



National review

BARBADOS

In the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Division for Gender Affairs of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the way to Beijing+20



UNITED NATIONS

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Introduction

The Government of Barbados continues to play an active role in ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

The Government holds the view that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly are important contributions to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs is Government's key focal point for the implementation of policies and programmes pertaining to gender and development with a mandate to integrate a gender perspective in all government development plans and policies in order to bring about gender equity and equality between men and women.

This National Review highlights Barbados's major achievements and challenges in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).

These achievements and challenges are presented in thematic areas which Barbados has adopted: Women in decision making, Violence against Women, Gender mainstreaming and Women in Health.

SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES SINCE 1995

Women in Decision Making

Women in the decision making process is one of the critical areas for the advancement of women. Government recognizes that the equal participation of both women and men is critical to the development of the country and has enacted policies to ensure the elimination of direct discrimination in all spheres of activities.

Women occupy a number of high positions in society, including the post of Opposition Leader, Leader of the Senate, Deputy Principal of the University of the West Indies and in the recent past Governor of the Central Bank. The Government of Barbados also appointed the first female President of the Senate in the history of its Parliament in 2011. In terms of the Judiciary women have also made significant strides in this area. For the last three years there has been a 50% representation of women in the courts.

That women occupy some of these very important positions can be regarded as an achievement for women in decision making in the period under review.

One of the greatest challenges for the Government nevertheless continues to be the small number of women seeking political office at the candidature level. Despite the fact that Government policy remains one of gender neutrality as it relates to women having the right to offer themselves for candidature in political parties and there are no legal barriers to women's participation in politics, women's involvement still remains by and large confined to campaigning and voting. During the last election, eight women were presented as candidates, with three being elected to serve in the House of Assembly.

Violence against Women

The Government of Barbados adopted measures aimed at preventing and eradicating violence against women and can boast of a number of achievements in this area.

After many years of concern among stakeholders that the legislation on domestic is inadequate, the Government is currently revising its domestic violence (protection Orders) Act to address the

gaps in the legislation. A team including persons from the legal fraternity, the institute for gender and development studies and the NGO community spent four months revising the document.

The response to violence against women has not only been in the area of legislation, but efforts have also been concentrated on persons who commit acts of domestic violence.

An initiative entitled the Partnership for Peace Programme was started in August 2012 within the Ministry of Family. The programme which seeks to rehabilitate perpetrators began with 9 male participants who were sent from the courts. To date the programme has catered to around 36 males.

Training has also been a part of Government's effort to combat and equip its law enforcement with the necessary skills to effectively handle incidences of domestic violence. The Royal Barbados Police Training Centre sensitizes police recruits and detectives on the issue through regular training exercises. Along with this training there has also been the establishment of the Victim Support Group of the Royal Barbados Police Force which counsels victims of domestic violence along with other crimes.

The establishment of the Family Conflict Unit in 2013 is one of Government's greatest achievements in the area of domestic abuse. The Unit was set up following a spate of killing of females by their intimate partners or former partners which resulted in great public outcry and the call for tougher measures to be taken to prevent and eradicate domestic violence.

The Unit is still in its embryonic stages, but already a number of measures have been put in place to deal more effectively and efficiently with cases of domestic violence. With the advent of the Unit there seems to be a heightened awareness of the problem. This is evident in the increased number of requests for the Bureau to make presentations on the topic.

The Bureau's efforts at data collection on domestic violence have met with moderate success. The Bureau was able to commission a survey on domestic violence by the Caribbean Development Research Services (CADRES) a regional research organisation in 2009, but continues to be plagued with challenges in data collection in the area of domestic violence in general.

In order to develop an instrument to accurately measure the extent of domestic violence there was the development of the Domestic Violence Data Collection Protocol which has been approved by Cabinet to allow for a systematic collection and analysis of data on domestic violence. A pilot project was launched among a number of agencies involved in the fight against domestic violence. The piloting phase of the Domestic Violence Data Collection Protocol did not achieve the results anticipated since the agencies involved did not utilise the instrument.

The Bureau envisages that the establishment of the Family Conflict Unit should assist in alleviating some of the problems in data collection on domestic violence.

The other challenge is linked to the collection of data in other areas of the Bureau's work. This is due to the fact that the Bureau relies heavily on other agencies for data and information which is submitted late or on some occasions not submitted at all. As a result the Bureau is therefore at times unable to submit reports within the scheduled time requested.

Human Trafficking

The Government of Barbados views the issue of human trafficking as one of the greatest challenges to the preservation of human rights. The international call for Governments to raise public awareness of the issue of trafficking in persons has seen the adoption of various methods to achieve this goal.

In September of 2001, Barbados signed the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime with annex to its protocol to punish, suppress and punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs has collaborated with the NGO community to raise public awareness of this activity through a series of initiatives which included awareness campaigns and training. A protocol was developed in collaboration with its strategic partners to intervene in cases of trafficking and offer treatment and support to the victims. These initiatives have had the financial support of the International Organization for Migration under the Caribbean Counter Trafficking Initiative.

Barbados enacted the Transnational Crime Bill (pt.III) in February 2011. This Act has created the legal framework for criminalizing the offences of human trafficking and smuggling, with

custodial sentences and monetary fines specified for these crimes. With the introduction of this Act, Barbados was able to charge three persons, a 75-year-old female pensioner, a 31-year old pregnant woman and a 22 –year-old male were charged with the trafficking of five young Guyanese girls between the ages of 17 and 21.

Another achievement in Barbados’ efforts to combat Human Trafficking has been the establishment of a National Task Force on Human Trafficking in 2011. It was established to coordinate Barbados’ anti-trafficking activities and to develop and oversee the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons. This Task force is chaired by the Attorney General. The Task Force is also responsible for establishing policies to enable government to work with the NGO community and civil society to prevent trafficking and provide assistance to victims. The work of the task force falls within the three main areas of interest, Prevention, Protection and assistance to victims and prosecution. The Government of Barbados has made a commitment to develop with speed a national policy/procedures properly documented and dispersed to all Ministries, Departments, Agencies, NGO etc. to ensure that there is a basic standard of service provided by all agencies at all times. Part of the National Action Plan includes training for the front line workers. Also included is the plan to co-operate with countries being used as a transit or destination points.

The establishment of the National Task Force on Human Trafficking and the subsequent hard work put in by members of that Task Force has not only strengthened Barbados’ commitment to the cause but has also ensured that there is indeed a coordinated and informed approach to tackling the scourge of human trafficking. The fact that the Office of the Attorney – General is committed to the fight against Human Trafficking has ensured that the political will is present.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming has been integral to the mandate of the Bureau as a means of promoting the empowerment of women and the achieving of gender equality by seeking to remove all barriers and structures of inequality as well as monitoring and evaluating government policies and programmes.

In terms of improving the status of women and ensuring equality and equity of opportunities, Government through the Bureau of Gender Affairs has taken specific steps to initiate the development of a National Policy on Gender. In February 2006, a Consultation was held to identify some of the gaps and highlight new and emerging issues which must be addressed to achieve gender equity and equality.

The Caribbean Policy Development Centre which the Bureau contracted submitted draft guidelines and an outline of a framework which has been reviewed by the Bureau.

The Bureau staged a National Consultation on Gender in March 2012 followed by a number of focus group discussions to do an in depth analysis of the findings of the National Consultation.

From these focus groups there was the emergence of a Project Advisory Team (PAT) whose role is to provide technical input and guidance to support the development of the policy. A draft policy has been developed and submitted to the Bureau for its comments and input.

That work has commenced on the development of a National Policy on Gender and is progressing steadily is critical, since the Policy will be instrumental in guiding the work of the Bureau and providing a framework to clarify gender issues for the public at large.

In order to fulfil its gender mainstreaming mandate, the Bureau of Gender Affairs is in the process of sensitizing all public officers to gender and to enable them to do gender analysis of their projects and programmes. It is expected that as a result of these workshops, officers will be in a position to incorporate a gender analysis in the development of their programmes.

The Bureau has nonetheless encountered challenges in its attempt at mainstreaming gender in the public service. A number of junior officers who do not have the power to effect change were sent to the training. In addition the association of gender with women resulted in a number of departments sending all women to the training. Another issue was that persons who were trained were sometimes transferred to another department. This prompted a change in strategy by the Bureau which has produced more encouraging results. Rather than training persons from various departments, staff of specific departments was targeted for training. This change has led to the Ministry of Labour emerging as a gender sensitive department and spearheading the gender audit within the country.

SECTION TWO: PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION SINCE 2009

Violence against Women

The Government of Barbados recognizes that violence against women remains very prevalent in our society. In its fight to reduce and eventually eradicate this plague from our society, Government through the Bureau of Gender Affairs, has implemented a number of programmes, which aim to combat and eliminate violence against women. This programme is being conducted at three levels:

- The elimination of inequalities between men and women.
- The provision of services for victims and offenders.
- The provision of funding to women's groups to engage in education and support services.

Together with public sector departments and civil society organisations, the Gender Bureau has played a key role in addressing issues on violence against women, particularly for domestic abuse of women and proving a framework for addressing cases of human trafficking.

Legal Measures, National policies, Strategies, Programmes or Projects

In 1999, The Barbados Government established a shelter for Battered women in fulfilment of its commitment to provide services to improve the welfare of abused women. The shelter is funded by Government and managed by an NGO, the Business and Professional Women's Club of Barbados.

A Victim Support Group was established by the Royal Barbados Police Force. It is a non-profitable Voluntary Organization. It was established in December 1998 to offer emotional and practical support to nationals, non-nationals and their families and friends, who have suffered traumatic experiences as a result of various crimes such as robbery, sexual offences, burglary and domestic violence.

Training for the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force in domestic intervention was seen as a crucial aspect in the elimination of domestic violence. As a result, a module on domestic violence was incorporated into the training of officers at the Royal Barbados Police Force. All new police recruits are now trained in domestic violence intervention.

With assistance from UN Women the BGA developed the domestic violence data collection protocol. The use of the Protocol was however not implemented.

The Bureau commissioned the survey on the Prevalence of domestic violence in 2009. The findings revealed a 27% incidence of domestic violence, public discontent with the response of the Royal Barbados Police, and the need to amend the legislation to include filing for protection orders in visiting relationships.

In 2012 the Gender Bureau with assistance from UN Women, formed a multi sectorial committee to review and amend the Domestic Violence Protection Order Act.

Currently, the Chief Parliamentary Council has produced a draft. After consultation it is expected that this draft will be presented to Parliament before the end of the year 2014.

As a result of a number of murders related to domestic violence in 2013 and responding to the loud outcry for the need for an improved police response, the Royal Barbados Police Force held a stakeholder meeting to assess the services that were available and to look at the recommendations from the Domestic Violence Legislation Committee; this led to the establishment of the Family Conflict Unit. The Family Conflict Unit is charged with the responsibility of providing support and guidance to victims of domestic violence and to settle family dispute cases.

Victims of domestic violence can now:

- Report incidences at any police station.
- the police is now ordered to assist the victims in the gathering of health and other data required for the collection of evidence.
- Police officers are now mandated to record every report of domestic violence.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs continued to provide finance and other technical support to the Business and Professional Women's Club (BPWC), for the management of the Shelter for Battered Women.

In tandem with its partners, the BGA leads a national campaign to bring focus to the issue of domestic violence in commemoration of the U N Day for the elimination of violence against women on November 25th and the 16 Days of Activism against Violence.

The Gender Bureau continues to spearhead initiatives to address human trafficking and is the secretariat for the National Task Force on Human Trafficking. Some of these initiatives are listed below:

In 2004 worked with the BPW Barbados a public awareness campaign on Trafficking in Persons was conducted

In 2007 the Bureau of Gender Affairs hosted a National Consultation on Human Trafficking.

In 2011 Barbados passed the Anti-human trafficking legislation

Established the National Task Force for the Prevention of Human Trafficking

Developed National Guidelines for the Prevention of Human Trafficking

The National Task Force implemented public awareness campaigns, capacity building training in the identification of victims of human trafficking for members of the Royal Barbados Police, the Immigration Department, NGOs and the media with support from the International Organisation of Migration.

Barbados remains however on the Tier 2 Watch list.

Methods of Monitoring

The Domestic Violence Programme and the Human Trafficking Programmes are monitored largely by our measurement of their achievement against the indicators set largely by the international conventions of the CEDAW and the Belem do Para and the U S State Department office for monitoring compliance to the minimum standards for fighting Trafficking in Persons.

Women in Decision Making

Barbados, like most states of the Anglophone Caribbean, operates within the framework of liberal democracy, and has adopted the Westminster form of government. The concept of democracy is built on some basic premise of the distribution of power, the separation of powers, participation of citizens, rights of the minority to be heard. These powers are distributed between the Judiciary, Parliament and Executive power. A significant factor of the Westminster model is the power of the prime minister and the role of the party in determining the nation's affairs. The power of the Prime Minister has significant impact on the selection process of candidates. There is a bicameral system, comprising of an elected House of Representatives and an appointed Senate. There are two major political parties who have shared the political power by way of constitutionally held national elections and have had continuous years of political stability.

Women's right to equal participation and freedom of assembly and association are guaranteed under the Constitution of Barbados. No legal impediments exists regarding their participation in the election process neither are there barriers to their holding office whether in Parliament or elsewhere. There is also equal opportunity for women to represent Government at the National and International Level.

Barbados has not implemented any special measures to increase women's participation in national elections. Women are not considered as a 'special' group that must be considered when appointing members to the Senate. Barbados has however appointed a woman as President of the Senate. Many women are willing to participate in canvassing and other administrative tasks, but are reluctant to enter elective politics because of the aggressive and sometimes "hostile" nature of the campaign platform. The challenges of gender relations in some circumstances make the care of the family oppressive and an obstacle that prohibits her participation in national elections. With the absence of special measures, one of the more significant obstacles to women's participation in the political process is the very nature of the party political system and the commitment of political parties to gender equality.

Women are under-represented in political decision making. The equal participation of both women and men in decision making is key to achieving a balance that reflects the composition of Barbadian society. This balance is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning.

A number of initiatives have been put in place to facilitate women's participation in public life. Among these was a leadership training programme implemented by the Bureau of Gender Affairs, in collaboration with the School of Continuing Studies focusing on "Education for Women in Politics".

In 1998 the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action, (CAFRA) the regional NGO together with the National Organization of Women (NOW), and the Women's Forum of Barbados hosted a two day roundtable of women in politics, which has as its theme "Women as 12 Transformation Agents". The goal of the roundtable was to reflect on how women in politics can be catalyst for transforming the politics, economics and sociology of Barbadian and Caribbean societies.

Among the more specific objectives were the following:

- Sharing of views on gender, women and politics;
- How women can help to broaden and promote accountability within the political Process; and
- How women can work to transform the nature and practice of politics.

This roundtable represented one of the key actions in terms of implementation of training programmes to facilitate women's participation in politics and public life.

Within the Public Service, women are under represented at the level of decision -making. At the end of 2001, seventeen percent (17%) of Permanent Secretaries were women, thirty-three percent (33%) of women were Deputy Permanent Secretaries, and thirty-three percent (33%) of women served as Directors or Heads of Departments. As far as the Judiciary is concerned, there is one woman serving in the High Court and six (6) serving as Magistrates. None serve as Judges of Appeal. However, in the Office of the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, The Chief Parliamentary Counsel, The Principal Crown Counsel and their respective deputies are all

women. Women also serve in the positions of Registrar of the Supreme Court and Registrar of Corporate Affairs. Women account for Sixty-three percent (63%) of the Senior Management positions, fifty-five percent (55%) of those at middle management and seventy-three percent (73%) at the junior level.

Table of Sex in Positions of Decision Making at 2001			
Position	Total	Male	Female
Elected Members of Parliament	28	24	4
Members of Cabinet	20	16	4
Parliamentary Secretaries	2	2	
Senators	21	15	6
Permanent Secretaries	25	18	7
Deputy Permanent Secretaries	24	16	8
Directors/Heads of Government Agencies	97	67	30
Deputy Directors/Heads of Government Agencies	50	36	14
Judges of High Court	6	5	1
Magistrates	10	6	4
Judges of Appeal	3	3	0
Parliamentary/ Crown Counsels	21	5	16
Ambassadors /Consular levels	11	8	3

Table of Sex in Positions of Decision Making at 2013			
Position	Total	Male	Female
Elected Members of Parliament	30	25	5
Members of Cabinet & Parliamentary Secretaries	20	17	3
Parliamentary Secretaries			
Senators			
Permanent Secretaries	23	8	15

Deputy Permanent Secretaries			
Directors/Heads of Government Agencies			
Deputy Directors/Heads of Government Agencies			
Judges of High Court	8	3	5
Magistrates	10	5	5
Judges of Appeal	5	3	2
Parliamentary/ Crown Counsels			
Ambassadors /Consular levels			
Source: Compiled from the Barbados Public Service Staff List 2000 - 2001			

At 2004 In the Foreign Service, at the Ambassador/ Consular levels, women are still under represented, filling just three (3) of the eleven positions.

Women and Poverty

For many years Barbados has been described as a middle-high income country ranked 38 of 187 countries on the Human Development Index and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Extreme poverty is not prevalent in Barbados. However, the country does suffer from pockets of poverty, and these are comprised of certain strata of society which exist at a comparatively high risk of falling below the poverty line.

The period 1995 – 2008 the gross domestic product (GDP) was relatively high, and growing incrementally every year until 2009 when the country started to experience the fall out of the global economic recession. However, it was recognised that the GDP like any other average had masked the reality of a number of people; there were pockets of poverty in certain sections, of the country. Urban Barbados, when explored revealed the unexpected high level of poverty and very poor living conditions. Present were dilapidated housing, poor sanitary conditions, and the inability of the residence to repair their homes and improve their standard of living.

During the period 1995-2013 the government of Barbados with the assistance of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank, conducted two poverty assessments, to determine the level of poverty in Barbados.

As a result Government established a number programmes to assist persons who are living below the poverty line. The Poverty Alleviation Bureau was established in October 1998. The Bureau was created to examine and report on the living conditions of persons and Organisations making applications to the Poverty Eradication Fund for assistance.

The aims and objectives of the Bureau were to:

- Assist in the alleviation and eradication of poverty through the empowerment of individuals and groups by the provision of economic and financial opportunities as well as educational and vocational training.
- Establish a cordial and effective working relationship with Government agencies, NGO's, CBO's, individuals and community groups in an effort to reduce inefficiencies, duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.
- Ensure a faster and more meaningful delivery of services.
- Create the climate for young people to gravitate towards the growth and development of small/micro- business enterprises.
- Pioneer the development of a new entrepreneurial class.

The Bureau was also charged with:

- i. Developing a strategy for the alleviation and eventual eradication of poverty through community involvement.
- ii. Providing the necessary technical assistance for the intermediary organizations to enhance their capabilities to service their clients.

A poverty Eradication Committee was also constituted to study the application and approve access to the Poverty Alleviation Fund which was established to assist the most vulnerable

groups in our society in acute need, particularly where this need cannot be met from traditional sources of funding.

The Committee considers requests from individuals whose income levels fall below the poverty line of \$5,503.00 per annum. The major beneficiaries of this programme are single mothers who are heads of households and the elderly, who again are predominately female.

The Poverty Alleviation Bureau was closed in 2010 following a restructuring of the ministry.

The Urban Development Commission was created in August 1997. This agency was given the mandate of addressing the needs of Bridgetown and its environments. The agency therefore seeks to eradicate poverty in the urban corridor of Barbados through physical, social and economic programmes aimed at improving the standard of living and quality of life of urban dwellers.

The Urban renewal programme provides for, among other things:

- a) The execution of a programme of renewal of the physical environment of those city districts that have suffered the greatest degradation.
- b) The restoration of buildings of architectural interest as a means of both preserving the national heritage and providing jobs.
- c) The construction of roads and drainage in tenancies.
- d) The enforcing of town planning regulations for tenancies including clear definition of boundaries and of space being rented and ensuring that houses are properly sited.

This programme of Urban renewal is supported by a Poverty Alleviation Programme, the Urban Enterprise Fund, the Urban Housing Loan Programme (UHLP) and the Transfer of Titles Programmes. These services and programmes are designed to impact effectively on the poorest of the poor in a sustained way.

The Transfer of Titles Programme assists dwellers in urban tenancies to purchase the lots they occupy by subsidizing the market price. As a result, these low – income groups are required to pay no more than \$2.50 per square foot for the land irrespective of the market value.

The Rural Development Commission was also established during the same year and has similar goals to those of UDC. However its programmes are designed to assist persons living in rural areas. This Agency falls under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Relief 2000 focused on meeting the needs in respect of employment, training, financial assistance, adequate housing and identification to improve the recipients of social assistance and other families in need, who were identified by social agencies and similar organizations as living in extreme poverty. Participants were encouraged take part in in any of the available programmes which are best suited their needs, goals and capacities. The project utilized both public and private section resources, in order to access specialist intervention and maximize gains from their involvement in these programmes. Examples of the programme were Fundamental Dining Services and the Residential Housekeeping Course.

Government has also established a micro-credit facility Fund Access which provides loans to self employed persons and low-income earners. Other micro-credit facilities are the Barbados. There is the Investment and Development Corporation and the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme. While women are not prohibited from acquiring loans or other financial no special measure is taken into consideration to appeal to women's needs, the requirement to obtain a guarantor for the loan can contribute to some level of exploitation. Most women appear to acquire loans from the Credit Unions where they are entitled to borrow three to five times the amount of money which they have saved.

Other initiatives implemented are:

Increased minimum wages for Shop Assistants and Domestic
\$500.00 tax rebate for persons earning less than \$250.00 per week
100% mortgages for persons earning less than \$13,000.00 per year
Adult education classes for the training and retraining of persons
Increased home help services to the elderly.

A major obstacle facing persons living in poverty is the access to information and opportunities for education, because many come from social and economic situations, which place them at a

disadvantage very early in their lives. Very often this is where the vicious cycle of poverty is established.

This lack of economic independence and absence of social skills very often translates in an inability to participate fully in society, where issues of equity and equality have little meaning. Education and training are therefore key components of the strategy to fighting and eradicating poverty from our society and improving the lives of women and their children.

It is within this context that the Bureau of Gender Affairs has been providing financial and technical support to the Business and Professional Women's Club of Barbados to undertake an annual one week self development training programme for young women, living in poor circumstances in an effort to equip them with the necessary skills to enable them to bring about a transformation in their social and economic situation and by extension in their lives.

The goal of this self development programme is to expose young women to skills, which can assist them in accessing job opportunities, as well as developmental skills which they can use in their daily lives.

In 2010, the Government of Barbados, in conjunction with the Caribbean Development Bank, conducted a Country Poverty Assessment of Living Conditions (CALC) to determine how Barbadians fare in terms of such important quality-of-life factors as levels of income and expenditure, consumption, employment, education, and access to social and public services. This assessment focused on identifying the causes of poverty and evaluated the type and magnitude of poverty being experienced in the country. Its results will inform poverty reduction and alleviation policies and related social policies and programs. The CALC study was divided into four components including the Survey of Living Conditions (SLC) and the Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA).

Data from the two components provide evidence about the gendered nature of poverty and about the similarities and differences in the experiences of poor males and poor females. Information provided by poor men and poor women females also highlight the similarities and differences in the impact that poverty has on them.

Data from the Survey of Living Conditions showed that:

- There has been an increase in the number of persons who are poor and in the number who are indigent.
- More females than males are poor and that there is a strong link between unemployment and poverty.
- Female headed households are more likely to be poor and that these households are usually larger in size, have more unemployed persons and more non-earners, and a higher level of dependency.

Data from the Participatory Poverty Assessment showed that:

- The women in female headed households carry a heavy burden of care and are solely responsible for the welfare of family members.
- Many of these women are either unemployed or underemployed and working part time in low paid jobs for low wages that are insufficient to meet either their basic needs or those of their family members.
- Poverty prevents males and females from performing their gender roles as expected by the society.
- According to women, the greatest impact of poverty has on them is their inability to care for and feed their children and other family members.
- According to men the greatest impact on them is that poverty prevents them from fulfilling their role as bread winner and provider and that it threatens their manhood and emasculates them.

The Labour Department with assistance from the International Labour Organisation has developed a number of programmes to assist workers in the changing environment. One activity is the Importance of the Decent Work Concept.

Decent work justifiably places emphasis on the people-centred approach to the globalisation process and the challenges that a changing international environment would bring. These challenges are both numerous and diverse, ranging from the declining prevalence of preferential trading arrangements for developing countries, to job redundancies in economic sectors that have become uncompetitive.

Decent work acknowledges that one cannot justifiably examine issues pertaining to trade, technology, international capital flows, intellectual property rights and market access without placing equal emphasis on other issues such as poverty reduction, gender equality, social security and workers rights. These issues have a direct impact not only on peoples' jobs, but their cultures and their very existence. Consequently, though it is acknowledged that profits are the driving force behind all business entities in any capitalist society, the decent work concept acknowledges the fact that some equilibrium must be found between:

- (i) Economic and financial matters; and
- (ii) Social justice, both at the workplace and in wider society.

The concept recognises that focus must be placed not just on the quantity, but the quality of employment, regardless of the occupation in which a worker is engaged. This is a concept that should be vigorously pursued, especially in light of the challenges associated with the current economic crisis and beyond.

The Welfare Department provides monetary assistance and relief in kind to the poorer members of society. This is done via:

- Family casework/counselling/and other social work interventions;
- National assistance grants;
- Assistance in kind (e.g. food vouchers, education assistance, payment of utility bills, and the like)
- Relief and rehabilitation of fire victims;

- Critical assistance in national emergencies such as flooding and hurricanes;
- Social reports for agencies and organisations;
- Counselling and assistance to the elderly and to persons with disabilities; and,
- Client advocacy and mediation.

For the elderly, the National Assistance Board social to the elderly such as home care, recreational activities, residential care facilities and bereavement support.

STRATEGIES AIMED AT POVERTY REDUCTION

The Medium Term Development Strategy 2010-2014 contained a number of key strategies which government pursued. The objective was to work towards the alleviation of existing pockets of poverty through the improvement in governance of resources, while ensuring that other social services such as health, housing and education/training, were adequately provided. Strategies included were:

- Undertake a Country Assessment of Living Conditions (CALC)
- Create a national poverty database through a Country Poverty Assessment which forms a part of an entire Assessment of Country Living Conditions
- Preparation of Barbados Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and Action
- Expand the Welfare to Work Programme to allow for the national development of a culture of behavioural change, empowerment and self-reliance, in relation to the treatment of poverty
- Introduce a system of continuous surveys of household conditions to monitor the level of poverty in Barbados
- Apply information and communication technologies to assist in the poverty eradication, constituency empowerment, and urban planning efforts
- Review legislation to strengthen the social safety net through, inter alia, the adoption of a rehabilitative approach to the problem of homelessness.
- Pursue a national policy on homelessness in conjunction with the ministry responsible for housing

- Empower communities through; inter alia, the development of partnerships between Government agencies and Civil Society, especially community-based and faith-based organisations.
- Empower individuals and families with the intention of breaking the cycle of dependency and increasing self-reliance.
- Seek to empower persons with disabilities, the aged, the poor and the indigent
- Finalise the new local governance structure under the Constituency Empowerment Programme, including the establishment of a Constituency Empowerment Department, Constituency Empowerment Centres and Constituency Councils

ISEE Bridge Programme

Following the closure of the Poverty Alleviation Fund, the Government of Barbados implemented the Implementation Stabilisation Enablement and Empowerment (ISEE) Bridge Programme. The programme comprises four areas of critical intervention and is an attempt to tackle poverty from the household level therefore addressing the needs of each member of that household with the aim of moving persons from a state of dependency to empowerment.

The programme began with 30 families which were selected from the 30 constituencies in the island.

The Medium Term Growth and Development Strategy 2013-2020 also contains a number of key strategies aimed at poverty reduction. These include:

- Establish measures to cushion the economy and society from the adverse effects of external shocks (social insurance mechanism)
- Develop and introduce adult and continuing education programmes in various communities supported by programmes for enhancing economic opportunities in entrepreneurial activities
- Evaluate and monitor the range of poverty initiatives, institutions and programmes to establish effectiveness and efficiency

- Provide greater access to housing, health care and education, especially for the poor and vulnerable

National Mechanisms

In 2000, in the response to the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Bureau of Women's Affairs was re-designated the Bureau of Gender Affairs and was charged with the responsibility of:

- Facilitating gender mainstreaming of national development policies and programmes, so that equality and equity between men and women can be achieved.
- Advising Government Agencies and NGOs on policy matters affecting the status of women and men and to monitor the impact of these policies.
- Liaising with Regional and International Agencies and NGOs on gender and development issues.
- Implementing, monitoring and evaluating government policies, plans and programmes pertaining to gender and development.
- Participating in a variety of programmes to further the development of gender equity in areas such as public education, legislature reform and human resource development.

Staffing

The current full time Staff at the Bureau is as follows:

- 1 Director
- 2 Programme Officers
- 1 Research Officer
- 1 Secretary
- 1 Clerical Officer
- 1 Clerk/Typist
- 1 Maid (part-time)

Despite the importance given to the National Strategic Plan of Barbados (2005-2025) to achieve gender equality and mainstreaming gender into national priorities and initiatives, in practice gender is not a priority. This is evidenced in the 'gender neutral' stance that does not recognize barriers to gender equality, and the difficulty in accessing sex-disaggregated data, particularly within the economic sectors. It is also reflected in the low levels of support from senior members within the public service for gender sensitivity training and the extent to which personnel trained are able to incorporate gender mainstreaming into existing work obligations. Ministries other than the host (Social Care, Community Development and Constituency Empowerment) do not have budgets for gender mainstreaming. This may be contrasted with the National AIDS Programme; budgets for HIV prevention and control exist in line ministries and these support the mainstreaming of HIV in these Ministries. It is important to note, however, that HIV/AIDS care and prevention programmes have received funding from a number of international donors, particularly the World Bank.

The development of the Gender Policy comes at a time when government resources are low and the level of work and resources required to successfully implement the upcoming policy is high. There is still need to monitor and evaluate current and past programming efforts of the Bureau to provide a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis and its existing ability to perform its mandate. Nonetheless, the review of the budget, CGA interviews and analysis of past external reports, reveal that the Bureau is predominantly government-funded and has engaged in multiple partnerships with international agencies and community-based organisations, usually around events and short-term projects, to achieve work objectives in the five existing priority areas of its work. If there is need for technical capacity that the Bureau has internally, the practice is to procure external support through consultancies.

Work plans are drafted on an annual basis, which are then proposed as part of the overall budget for the Ministry of Social Affairs, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, but the implementation of the gender policy and an expansion of thematic areas will undoubtedly require a greater amount of human and financial resources, placed within a multi-year strategy, to achieve objectives. It is envisioned that various partners will take ownership of implementation of different aspects of the policy. As there is no gender budget currently

allocated to each ministry or supporting departments for gender-related projects, an increase in the need for human and financial resources is to be expected within and outside of the Gender Bureau. In the current economy, the Bureau will ultimately have to access funds available through regional and international donors around thematic areas or in support of the development and implementation of the policy. Increased partnerships with the private sector around specific projects could also be explored.

Mainstreaming Gender

Since 2000, the Gender Bureau has conducted a number of gender training and sensitisation workshops for the public sector, community organisations and specific target groups in the wider community. There is a three-day training workshop that is administered to public sector employees. The workshop aims to be an interactive and flexible training session that is catered to the work of the participants. The training sessions serve to educate participants on the difference between sex and gender; explain gender constructs and how they shape gender identities and gender roles and relations; and strengthen skills in gender analysis for policy and programme development.

To date, over 500 government employees across sectors have received training.¹ Amongst the persons trained are the identified gender focal points within each ministry and persons that sit on the Gender Advisory Committee and other committees. The Bureau has also been invited to provide training by international agencies, community organisations and private entities on gender equity and equality, particularly related to the five thematic areas they cover. The Bureau hosted a Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop in 2013 to receive feedback from past participants.

The National Advisory Council on Women was changed to the National Advisory Council on Gender. The new National Advisory Council on Gender was re-constituted in June 2001. The Terms of Reference of the Council include identifying, monitoring and making recommendations to the Minister with responsibility for gender affairs on issues as they relate to gender. The

National Advisory Council continues work function and has developed new strategies to make their role and function more effective.

Gender and health

The Government of Barbados holds as its philosophy regarding health, that the right to health care is a fundamental right without which none of the other rights guaranteed under the Constitution can be attained. It has therefore continued to maintain a relatively reputable health care system with free health care for all. The current economic situation of Barbados has had some effect of the state's ability to continue to provide the type of service once provided and has introduced some client fees in order to constrain expenditure as it maintains its commitment to make primary health care accessible to all health citizens.

Government has also sought to further strengthen the health sector to realize gender equality and equity through the integration of gender sensitive policies and programmes. To achieve this, there is collaboration with other sectors to enable individuals, families and communities to develop and adopt good health practices and to achieve productive and healthy lifestyles. Health Education Clinics are conducted at all the polyclinics to help increase awareness of disease risk factors, as well as disease prevention and control. There are certain services that do target women and adolescent girls.

- The goal of the Maternal and Child Health Program (MCH) is to promote good health, in pregnant women, ensuring both a healthy mother and infant.
- Family Clinics have also been integrated into the MCH Program.
- A Cancer Control Project was established in 2002, aimed at influencing women in the 45 and over age group to have Pap smear tests in the Polyclinic.
- Adolescent health programs have been developed to assist adolescents in the 12-19 age groups to cope with the many socio-economic, psychological, nutritional, health and interpersonal problems that confront them on a daily basis.

Ante-natal and post-natal health services have been considered priorities and the services are being expanded to provide increased accessibility. The wider reproductive health needs of

women throughout the life cycle, such as menopause however are not yet treated as priorities. Men have STD services at all government clinics, but only 2/8 (25%) of government clinics provide services to youth.

Government has established the National Commission on HIV/AIDS under the Prime Minister's Office, with a mandate to implement a broad based programme to control the further spread of the epidemic in the general population, by preventing HIV infection among vulnerable and high risk groups without stigmatizing them and treating infected persons. One of the objectives of this new programme is to strengthen collaboration among various agencies and bring greater accountability to the management of the disease.

The goals of the new structure and programmes are as follows:

- To achieve a 50% reduction in the mortality rate within three years.
- Improve the quality of life for persons living with AIDS and increase their life expectancy.
- To achieve a 50% reduction in the rate of new infections within the next five (5) years, and
- Build sustainable institutional arrangements for managing the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The cultural context in the Barbadian population has contributed tremendously to the implementation of IEC activities to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Nineteen HIV/AIDS Community committees have been established across the island to address the situation at the community level. New approaches have been introduced using drama and other performing arts to get the message across and impact on society.

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

The goal of a gender management system in the Health Sector is to ensure the integration of gender into all government policies, programmes and activities which impact on health.

However, the development of a Gender Management System for the health sector has been pending the development of a health information system that would produce system-wide gender statistics, by disaggregating of all epidemiological data. The Ministry of Health is presently pursuing the development of a comprehensive health information system.

Gender inequality is a critical factor in the increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS in Barbados. The Bureau of Gender Affairs has implemented a training programme on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, to provide information on the gender relations and the gender dynamics of HIV/AIDS in order to reduce the levels of vulnerability. The workshops provided participants with the opportunity to:

- Distinguish the difference between HIV/AIDS and examine the modes of transmission.
- Identify and examine some of the factors and situations which would expose individuals to the virus.
- Examine women's and men's reproductive health; taking into account social and economic issues such as gender roles and relationships, socialization, social competence, cultural mores and economic dependences.

Workshops are conducted on an on-going basis with leaders of non-governmental organizations, Parent-Teachers Associations, community groups and church related groups.

The National HIV/AIDS Commission launched an HIV/AIDS website and logo to provide the public with HIV/AIDS information.

In the face of a growing HIV/AIDS epidemic and the fact that women constitute a large percent of the victims of this epidemic, government has adopted several strategies for health promotion and treatment.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs collaborated with the National HIV/AIDS Commission in the implementation of its Speak-Sister Campaign. The Campaign was launched on October 1, 2003 and sought to focus attention on women and HIV/AIDS, and to provide information on reproductive rights, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and gender issues.

Other agencies collaborating in the implementation of this Campaign are the Ministry of Health, the National Organization of Women, and the Community Development and Welfare Department. A series of six workshops will be held with various stakeholders to raise awareness of the impact of HIV/AIDS on women.

In 1995, Government implemented a policy to administer the drug Zidovudine AZT at the fourteenth (14th) week of pregnancy to women who tested positive for HIV/AIDS. For the last two (2) years, the use of AZT for the mother-to-child transmission prevention programme, has been replaced by the administering of Neviparine - another anti-retroviral drug with greater potency. Neviparine is administered to the mother during labour (one dose) and to the child (one dose) within seventy-two (72) hours of birth.

AZT continues to be used in combination with another anti-retroviral drug – 3TC – for post-exposure prophylaxis for all health staff.

SECTION THREE: DATA AND STATISTICS

National Indicators

The Government of Barbados, through the Bureau of Gender Affairs has not yet established a core set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality in Barbados. One of the main contributing factors for the lack of a core set of indicators has been the absence of a national gender policy to guide data collection. With the advent of the National Policy on Gender which is currently being developed, it is expected that gaps in the data will be identified, as well as areas for data collection. As a result a core set of national indicators to monitor progress in gender equality is expected to be established.

Minimum Set of Gender Indicators

The Government of Barbados, through the Bureau, has not embarked on a systematic data collection and compilation of the minimum set of gender indicators. While there is no systematic collection or compilation of these indicators, the Bureau of Gender Affairs has been constantly required to report data on some of the indicators for local and international agencies, through its reports. This has been particularly true as it relates to the area of women in decision-making, political life, the judiciary and women in Parliament. The Bureau normally requests the assistance of the relevant ministries in collecting the requested data.

Nine indicators on violence: UN Statistical Commission 2013

There has been no commencement on the part of the Bureau of Gender Affairs to collect and compile data specifically around the nine indicators on violence against women as agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013. Work on the development of a Nation Policy on Gender has played a significant part in the delay to commence these processes. Nevertheless the Bureau remains mindful of the set of indicators and is optimistic that the advent of the policy should lead to the incorporation of the nine indicators as the Bureau seeks to gather data on domestic violence and violence against women in general.

Processes undertaken to collect data on the situation of particular groups of women, such as rural women, older women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, women living with HIV and AIDS or other groups

In terms of data collection on the situation of the groups mentioned, the Barbados Statistical Service, Government's central agency for the collection of data, undertakes a Barbados Population and Housing census every ten years. The census gathers data on a number of the groups and therefore the results are used by various Ministries / Departments to provide some guide on the situation of the respective groups.

The Lady Meade Clinic in Barbados collects data on persons. In terms of data collection as it relates to women living with HIV/AIDS, the cases are generated at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital

for all HIV + persons. These case-based forms are maintained in the National HIV surveillance database. From this database, the number of women diagnosed in any given year by age group can be ascertained. Additionally persons who are diagnosed are referred to the Lady Meade Reference Unit (LRU) for follow up care. Data is then collected on the CD4 and viral load as well as any treatment information. All this is stored in a database called SHIP and this data allows for the number of women registered in the area by age group. From this data a count of the number of persons on treatment and what regimen they are on, can be had.

Data is also collected on women who are HIV + and pregnant. These women are referred to the Lady Meade Reference Unit. Data is collected if the woman is on treatment, treatment regimen, CD4 and viral load.

In the area of poverty, the Bureau of Social Policy in 2010 undertook a comprehensive study on the living conditions in Barbados. The study known as the Country Assessment of Living Conditions (CALC) included an examination of poverty. One specific objective of that study was to measure the indigent and poverty lines for Barbados and to determine the characteristics, extent, geographic concentration, severity and causes of poverty by age and sex.

SECTION FOUR: EMERGING PRIORITIES

The Government of Barbados, through the Bureau of Gender Affairs views the development and implementation of gender indicators as an urgent need over the next three to five years for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the national level.

The need for the setting up of a Gender Management System across the Public Service to manage the collection around the indicators once these have been developed and implemented is also a key priority for the Government of Barbados.

The area of Finance is one in which there needs to be training in gender analysis in economic Ministries in order that economic planning recognises issues of gender and incorporate these issues into respective projects and programmes. Closely related to this is the need for gender budgeting to ensure equity in budget allocations and in turn the financial empowerment of women.

The institutional strengthening of Government's National Machinery for gender equality and empowerment of women, is another area of priority. The Bureau of Gender Affairs requires adequate human resources to enhance its technical capacity to effectively plan and implement its programmes, if it is to achieve its mandate.

The need for increase human resources of the Bureau must also be met with a complimentary increase in the financial budget of the Bureau of Gender Affairs.

The merger of greater human resources and greater financial resources rank highly on Barbados priorities and recommendations for the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of women. These are essential for Barbados in light of the current discussions on Sustainable Development Goals and the post 2015 agenda.