductive health as well as career planning. Over 7,000 male and female students were exposed to HIV sensitisation training through 57 sessions.

## **Education outcomes and skills for women and girls**

The Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training's strategic goals, set out in the 2019-2020 estimates, identify the provision of high-quality sound basic education at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels to every citizen to equip them to recognise and realise their potential for development. This characterises the government's policy and development focus for the period 2014-2019.

During the five-year period under review, there were challenges and setbacks as the country experienced economic and financial instability. Approved expenditure for the financial year 2015/2016 totalled BBD489 million, a decrease of 1.7% when compared with the BBD497.5 million approved for the previous financial year. Significantly, there was a .7% decline when compared to the previous year's figures. Government increased its allocation to pre-primary and primary level education by 13% when compared to 2014/2015. During 2015-2016, three nursery schools were added to the education infrastructure.

The Government of Barbados provides universal access up to tertiary level for all of its citizens free of cost. The outstanding performance in the education system by girls also indicates the level of equality that exists between males and females. Efforts are now being made to encourage more girls to participate in non-traditional technical and vocational subjects and the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines.



## **Girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development**

At the secondary level, the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) in some secondary schools were implemented. In preparation for the programme's institutionalisation, teachers were trained in the CVQs within the secondary school system. Additionally, teachers in the CVQ programme participated in a standardisation process to support the preparation of quality units and lesson plans for the delivery of the CVQs. CVQs were initially offered in eleven areas in schools and this was expanded during the period under review. These areas included carpentry; masonry; electrical installation; commercial food preparation; cosmetology; barbering; crop production; horticulture; furniture making; data operation and art and craft production.

Tuition fees were introduced in 2013/2014 at the University of the West Indies, the main tertiary institution in Barbados, resulting in an overall decrease of 21% in student enrolment. November 2016/17 saw a continuing decline of 9% enrolment which was greatest among mature students. Female enrolment ratios are higher than males thus the decrease in enrolment affected female access to, retention in and completion of education. To buffer the introduction of tuition fees, loans were facilitated through the Student Revolving Loan Fund.

During the period under review, a Skills for the Future Project was established through a loan and partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank focussing on improving the quality and relevance of secondary education and the effectiveness of technical and vocational education and training. It also aimed to facilitate the school to work transition and improve the level of success among both young women and men in Barbados. The A Ganar Programme, which is an initiative under the Skills for the Future Project and is also supported by USAID, was launched in 2014. This is a workforce development programme targeting Barbadian young women and men between ages 16-24 deemed to be at risk and in need of appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes that would allow them to positively impact their community, via employment and entrepreneurship or a return to the formal education system. A Ganar uses team sports to develop core and life skills, promotes youth engagement in society and helps to combat youth unemployment through three phases: Phase 1 - Academic and Life Skill-Building, Phase 2 - Technical Training, and Phase 3 - Internship.

## **Educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education**

Barbados observes a principle of gender neutrality in education. This has meant equality of access in all areas and in some cases has seen females outnumbering males especially at tertiary level institutions. However, the enrolment pattern in technical and vocational edu-

cation and training is generally characterised by traditional gender profiles – men in such areas as carpentry, masonry and electrical installation and women in food preparation, cosmetology and manufacturing sewn products as shown in Table 3 below, based on enrolment figures from the Barbados Vocational Training Board.

**Table 3: Barbados Vocational Training Board Enrolment in Skills Training 2015 & 2016**

Enrolment							
2015				2016			
Skills	Male	Female	Total	Skills	Male	Female	Total
Agricultural	6	5	11	Agricultural	18	6	24
Apparel & Sewn Product	5	125	130	Apparel & Sewn Product	3	185	188
Art & Craft	2	29	31	Art & Craft	2	67	69
Automotive	154	10	164	Automotive	211	12	223
Beauty Care & Services	40	293	333	Beauty Care & Services	26	312	338
Commercial	4	28	32	Commercial	127	351	478
Hospitality	91	348	437	Hospitality	54	75	129
Information Technology	40	41	81	Information Technology	20	1	21
Machine & Appliance	13	1	14	Machine Appliance	26	2	28
Other	532	94	626	Other	573	95	668
All Skills Programme	887	972	1,859	All Skills Programme	1,028	1,119	2,147

Source: Barbados Vocational Training Board in Barbados Economic & Social Reports 2015 & 2016

The Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) also maintained the gender-neutral principle but with essentially the same profile. One feature of this programme is that females outnumber males in all the areas for which they opted, for example beauty care and sewn products. The Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute which offers technical and vocational education and training repeated the gender profile. Attention to gender as a special consideration is only mentioned in the Human Resource Development Strategy 2011-2016 with regards to “growing gender imbalance within the education system reflecting a declining level of participation of males in higher education levels.” No policies were found to address the traditional gender profiles.

Erdiston Teachers’ Training College has started to include gender issues on its curriculum under the module titled Social Issues in Education. The session aims to describe how schools seek to address issues in relation to gender equity, specifically the effect of gender and sexuality on the school environment.

## **Safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls**

Violence in schools has emerged as a challenge for both girls and boys and there have been increasing reports of bullying in Barbados. In response to the violence, the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, with assistance from UNICEF, launched an Anti-violence Campaign in July 2018 under the theme “Peace Begins With Me: Talk it Out, Violence Solves Nothing”. Peer-on-peer violence by children was a big concern for the Ministry of Education and studies showed that between 25 to 50 per cent of children have been victims of bullying. Cyber bullying was also a major area of concern for the Ministry.

The campaign includes an increase in guidance counsellors in secondary schools and hiring safety officers and social workers in a number of schools. It also involves closer relations with principals and teachers, as well as a partnership with the Transport Board. Facilitating anger management resolution classes is also another proposed strategy.

These approaches have not mentioned sensitivity or awareness to the gendered nature of violence and bullying in the school system.

## **Skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and digital fluency and literacy**

In the area of new and emerging fields, the National Cultural Foundation facilitated training in the effective use of social media. To this end, forty-two persons were trained in digital photography and a number of other related training programmes took place within the policy direction of the establishment of a Film and Digital Media Commission. It is proposed that the cultural industries would form a critical and vital part of the government’s growth strategy to diversify the economy.

The National Council for Science and Technology holds an annual Science and Technology Summer Camp. The camp is designed to expose boys and girls between the ages of 7- 13 to the practical aspects of science and technology. This project has resulted in a small cadre of students with the skills and competencies to build websites.

The Caribbean Science Foundation organises a series of STEM-related training activities. Since 2015, it has organised an annual Junior Robotics Camp, the aim of which is to introduce basic technology and engineering concepts to children. The camps are targeted at children who are passionately interested in STEM subjects and enjoy hands-on work. Students from low-income households and girls are encouraged to apply. There were 14 girls and 34 boys in 2017 but the aim is to have a balanced class of 50% girls and boys. The camp exposes campers to practical experiences which build confidence and social, communication, conflict resolution and team-working skills. Further, the camps try to emphasise and ignite interest in learning about the sustainable use of science and technology and allows for contextual and creative problem-solving.

The Caribbean Science Foundation also organises a Student Programme for Innovation in Science and Engineering (SPISE) to Caribbean high school students, 16 to 17 years of age, who are gifted in STEM subjects and interested in studying and exploring careers in these disciplines. SPISE is an intensive four-week residential summer programme held at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus in Barbados. Between 2012-2018, 22 students from Barbados participated; a breakdown by sex was not available.

Beginning in January 2018, the Foundation partnered with other organisations to launch a set of computer coding workshops in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. The goals of the Computer Coding Workshops are to help address the challenge of increasing the low numbers of skilled ICT workers in the Caribbean; stimulate more interest in science and engineering careers; help train the technology workforce of the future (especially retraining of retrenched workers); stimulate more technology-based entrepreneurship by encouraging the formation of more globally competitive ICT companies; help get more students interested in going beyond programming into the field of computer science and help prepare students for university study in the STEM disciplines. Twelve students (both boys and girls) participated in the pilot project that was held in March 2018. Girls are especially invited to apply; other targeted applicants are retrenched workers, out-of-school and at-risk youth, disabled individuals and secondary school science and mathematics teachers.

### **Safe water and sanitation services and menstrual hygiene management especially in schools and other education/training settings**

Schools maintain access to safe water and sanitation services including menstrual hygiene management. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students often complain about the level of adequacy of disposable sanitary units. At the primary level, menstrual hygiene management is facilitated through the female staffroom.

### **Prevention of adolescent pregnancies and to enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/or motherhood**

Statistics in the CEDAW Report 2009-2013 suggest that teen pregnancies are down over previous levels. While it is not a legal obligation, the Ministry of Education's policy is to allow pregnant teens to return to school to complete their education. This policy is said to be challenged by attitudes of certain school educators to widespread implementation according to the Barbados Country Gender Assessment report of 2014.

The BFPA, formerly the Barbados Family Planning Association, is one of the top providers of sexual and reproductive health services for women in Barbados. It organises schools' programmes, youth sessions and contraceptive and sexual health counselling. Their other programmes include The Youth Advocacy Movement, Sex Talk and Peer-to-Peer counselling. BFPA also produces and distributes information brochures, for example on practising safe sex.

Dance4Life is an organisation which became active in Barbados in 2009. Its mission is to reduce the prevalence of what they identify as the three greatest threats facing young people, namely HIV, unwanted pregnancies and sexual and gender-based violence. They have also included programmes that go beyond sexual health with the aim of paving a brighter future for all young people. Dance4Life's work has included sixteen secondary schools with especially vulnerable youth from the Government Industrial Schools (reform schools) for boys and girls and the Sterling Children's Home.

Dance4Life delivers comprehensive sexuality programmes by following a manual that they developed. The aim is for persons to make safe decisions about their sexual health and create positive changes for themselves. The programme involves participants developing skills and knowledge to help them plan and implement a social action project. Their advocacy projects include the fight against AIDS, gender-based violence and a petition advocating that teens should not need parental consent to access testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Other**

In 2016, the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus participated in discussions on service support for students with disabilities with the Ministry of Education and the Disability Advisory Committee to review courses for students entering the university.

## **Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes**

The level of domestic violence in Barbados continues to be a major concern, particularly violence against women and girls. The Commissioner of Police reported in July 2018 that for the year so far, they had received at least one report of an incident of domestic abuse every day, namely 204 incidents up to that point. Data made available from the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) indicate that the reports of domestic violence have even exceeded one per day for the years 2016 – 2018. As Table 4 shows, these reports remained relatively steady over that period and represent an increase from the previous reporting period.

**Table 4: Reports of Incidents of Domestic Violence 2016-2018**

<b>Year</b>	<b>DV Cases</b>	<b>Persons charged</b>	<b>Referrals</b>
2016	515	296	132
2017	539	289	114
2018	518	273	108

Source: Family Conflict Intervention Unit, Royal Barbados Police Force

This increase in reports might partially be attributed to an increase in incidents of violence but could also be attributed to a number of other factors. Both government and non-governmental organisations organise related activities during the year and particularly around International Women’s Day and the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women. These include the Bureau of Gender Affairs, other government departments, trade unions, the Business and Professional Women’s Club of Barbados, the National Organisation of Women, other women’s organisations, Advocates against Domestic Issues and the Barbados Association of Professional Social Workers. These activities have raised awareness about violence against women and enabled survivors and the general public to have a better understanding of the related issues. They have also helped to make survivors more aware of the range of support available to them.

Other factors that might be reflected in the increase include amendments to the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act and the Sexual Offences Act and increased training within the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) by the Family Conflict Intervention Unit (FCIU) which was established in 2013. The FCIU also attributes the increased reports to the confidence of survivors to report matters with a higher degree of expectancy of resolution, professionalism and confidentiality on the part of the RBPF. The FCIU’s work is to a large extent responsible for this.

The FCIU further notes that perpetrators are aware of the unit’s work coupled by the fact that the police now have to respond to all reports of domestic violence and perpetrators therefore receive ongoing visits and warnings. In addition, the police can now issue emergency protection orders. As a result, they assert that the perpetrators seem to be taking the issue more seriously. It was also noted that there has been a decrease in domestic violence related homicides.

The data indicate that there is a predominance of three particular offences as a percentage of all reported domestic violence crimes. These are assault occasioning actual bodily harm, assault and criminal damage. The data also show relatively low levels of charges brought against alleged perpetrators.

UN Women Caribbean recently supported the conduct of national prevalence surveys on violence against women in the Caribbean for the first time. The first set of data reveal that in Jamaica almost 1 in 4 women is a victim of physical and sexual violence and that Trini-

dad and Tobago reflects the global average which is 1 in 3. It is expected that the prevalence of violence against women in Barbados will fall within a similar range.

The Government of Barbados remains committed to eradicating violence against women and girls and, during the period under review, the focus has been on updating and introducing legislation to address this issue in its various forms and to ensure that women and girls experiencing these challenges have increased access to protection, justice and services. Various programmes were also implemented both by government and NGOs to combat violence against women and girls.

### **13. Forms of violence against women and girls prioritised for action**

During the review period, the Government of Barbados prioritised legislation dealing with various forms of violence against women in an effort to ensure that the legislation is comprehensive and that it responds effectively to the needs of women and girls.

The following forms of violence were prioritised for action, with legislation either being reviewed and updated or introduced to address them:

- x Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape
- x Sexual harassment and violence in employment
- x Trafficking in women and girls
  
- **Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape**

Amendment of legislation - The Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act, 1992 Cap. 130A was amended in 2016 to the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) (Amendment) Act, 2016.

As noted in the Beijing +20 report, in 2012 the Bureau of Gender Affairs, with assistance from UN Women, established a multi-sectoral committee to review and amend the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act, 1992 Cap. 130A. Based on the recommendations of this committee, an amended Act was passed in January/February 2016. According to UN Women, the amendments have made the Barbados Act one of the strongest in the region, giving powers of emergency protection orders to police, and drawing heavily on best practices in the Commonwealth in the scope and definition of gender-based violence. (marital rape)

The aims are to:

- make provision for a comprehensive definition of the term “domestic violence”

- extend the classes of persons who are considered to be victims of domestic violence, including persons in common law unions
  - ensure that victims of domestic violence receive the appropriate counselling or therapy
  - facilitate the enrolment of perpetrators of domestic violence in the appropriate rehabilitative programmes
  - extend the classes of persons who may intervene in applications before the Court on behalf of victims of domestic violence
  - establish the duties and powers of members of the Police Force in relation to allegations of domestic violence, including the power to issue emergency protection orders
  - maximise the safety and protection of victims and ensure that perpetrators of domestic violence are held accountable, and for related matters.
- **Sexual harassment and violence in employment**

Introduction of legislation - The Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act, 2017 came into force in December 2017. The Act aims to:

- make provision for the protection of employees in both the public sector and private sector from sexual harassment at their workplace
- provide a framework for the reporting of sexual harassment cases by employees and a method of resolving such cases
- establish a procedure for the hearing and determination of matters related to sexual harassment; and provide for related matters.

Sexual harassment, under the legislation, includes the use of sexually suggestive words, comments, jokes, gestures or actions that annoy, alarm or abuse a person. It also includes the initiation of unwanted physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances or requests.

The main features of the Act are:

- The requirement that all employers must establish and communicate a policy on sexual harassment to employees
- Empowerment of the Chief Labour Officer and Labour Officers to go into workplaces and inspect to find out if the policy is in place
- The provision of a framework for the reporting and lodging of complaints and for the investigation, hearing and determination of sexual harassment complaints
- Strict confidentiality, except to the extent necessary for the purposes of the Act
- A procedure for the hearing and determination of matters related to sexual harassment.



## - **Trafficking in women and girls**

Updating of legislation – The Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act, 2016 gives effect to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and for matters connected therewith.

Although human trafficking is not a major challenge in Barbados, it is an offence that police and other frontline officers have to identify. As noted in the Beijing Plus 20 Report, Barbados enacted a Transnational Crime Bill in 2011 which was replaced by the Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act, 2016. This makes greater provision for the prevention of trafficking in persons and broadens the scope of the offence where trafficking in persons takes place in Barbados. It makes provision for trafficking in children and there is a special offence with heavier penalties in relation to the trafficking of children. It criminalises human trafficking and aspects associated with persons who assist suspected traffickers. The Act defines trafficking in persons as a general crime but does not differentiate between sex trafficking and forced labour.

Barbados also amended its Sexual Offences Act 1992 in 2016 to provide for the circumstances under which the offence of rape is committed by a husband against his wife. The law criminalises rape and the maximum penalty is life imprisonment. Previously, there had to be a court-issued divorce decree or separation order.

## **Addressing violence against women and girls**

### **Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws**

As discussed above, legislation was updated or introduced for the following:

- x Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape
- x Sexual harassment and violence in employment
- x Trafficking in women and girls

In addition, Barbados amended its Sexual Offences Act Cap 154 in 2016 to provide for the circumstances under which a man can be prosecuted for raping his wife. The Act now states that, “A husband commits the offence of rape where he has sexual intercourse with his wife without her consent by force or fear, where he knows that she does not consent to the intercourse or is reckless as to whether she consents to the intercourse”. Prior to this there had to be a court-issued divorce decree, separation order, or non-molestation order.

The enforcement and implementation of the amended legislation on intimate partner violence/domestic violence continue to be enabled by ongoing training of police officers, including recruits at the training school, conducted by the Family Conflict Intervention Unit (FCIU) of the Royal Barbados Police Force. The officers in the unit indicated that this was a

major challenge initially. However, the training is progressive, commencing with updating officers and then sensitisation in terms of their mindset and is primarily geared towards first responders in the police force. Victims and perpetrators are also targeted as well as the public. The amended legislation requires police officers to respond to all reports of domestic violence but victims' failure to cooperate and follow up can hinder enforcement since the legislation requires cooperation from the victim except in the case of a child. However, the police officers can provide initial protection through their power to issue Emergency Protection Orders. There have been more detailed recording and analysis of statistics of domestic violence cases as a result of the FCIU's establishment.

### **National action plans on ending VAW and girls**

A National Task Force on Human Trafficking was established in 2011 with the Bureau of Gender Affairs performing the role of secretariat. The Task Force's work was interrupted by general elections which were held in May 2018 and it is now operating under the aegis of the Attorney General's office. A National Action Plan for Trafficking is to be updated and submitted to Cabinet for approval.

### **Measures to increase women's access to justice**

The Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) project is a five-year regional judicial reform initiative being implemented by the Caribbean Court of Justice. Gender equality is one of its crosscutting themes and its overarching goal is to establish a judicial system more responsive to the needs of women, men, youth and businesses. The project works with the judiciaries in select Caribbean countries, including Barbados, to improve efficiencies in court administration. Training of the judiciary across the region is part of its remit.

The National Centre for States Courts is designing and implementing a Domestic Violence Bench Book for Barbados. This Bench Book will serve as the basis for domestic violence training as well as an easy reference for the everyday work of Judges hearing domestic violence cases. A site visit and stakeholder meetings took place during 2015 to define Barbados' needs and expectations, as well as to ensure that the Book Bench is relevant and responsive to the needs of Judges and Magistrates in Barbados.

As indicated above, training of police officers is conducted by the Family Conflict Intervention Unit and domestic violence is also part of the curriculum of the Barbados-based Regional Police Training Centre for recruits. Another source of training for police officers is the Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean (Impact Justice) project. This is a five-year regional civil society justice sector reform project being implemented from within the Caribbean Law Institute Centre, Faculty of Law at the University of the West Indies in Barbados since 2014. Impact Justice's ultimate outcome is enhanced access to justice benefitting men, women, youth and businesses across the region and it works towards addressing deficiencies in the justice sector.

In relation to trafficking, there has also been training of police officers, the Immigration Department and the Child Care Board (CCB) during the review period. Interpol conducted training on combatting human trafficking (victim identification and advanced investigative skills) in the Caribbean in 2017. In addition, in 2018 the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) in collaboration with the BGA, the Child Care Board and the Immigration Department, conducted seminars and sensitisation sessions and provided anti-trafficking information for government agencies and members of non-profit organisations. A standard operations procedures manual was also prepared by the RBPF and the Immigration Department; this forms the basis for continuous training and contact with victims of human trafficking. The Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations also conducts awareness training for employers and employees.

The amendment to the domestic violence legislation permits police officers to issue an Emergency Protection Order where there is reasonable cause to believe that the issue of such an order is necessary to ensure the safety of a person at risk. An Emergency Protection Order has a duration of seven (7) days and is intended to provide the victim with a period of relative safety until the court hearing. A subordinate police officer does not need the consent of the person at risk to issue such an order and must take the following into account in determining whether to issue an Emergency Protection Order:

- whether the person at risk has immediate access to the court
- the likelihood that the perpetrator will continue to commit acts of domestic violence
- the welfare of any children residing with the perpetrator or the person at risk
- any hardship that may be caused if the order is issued
- any other matter that the member of the Police Force considers relevant.

When an Emergency Protection Order is issued, the perpetrator has to vacate the shared premises and desist from engaging in violent behaviour or behaviour that constitutes harassment against the victim. Police officers also have the power to arrest the perpetrator if the order is breached or its provisions are disobeyed. They also have the power to arrest if there is an arrest clause attached to a court issued protection order.

The police force established a Sex Crimes and Trafficking Unit in 2013 and this plays a supportive role by conducting raids, surveillance and monitoring. The police also work with the Immigration Department in gathering intelligence, conducting raids, screening, identifying and rescuing suspected trafficking victims. Other government ministries include the Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations which conducts inspections at workplaces and participates in the inspection of workers' accommodation.

Barbados has this year taken the first step to establishing a dedicated Family Court with the appointment of a consultant to oversee the process. UNICEF is funding the consultancy as well as the training of judges and ancillary court staff. The Family Law Council is tasked with spearheading the creation of the court, after almost two decades of advocacy and lob-

bying. The Barbados Family Court is expected to come on stream in November to coincide with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the island is a signatory.

### **Services for survivors of violence**

During the review period, the Government of Barbados continued to work towards the provision of support services for survivors of violence, including collaborating with and supporting civil society organisations.

Services for survivors of domestic violence include:

- Support to the Shelter for Abused Women run by BPW Barbados through an annual subvention although at a slightly reduced due to the current economic crisis
- Counselling through the Family Services section of the Welfare Department
- Counselling and educational sessions by the National Assistance Board for elderly women in relation to elder abuse
- Short-term counselling through the Accident and Emergency Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) which also has a protocol for dealing with women affected by domestic violence once they give consent for this assistance and for the police to be contacted
- Investigation of child sexual abuse by the Child Care Board
- Counselling including for young people who have been abused at the Social Services Department at the QEH
- Work by the National Disabilities Unit with women with disabilities who are abused – this is described as prevalent but shrouded in silence
- Assistance with issuing protection orders by the Family Conflict Intervention Unit and seeking to ensure the safety of survivors and their family. The Unit has, among other things, a discussion room, interview rooms, a child friendly room as well as a holding cell
- Support given in relation to raids, surveillance and monitoring by the Sex Crimes and Trafficking Unit

Services for survivors of trafficking include:

- Temporary housing - support and protection by the government-supported Business and Professional Women's Club's Shelter for Abused Women
- Healthcare
- Assistance in returning home
- Shelter for children through the Child Care Board, once the child has been identified as a victim (under age of 18)
- Provision of social services through the Welfare Department
- Medical care through the Ministry of Health

Services by non-governmental organisations include:

- The Business and Professional Women's Club of Barbados (BPW Barbados) has run the Shelter for Abused Women since 1999 and a Crisis Hotline since 1986. Neither of these is presently operating to full capacity because of funding challenges and a reduction in the annual government subvention as well as its late receipt. They are again receiving funds from government, but these have to go towards arrears. As a result, they can only accommodate acute cases.
- BPW Barbados offers group counselling to residents of the Shelter for Abused Women and one-on-one counselling if requested to women who are not resident at the shelter. Limited resources present a challenge.
- Advocates against Domestic Issues, formerly the SAVE Foundation, is a social support agency which provides assistance and education to victims, perpetrators and the wider community. Their processes are as follows – referring clients to the Crisis Centre; counselling including for perpetrators, if needed; a hot line and interacting with other agencies including the police and the FCIU.
- Life In Leggings is an online movement which was founded in Barbados to tackle the rape culture and gender-based violence in the Caribbean. It began with a hashtag (#lifeinleggings) that was created as a safe space for women who had experienced sexual harassment and sexual assault and was launched on the first day of 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women and Girls in 2016. Life In Leggings promotes advocacy and creates awareness of gender-based violence towards women and girls in the Caribbean region.
- The Muslim Association of Ladies reported that domestic violence is a major challenge for this community but there is a lot of silence around it and some consider that it is religiously mandated. The association collaborates with other organisations in relation to accessing services such as safe houses or the shelter; counselling is also offered within the community.

The National Organisation of Women is also exploring the possibility of establishing a one-stop centre for persons experiencing domestic violence. This centre would bring all the services together under one roof and enable government and civil society organisations to work together to ensure that there are better practices and services for survivors. This would mean that they would not have to move from agency to agency and would have access to aspects such as medical attention, psychosocial services and a police interview in one location.

The Barbados Council for the Disabled reports that many persons with disabilities, including women, are forced to live at home where some of them are subject to emotional, physical and financial abuse. The Council refers members to the various organisations offering support to survivors, including the National Disabilities Unit.

### **Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including regarding particular groups of women and girls**

The Bureau of Gender Affairs has conducted training workshops with women's and men's NGOs to assist them with the monitoring and evaluation of their programmes, including those dealing with domestic violence.

## **Prevention of violence against women and girls**

### **Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours**

For the past twenty-seven years, the Bureau of Gender Affairs has worked in tandem with its partners and stakeholders to stage activities as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women and Girls and to raise awareness about gender-based violence and sensitise the general public.

Information and education campaigns were conducted throughout 2017 to increase the public's awareness of human trafficking. The government, in conjunction with NGOs, conducted 10 public awareness campaigns, which focused on both trafficking victims and on the demand for trafficking. These included spots on a local radio station, a mock UN Session during which students discussed human trafficking awareness and presentations at various secondary schools. Additionally, participants in the training by the Ministry of Education worked with a local NGO, Women of Purpose, to create a targeted outreach radio campaign focusing on prevention and awareness to marginalised communities.

BPW Barbados conducted a one-week training programme of all health and related services that interface with survivors of domestic violence. This included doctors, lawyers, social workers, nurses, polyclinic personnel and teachers. The training aimed to sensitise the trainees about domestic violence and how they could collaborate with other agencies. This was done with the assistance of USAID. In 2017, they organised training in collaboration with Marina House, a residential treatment centre for women, for survivors of domestic violence and women in drug rehabilitation to explore the connection between the two issues.

Women of Purpose has conducted radio programmes covering the following topics: – Red Flags in relation to Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking, Child Abuse and Child Protection.

## **Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education**

In 2018, the Bureau of Gender Affairs collaborated with the Barbados Association of Guidance Counsellors, the Barbados Association of Professional Social Workers and women NGOs to sensitise fourth formers of a secondary school about domestic violence and to assist students who might be involved in such relationships. This initiative developed out of a concern raised by the guidance counsellor of the school.

NOW has an ongoing programme in secondary schools around the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault. They work mainly with boys and girls in the upper school but prefer to work with girls alone. Areas such as what is sexual assault, what is domestic violence and how to recognise the signs of domestic violence are explored. They also provide counselling.

The Business and Professional Women's Club of Barbados (BPW Barbados) works in schools on the issue of domestic violence, particularly during the 16 Days of Activism.

### **Grassroots and community-level mobilization**

The Bureau held a Community Discussion on Domestic Violence in November 2016 in collaboration with the St Thomas Constituency Council and the Youth Development Programme. The topics included the Reform of the Domestic Violence Legislation and the Powers of Police in relation to the Amended Legislation.

The National Advisory Council on Gender and the Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit held a Breakfast Leadership and Advocacy Seminar in February 2018 around the issue of domestic violence.

UN Women hosted a social mobilisation workshop in Barbados in November 2014, ahead of its programme of work to address gender-based violence in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. Social mobilisation is focused on mobilising communities and boys and men in tackling the social norms and behaviours which sanction violence against women and girls. Participants included government and NGO representatives from Barbados and other countries in the region.

The National Organisation of Women (NOW) organises ongoing community training days where they teach entrepreneurs (e.g. hairdressers, barbers) about the red flags related to domestic violence.

The Business and Professional Women's Club of Barbados (BPW Barbados) sets up at fairs and other public gathering to sensitise the public. They also participate on call-in radio programmes, other media programmes and serve as resource persons on panels, etc. particularly during the 16 Days of Activism. They also visit polyclinics to talk to women about

health issues, domestic violence and sexual assault. Funding and membership are challenges faced in implementing their programmes.

### **Working with men and boys**

The Bureau of Gender Affairs organises annual workshops with secondary school boys around the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence looking at gender, masculinities and gender-based violence.

An International Men's Day Planning Committee was established in 2016 to conceptualise International Men's Day and organise programmes and men's forums. A discussion on Alternatives to Violence in Today's Communities was hosted by the Bureau of Gender Affairs in March 2019 in association with the committee in commemorating International Women's Day.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs in collaboration with men's organisations and the Division of Youth Affairs and Community Development organised a Men's Forum on "Men and Aging" in September 2017. The issue of violence was among the topics discussed.

The FCIU works with perpetrators, victims and the wider community to bring awareness to the issue of domestic violence. They have found that since they can issue emergency protection orders and also issue warnings to the perpetrators, they know and appreciate that the issue is being taken more seriously. There is also a high level of confidentiality.

The Partnership for Peace (PFP) programme was initially funded by the Caribbean Office of UN Women and is presently under the aegis of the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs. It primarily targets adult males who have been violent towards women and is designed to encourage men to take accountability for their violent actions to women and support them in achieving a violence-free lifestyle. They are challenged to change their violent behaviour and support each other to live violence-free lives. (See below for further details).

**The Partnership for Peace (PFP)** programme commenced, as noted in the previous report, in 2012 and has continued to date. The PFP is an eight-week programme that primarily targets adult males who have been violent towards women and is designed to encourage them to take accountability for their violent actions towards women and support them in achieving a violence-free lifestyle.

#### **Aims and scope**

The PFP programme has ten goals which are as follows:

- x To help participants stop violence in their lives
- x To help participants understand that violence is a choice
- x To help participants accept responsibility for their behaviours and to choose new behav-



hours that are free of violence

- x To help participants understand the costs of violence to themselves, their partners, their children and society in general
- x To teach participants skills for addressing conflict and responding to stress
- x To establish and model an atmosphere of respect within the group and to challenge disrespectful behaviour
- x To empower participants to take steps towards improving their lives and relationships
- x To encourage participants' examination of where their violent behaviour began
- x To create a network of men who will advocate for non-violent relationships and
- x To prioritise the safety of victims.

The topics are all framed around the core principles of protection of women's rights to physical safety and integrity, as well as perpetrator accountability. The manual stipulates that the programme must be delivered by a male and female facilitator. Quarterly interim reports outlining the participants' progress are sent to the courts and final reports are also sent to the courts on completion of the programme.

### **Target population**

Participants are first referred through the Magistrates' courts or through respective social workers in other agencies. Though not preferred, self-referrals are also encouraged. Once the maximum number (10-12) of persons has been identified, they are interviewed by the Clinical Supervisor and the administrative staff in the Ministry. A consistent pattern of violence has to be established. The intake process is a very important feature of the programme as it not only provides useful background information about the participants, but it also sets the tone for the actual delivery of the sessions. The Ministry is responsible for the administrative arrangements.

### **Budget**

BBD143,671.60

### **Impact evaluations**

91 men participated in the programme during the review period.

For the most part, the participants expressed full appreciation for the programme, viewing it as being helpful for improving both their intimate and professional relationships. Some of them have also indicated that they have imparted the knowledge learnt to their work colleagues.

### **Lessons learnt**

The Partnership for Peace programme continues to be a vital strategy for the maintenance of family relations and for society as a whole.

## **Prevention of and response to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology**

### **Introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions**

The amended legislation on domestic violence has extended the definition of harassment to include intimidation of a victim by a perpetrator through persistently contacting the victim by any means, including e-mail, facsimile, post, telephone, text message, WhatsApp and other forms of social and electronic media.

### **Portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media**

Work through a Media Watch has been done in this area in previous years, but no action has been taken by the government during this reporting period. The Institute of Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit of the University of the West Indies in Barbados analyses reporting on women and girls in the media, in particular around the issue of violence.

### **Violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination**

The government has programmes and policies in place that address violence, but none specifically address violence faced by specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination.

The Institute of Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit launched the Livity Project in 2018. This is a seven-country (including Barbados), four-year project which is designed to meaningfully address marginalisation, discrimination and exclusion of persons with disabilities (PWD), Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Caribbean citizens, women, girls, youth and the elderly in national and regional decision-making and participatory processes through civil society organisations' strengthening activities. Its project team includes the Barbados Council for the Disabled.

## Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

### **Promotion of women's participation in public life and decision-making**

Barbados has a bicameral parliamentary system consisting of an upper and a lower house. The upper house is the senate and the lower house is the house of assembly. Power is distributed between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The Prime Minister is responsible for the executive decision-making.

Barbados has not implemented any special measures or constitutional reform to promote women's participation in politics and national elections. There are no legal barriers for participation in elective politics and women's rights for participation and association are guaranteed under the constitution. However, women are generally underrepresented since they have tended not to participate in electoral politics, but they continue to play active supportive roles at the political level.

Barbados appointed its second woman Governor General in 2017 and in May 2018 Barbados elected its first woman Prime Minister. Thirty parliamentarians were elected to the lower house by adult suffrage on the first past-the-post system. There were twenty-four males and six females, representing 25% of the parliamentarians. Twenty-one senators were appointed to the upper house, 43% of whom are women.

The 2018 elections reflected increases in women's participation and their election and appointment to public office. The percentage of women elected to the lower house increased by 3% to a total of 20% women. The upper house saw an increase of 19% women being appointed, representing a total of 43%. Women with ministerial portfolios currently represent 25% of the cabinet.

The civil service is administered by permanent secretaries and officers of related grades in decision-making positions. There are forty-three such positions. The total number of permanent secretaries is twenty-five which represents fifty-eight percent of the total positions. Within the category of permanent secretary, there are fourteen females which represents fifty-six percent. The related grade represents forty-two percent of the administrative decision-makers. Within this category there are ten females representing fifty-five percent. Overall, women hold fifty-five percent of the administrative decision-making positions in the civil service.

Within the judiciary, there are currently five female High Court judges compared to three males. Within the Court of Appeal, there are currently two females and three males. Wom-

en occupy senior positions within the trade unions and three of the major trade unions are headed by women. Most of the organisations of PWD are headed by women.

**Table 5: Select Decision-making Positions by Sex**

<b>Positions</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>% of Fe- males 2018</b>	<b>% Change from 2013</b>
Elected Members of Parliament	30	24	6	20	3
Members of Cabinet	24	18	6	25	2
Parliamentary Secretaries	1	1	0	0	-
Senators	21	12	9	43	19
Permanent Secretaries	25	11	14	56	-9
Judges of High Court	8	3	5	NC	NC
Magistrates	10	5	5	NC	NC
Judges of Appeal	5	3	2	NC	NC

NC = No change

**Table 6: Senior Public Officers of Related Grades by Sex**

<b>Positions</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>
Head of Civil Service and Director General of Foreign Trade	1	
Cabinet Secretary Cabinet Office		1
Director of Finance and Economic Affairs	1	
Accountant General Treasury Department	1	
Auditor General Audit Department	1	
Chief Agricultural Officer, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	1	
Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training		1
Chief Medical Officer (ag.), Ministry of Health and Wellness	1	
Chief Parliamentary Counsel		1
Chief Technical Officer (ag.), Ministry of Transport, Works and Maintenance		1
Chief Town Planner (Ag.), Town Planning Department	1	
Commissioner of Police, Royal Barbados Police Force	1	
Commissioner of Titles, Land Adjudication Unit		1
Director (Ag.), National Insurance Scheme		1
Director of Public Prosecutions		1
Registrar of the Supreme Court		1
Solicitor General		1

## **Participation of minority and young women, including through sensitization and mentorship programmes**

The Barbados National Youth Parliament was launched in 2014 to provide opportunities and platforms for young people to learn about politics, democracy, social work and the parliamentary system.

## **Women's access to expression and participation in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)**

### **Measures to enhance access, affordability and use of ICTs for women and girls (e.g. free wifi hubs, community technology centers)**

THE Barbados Entrepreneurship Foundation (BEF) started working with the government and the Community Development Department to make free Wi-Fi available at every community centre in 2011. As at August 2017, fifteen community centres have been furnished with the necessary equipment and have fully operational free Wi-Fi networks.

The Barbados Free Wi-Fi project also commenced in November 2011 with the aim of having free Wi-fi access to the internet around Barbados. The idea was to have free internet access with workable speeds using managed bandwidth allocations to facilitate communication, retrieval and sharing of information and essential business activity. This initiative was only partially successful and is ongoing.

It was announced in May 2018 that the National Conservation Commission was moving towards having free wi-fi access for beach and park users. This has commenced and is ongoing.

## **National strategy or action plan for gender equality**

A draft National Policy on Gender and a Gender Action Plan was developed and submitted to the Cabinet in 2016. The recommendations from Cabinet have been incorporated and the revised policy has to be reviewed before resubmission to Cabinet.

## **National human rights institution in your country**

No. However, there is a Human Rights Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. The Office of the Ombudsman also investigates complaints by Barbadians or persons residing in Barbados who consider that the conduct of a Government Ministry, Department or Statutory Authority has been unreasonable, improper, inadequate or unjust thereby ensuring protection of individual rights and liberties against bureaucratic wrongdoing and the effects of maladministration.

## Peaceful and inclusive societies

### **Discrimination against and violations of the girl child**

#### **Girls' access to quality education, skills development and training**

The Community Development Department recognised that some parents could not afford to send their children to computer camps and therefore young persons from specific disadvantaged communities were targeted for an Information Technology Summer Teens Programme (ITS For Teens) which was introduced in 2009. This course is ongoing and is held for six weeks during the summer holiday for teenagers between the ages of 14-18 years and exposes both female and male teenagers to the many benefits of Information Technology (IT).

The United Nations Development Programme also partnered with the then Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth to offer training to forty (40) Youth Commissioners through a Trainer of Trainer Workshop on business lab methodology to enable them to train youth in thirty (30) communities in entrepreneurship. Components of the training programme were also used in the Barbados' 2014 National Summer Camp programme.

Soroptimists International of Barbados continued to organise its New Horizons Project at the girls' unit of the Government Industrial School, which is a juvenile reform school for girls. The New Horizons Project includes mentoring, a literacy programme, health care, art projects, internet safety, hair braiding and beading techniques. They have also established a resource centre at the institution with books, kindles and other resources. Another project entails equipping the students of the two female-only secondary schools with marketable skills as well as a mentorship programme where they cover various areas such as job applications, managing money.

#### **Policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices**

The Bureau of Gender Affairs, in collaboration with the NGO sector, has worked with secondary schools to sensitise students about domestic violence and the related issues. The National Organisation of Women also has an ongoing programme in secondary schools around the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault and BPW works in schools on the issue of domestic violence, particularly during the 16 Days of Activism.

During 2016, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Government Information Service, Crime Stoppers Barbados, the Child Care Board and state and non-state owned media stations, prepared public service announcements (PSAs) to support the education of parents, caregivers, families, professionals and children themselves on positive child rearing practices, recognition of violence and how and where to seek support. These PSAs were regularly aired to increase the likelihood that positive disciplining methods and safeguards for the protection of children from the incidence of child sexual abuse are always in place.

UNICEF also continued its support to the Child Care Board's Break the Silence Campaign for ending childhood abuse. As a first line of violence prevention programming, the process aims to change attitudes and social norms that hide violence. UNICEF worked with the CCB and religious leaders as well as sports coaches to integrate safeguards for children participating in these spaces. UNICEF also supported the Board to host networking sessions with the police, welfare and education services to strengthen the interagency coordination and cooperation around child abuse cases.

### **Policies and programmes to eradicate child labour and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children**

Barbados signed on to the Child Labour Convention 182 which covers work that would upset the child's safety, health and morals. This has resulted in a change to the minimum age in relation to the definition of a child.

## **Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation**

### **Integration of gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies**

Barbados possesses many of the inherent economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities that are associated with Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Among others, these include susceptibility to natural disasters and extreme events; a small population; limited land and natural resource base and a small open economy. These will be exacerbated by the impacts of climate change and, if left unchecked, can undermine the sustainable development gains that have been achieved over the course of the country's history.

Barbados is experiencing more extreme weather events, as well as more subtle changes to temperature and precipitation patterns. Observations confirm that temperatures are rising, the frequency of extreme weather events are increasing, sea levels are rising and coral bleaching events are more frequent. These observations are consistent with climate change projections for the Caribbean region.

The Government of Barbados has drafted a National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF), which provides the country's overarching approach to adaptation and mitigation and is in line with the Barbados Sustainable Development Policy (2004). The NCCPF is monitored by the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), on which the Bureau of Gender Affairs is represented as the National Climate Change Gender Affairs Focal Point.

The sectors identified as most vulnerable to climate change are agriculture, fisheries, tourism, water, human health, coastal resources and human settlements. Climate change will also impact vulnerable groups disproportionately, including youth and gender. As a result, gender and youth play a central role in the draft National Climate Change Policy Framework. A Gender Action Plan for the Environment has been developed.

Barbados signed on to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change on April 22, 2016 and, through confirmation of its Nationally Determined Contribution communicated the mitigation targets it intends to pursue as a contribution to the overall objective of the Climate Change Convention.

### **Integration of gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation**

See above.



## SECTION THREE: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

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### **32. Current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women and its location within Government**

The Bureau of Gender Affairs is the prime Government agency which exists to support and progress gender issues. Consequently, all matters pertaining to gender and related issues fall under the purview of the Bureau of Gender Affairs. It is charged with the responsibility for incorporating a gender perspective into all of Government's plans and policies, with the ultimate aim of achieving gender equality and gender equity.

The Bureau is located in the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs which delivers social protection and deals with social issues. There is also a research and policy arm within this ministry.

### **Institutional process for SDG implementation**

There is no national process for SDG implementation. However, in 2017, a Permanent Secretary located in the Prime Minister's Office was selected with responsibility for addressing the SDGs.

### **Mechanisms for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

There are no formal mechanisms in place, but this is done through informal networking and linkages among the government and non-governmental organisations including women's organisations, faith-based organisations, academia and the UN System.

### **Stakeholders' contribution to the preparation of the present national report**

A number of stakeholders were interviewed and consulted in compiling the present report.

## SECTION FOUR: DATA AND STATISTICS

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### **Progress in relation to gender statistics at national level**

The Barbados Government has not yet started using gender statistics at the national level. However, it has supported the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Gender Equality Indicators. The main goal is to develop a set of indicators parallel to the Global Set of Minimum Gender Indicators to identify, assess, measure and track the persistent gender equality concerns and disparities across the CARICOM region, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals. This support has enabled the Bureau of Gender Affairs to work on some aspects of the draft gender policy despite the fact that it has not yet been approved. One of these that work has started on is the recommendation to develop a gender management system.

The IDB-funded Strengthening Human and Social Development in Barbados project (see p14) has a component on enhancing institutional capacity through a Management Information System (MIS). The objective of this component is to strengthen public institutions involved in the project in terms of their coordination, monitoring and accountability capacities, through the installation of MIS. It aims to set up an inter-institutional MIS able to centralise data, process information and disseminate the outputs among stakeholders. MIS will store qualitative and quantitative information for each programme implemented by MPEA, MLSP and their related entities, including national assistance programmes, IBP, BECCS services and training programmes. This will fuel the flow of information and data between related institutions and thereby improve monitoring and evidence-based decision making. At the same time, MIS can become a pilot project for knowledge management and sharing to inform the monitoring and evaluation of social policies.

This component will finance purchase of hardware and software, based on technical assessments of the IT environment of the country and the computer resources of ministries and related agencies; the design, set up, test and maintenance of the MIS by an experienced provider and training for staff.

### **Priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years**

The Barbados Government, through the Bureau of Gender Affairs, is organising a National Research Consultation on Gender Indicators in May 2019 which is the first activity in a proposed series of activities to build awareness about the linkages between gender indicators and the international conventions which Barbados has signed and ratified and to develop a strategy for storing information and data based on the gender indicators.

To this end, the priorities for the next five years will be:

- Development of a project proposal for the establishment of a gender management system
- Identification of funding to establish and implement the gender management system, including major training and sensitisation of all government offices.
- Development of a centralised web-based database and/or dashboard on gender statistics and the identification of sources of data and access

### **National set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?**

Barbados proposes to use the core indicators developed by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.

### **Data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs**

Data collection has started but the indicators have not been prioritised as yet.

### **Disaggregations routinely provided by major surveys**

- x Income
- x Sex
- x Age
- x Education
- x Marital status