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**REPORT OF THE
ECLAC-CDCC/COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT
REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

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**REPORT OF THE
ECLAC-CDCC/COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT
REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

The Regional Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming was held from 2-4 May 2000, at the Royal Antiguan Hotel, Antigua and Barbuda. This meeting was convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Fifteen CDCC member and associate member countries from the national women's machineries were present, namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to representatives from the Commonwealth Secretariat and the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, resource persons in attendance included Ms. Denise Noel DeBique of the Gender Equity Fund, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Dr. Eudine Barriteau, Centre for Gender Studies, University of the West Indies (UWI), Ms. Sonja Harris and representatives of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) and the Windward Islands Farmers' Association (WINFA).

In their welcoming remarks, both Ms. Nancy Spence, Director of the Gender and Youth Affairs Division (GYAD), Commonwealth Secretariat, and Ms. Roberta Clarke, Social Affairs Officer, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, spoke of the importance of inter-agency collaboration in supporting the work of governments in the area of gender mainstreaming. They both recognized that gender mainstreaming was the current international approach for promoting equality between women and men. This approach required the involvement of all actors within the public sector, not just the Women's Affairs Ministries.

Ms. Spence referred to the work of the Gender and Youth Affairs Division in the development of a Gender Management System (GMS) which was being implemented in a number of countries within the Commonwealth. In supporting gender mainstreaming initiatives, the Commonwealth Secretariat had developed and published a series of publications for use by key stakeholders within the public sector. She spoke of the strategic role played by the GYAD as policy advisers to governments implementing the GMS. She stated that the GYAD was seeking to become a knowledge-based agency with a mandate to produce gender-aware policy briefs on key mainstream areas to facilitate the advocacy of national women's machineries.

Ms. Spence also mentioned the mandate to promote gender mainstreaming advanced at the Fifth Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs convened in Trinidad and Tobago in 1996. At that meeting, the Commonwealth Secretariat was urged to assist governments to promote gender equality using the Gender Management System. The update to the Plan of Action on Gender and Development (2000-2005), endorsed by Women's Affairs Ministers and by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in South Africa in November 1999, also mandated the Commonwealth Secretariat to provide practical training for governments, and to develop resource materials on gender mainstreaming, within the framework of the GMS.

Speaking on behalf of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, Ms. Roberta Clarke welcomed the participants to the regional workshop. She referred to the mandate to governments to incorporate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programmes. This mandate was stated in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Platform for Action recognises that the primary institutional governmental response to promote the advancement of women was the establishment of national machineries for women and that these mechanisms have been plagued by unclear mandates and lack of adequate staff training. In this context, the Platform for Action calls for the coordination and cooperation within the central government in order to ensure mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policy-making processes.

The need for training around gender mainstreaming and its component concepts (gender analysis and gender planning) was also accepted at the Second and Third Caribbean Ministerial Conferences on Women. The Port of Spain Consensus, which was adopted at the Third Ministerial conference on Women in Port of Spain 5-7 October 1999, called on ECLAC/CDCC member States to strengthen the machineries for women through the provision of training to ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender mainstreaming as a critical element in the achievement of gender equality, equity and social justice. The Port of Spain Consensus also recommended that the "Gender Management System" developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat be adopted by the region as an approach to gender mainstreaming.

The need for a regional vision and consensus on the meaning of gender equity and the process of gender mainstreaming was advocated at an Ad Hoc Expert Group meeting on Gender Mainstreaming, hosted by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat in Port of Spain 13-14 January 2000. Beyond a regional vision, that meeting agreed that the enabling environment for the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming included clarity in the definitions and understanding of gender, gender equity and gender mainstreaming and that technical expertise at the level of the national machineries was a necessary

prerequisite. The need for gender training was also one of the strongest recommendations which came out of the ECLAC/CDCC study on “Gender Mainstreaming in the Caribbean”.

Objectives of the Workshop

In meeting these various mandates, the regional training workshop focused on:

- (a) An evaluation of best practices in gender mainstreaming in the region;
- (b) A clarification of the definition of gender and the use of the concept of gender as an analytical tool in public policy and planning;
- (c) Planning of mechanisms for gender mainstreaming;
- (d) Building the capacity of member governments in the Caribbean region to mainstream gender, based on their individual situations/needs/constraints faced, (for example, making the choice whether to mainstream gender throughout the State machinery, or within specific sectors, or through cross-cutting issues, such as poverty alleviation programmes, HIV/AIDS management, etc.); and
- (e) Responding to the demand for new GMS resource materials for use by governments, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), gender trainers and multilateral and bilateral agencies in the Commonwealth and internationally.

It was expected that the training workshop would result in the following:

- (a) National women's machineries and social/economic planners trained to use gender mainstreaming concepts and tools;
- (b) Use of a problem-solving approach to mainstreaming gender in the region based on the situations/ needs/ constraints faced by individual member governments and national women's machineries;
- (c) Policy/programming responses to emerging gender gaps reflecting male disadvantage in the Caribbean, for example, in education and health;
- (d) Exchange of experiences and good practices of gender mainstreaming in the region, including the GMS mission/ pilots and initiatives in progress by other agencies;

(e) Regional networking strategies for sharing information and expertise on gender mainstreaming; and

(f) Success in building inter-agency partnerships and brokering funds for advancing progress on gender mainstreaming in the Caribbean region.

Session 1: The status of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the Caribbean

In the first working session of the workshop, which was chaired by Ms. Denise Noel DeBique, Regional Adviser, Gender Equity Fund, CIDA, the participants reflected on country achievements and challenges in gender mainstreaming.

Antigua and Barbuda

In 1997, Antigua and Barbuda formulated a Plan of Action entitled "Women and Men into the 21st Century for the period 1997 to 2001". Five critical areas of concern were identified for government attention. These were poverty, health, education, violence against women and women in decision-making. In 2000, technical assistance for the development of a Gender Action Plan was obtained from the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat.

The Directorate of Gender Affairs has also taken a collaborative approach in developing programmes to address the issue of violence against women. The Domestic Violence Act, which was passed in January 1999, was one of the important outcomes of this collaboration with other sectoral ministries.

Challenges

Insufficient financial and human resources impedes the effective implementation of the gender mainstreaming process. However the gender mainstreaming process could be advanced through:

- (a) Making effective use of limited resources;
- (b) Promoting exchanges and common understanding among stakeholders;
- (c) Conducting research and collecting data;
- (d) Promoting consultation between government and NGOs; and
- (e) Garnering political commitment and support for the process of gender mainstreaming.

The Bahamas

The Bureau of Women's Affairs in the Bahamas has conducted community programmes in partnership with local NGOs with a view to promoting gender awareness, providing skills training and legal literacy for women. These programmes include:

- (a) Legal literacy workshop;
- (b) Gender analysis training workshop for media personnel, senior officials and policy makers;
- (c) Women's human rights campaign; and
- (d) The United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Gender and HIV/AIDS Project

The Bureau has developed a strong support system with the NGOs as well as with the private sector. This has led to an undertaking on the part of the British American Bank to provide a safe house for battered women.

A number of laws and social policies are under review to eliminate inequalities in the system. Two areas that are currently under focus are: (i) The inheritance legislation which is being revised to eliminate certain discriminatory practices against women; and (ii) constitutional reform relating to the rights of nationals who are married to foreigners.

Challenges

Lack of gender awareness and insufficient knowledge of gender issues among government officials were identified as obstacles to the implementation of policies that would lead to positive gender outcomes. Plans are now underway to restructure the Women's Bureau and it is anticipated that the imperative of gender mainstreaming will inform the role and function of the restructured Bureau.

Barbados

Most of the objectives of the National Policy Statement for Women, developed in 1992, were achieved. Conferring of citizenship to the non-Barbadian spouse of a Barbadian woman was the main exception. This is being addressed under the Barbados Constitutional Review, currently underway. As a result, the Barbados Government has called for a new policy statement on women.

In order to mainstream gender in the government, the Bureau has:

- (a) Established an inter-ministerial committee comprised of gender focal points in each ministry; and
- (b) Ensured its representation on important committees, such as the committee to develop the Barbados National Development Plan; the National Sustainable Development Committee and the Crime and Prevention Panel.

An example of a good gender mainstreaming initiative was the incorporation of a gender and human rights module in the curriculum in the Barbados Police Training College. This has led to a dramatic rise in police prosecutions of domestic violence.

The Gender Management System approach has been promoted in the area of health.

Challenges

The National Machinery has been undergoing changes in leadership, ministry location and name and, in its present state, the Bureau of Women's Affairs does not possess the staff nor the tools to assess and monitor the progress of gender mainstreaming. As a result, the inter-ministerial committee is currently non-functional and needs to be reactivated.

Belize

The gender mainstreaming process in Belize has been advanced through the cross-cutting issue of violence against women. The Women's Bureau has established an inter-ministerial committee on family violence and this committee conducted a study on the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Act. This study led to the development of a National Plan that focuses on prevention, early detection, attention and promotion of a non-violent society. A number of positive outcomes have arisen from this activity, one of them being that each police station has a domestic violence unit.

Challenges

- (a) Limited training in gender analysis;
- (b) Insufficient data and data analysis;
- (c) Insufficient human resources; and
- (d) Lack of political will for the continuation of the process.

Dominica

The gender mainstreaming approach has not been adopted in Dominica though this is under consideration. The Women's Bureau of Dominica, in collaboration with other agencies and institutions within the region, has promoted ideas of gender and gender equality through workshops targeted especially at senior officials in the public and private sector.

Recognition of the need to implement gender mainstreaming in the various government sectors has also led to specific recommendations for gender mainstreaming to be implemented in the health sector.

Challenges

Some of the gaps that were identified in the Dominica report included:

- (a) Limited financial and technical resources assigned to the Bureau;
- (b) Insensitivity on the part of policy makers to gender issues;
- (c) Insufficient knowledge of the concept of gender;
- (d) Major legal barriers blocking the advancement of women;
- (e) Insufficient support from the NGO umbrella women's organization.

Grenada

The Division of Women's Affairs changed its name to 'Gender and Family Affairs' in March 2000. The Division has organized a number of gender training activities, including:

- (a) Training in domestic violence for police;
- (b) Gender training for staff in the Ministry of Finance and other ministries in the Government; and
- (c) Training workshops for the inter-ministerial committee on gender.

The Division has also been represented in preliminary negotiations between the Ministry of Finance and other funding agencies for the undertaking of projects related to poverty alleviation, the national census and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) initiative to develop a comprehensive database of statistics.

Domestic violence legislation was drafted in 2000 and a help-line was established. This follows the establishment of a crisis shelter for battered women and their children in September 1999.

Challenges

Staff members of the Division are in need of gender training. This lack of training manifests itself in the dependence on consultants to assist in the work of the Division, which renders execution of planned community activities difficult. The Division needs technical assistance in the area of strategic planning in order to implement gender mainstreaming. The inter-ministerial committee lacks the effectiveness required for the implementation of agreed actions, because members are often not at a level of authority necessary to influence the decision-making process in their respective ministries.

Guyana

In 1996, the Parliament of Guyana approved a National Policy on Women. This allowed for the establishment of:

(a) The National Commission on Women drawn from the three political parties in Parliament, the public sector, the Trade Union Congress and technical persons experienced in women's issues; and

(b) The Inter-Ministry Committee comprising 17 agencies drawn from the governmental ministries and agencies. The National Commission on Women has been involved in the sensitization of the population to issues affecting women. This has been done in a number of ways including:

- (i) Community group sessions;
- (ii) Round-table sessions;
- (iii) Media panel discussions shared with responsible sector agencies; and
- (iv) Commissioning of nine issue papers on matters related to women, funded by the Gender Equity Fund.

Challenges

The work of the Women's Bureau has been well supported by the Government and by international agencies, but suffers from the following:

- (a) Limited training in data collection;

- (b) Low budgetary allocation for the implementation of national programmes;
- (c) Duplication of work in some areas;
- (d) Low profile of the Bureau within its parent Ministry; and
- (e) Lack of coordination with respect to training and the implementation of other programme initiatives for women.

Jamaica

The Bureau of Women's Affairs has embarked on a process of gender mainstreaming as outlined in their Medium Term Strategic Plan for 1997-2000. Technical assistance in this area was received from the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1998. The Gender Management System was introduced into the health sector through a pilot project with the collaboration of the Ministry of Health and the Bureau of Women's Affairs.

An inter-agency conference on Violence against Women and Girls was held as a part of the gender mainstreaming activities. Participants were drawn from the Bureau of Women's Affairs, government organizations, international funding agencies, women's NGOs and one men's NGOs (Father's Incorporated).

In the area of education, the Bureau, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, is exploring a number of issues. Within high schools girls are no longer prevented from pursuing areas that were traditionally accessible to boys only and boys are now able to take home economic courses. A gender analysis of primary school textbooks is to be undertaken.

Challenges

- (a) Financial and budgetary constraints;
- (b) Inadequate understanding of the gender mainstreaming process;
- (c) Insufficient training for policy makers and technocrats;
- (d) The need for overall management and coordination of the various strands of the gender mainstreaming process;
- (e) The need for active focal points in the government ministries; and
- (f) The need to ensure that an understanding of gender mainstreaming concepts reaches every individual at every level of society.

Montserrat

There is no current policy statement on women in Montserrat and gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of the Community Services Department (CSD). A gender desk has been established at the CSD and an officer with responsibility for women's affairs is to be assigned.

Challenges

The volcanic crisis has presented a number of challenges for Montserrat. The major focus has been to return to a state of 'normalcy' and to relocate and find housing for the population. As a result, the Government has not been able to develop a coordinated strategic plan for gender mainstreaming and gender equity.

St. Kitts and Nevis

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis approved a National Development Plan on Gender and Development for the years 1996-2000. The Government's five-year development plan also refers to its commitment to the gender mainstreaming process and to gender equality.

Training workshops, funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), were held to prepare participants for the Gender Management System, which was implemented with technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

There has been an increase in the human and financial allocation of resources to the gender mainstreaming process. At present, there has been an increase of approximately 68 per cent in the budget of the national women's machinery.

Challenges

The absence of gender disaggregated data has made it difficult to implement poverty alleviation and poverty eradication programmes. It is expected that this problem will be solved when the findings of the Poverty Survey are made available.

There needs to be more training opportunities for persons in order to ensure continuity in the process.

Saint Lucia

In 1998, the Division of Women Affairs was renamed the Division of Gender Relations.

The Government of Saint Lucia has approved a national policy on women and has been working towards securing sectoral commitment to the implementation of the policy. Despite the absence of a national plan for gender mainstreaming activities, four areas have been prioritized for action. These are:

- (a) Gender and poverty;
- (b) Gender and health;
- (c) Violence against women; and
- (d) Women in power and decision-making

In 1999, the CIDA/Gender Equity Fund collaborated with the Division to focus intersectoral attention on gender-based violence. Activities included:

- (a) Gender sensitization and training workshops on violence for police;
- (b) Mass media campaigns;
- (c) Popular theatre productions centred around the theme of gender-based violence; and
- (f) The establishment of a shelter for abused women and children.

Challenges

There is a need for the following:

- (a) Inter-ministerial mechanism for collaboration on gender;
- (b) Improvement in the data collection systems to provide gender sensitive indicators in all sectors;
- (c) The institutionalization of a gender planning framework; and
- (d) Gender training and sensitization for all Parliamentarians and policy makers.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

The proposed National Policy on Gender Equality focuses on poverty, education and health; power sharing and decision-making; women's human rights; violence and mechanisms to promote women's advancement.

Gender mainstreaming activities include:

- (a) A mandate for the incorporation of gender in all policies, plans and programmes;
- (b) Naming of focal points within all sectors of the Government, the NGOs and the private sector; and
- (c) Sensitization training and advanced gender training conducted for all focal points and Bureau personnel.

Challenges

- (a) Limited human and financial resources to implement policies and programmes;
- (b) Limited training in data collection and gender planning and analysis;
- (c) The need to continue lobbying for political support and to ensure that gender mainstreaming is kept on the front burner; and
- (d) Attitudinal obstacles and differences in the receptivity of male and female bureaucrats to the training offered.

Turks and Caicos Islands

The Women's Desk was established in March 1999 within the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Women's Affairs. The Desk publishes a quarterly magazine which keeps the national community informed about gender issues. Much of the work of the Desk has been on violence against women. The desk has hosted seminars on domestic violence which targeted police, social workers and other concerned persons. As a result, there has been increased reporting of crimes against women and young girls.

Challenges

The Coordinator of the Women's Desk is the only staff position in a country of seven inhabited islands.

NGOs and gender mainstreaming

The concern for gender mainstreaming has also been addressed in the work of the regional NGOs, WINFA, which undertook a study entitled "Building the Capacity to Integrate Gender into the Programme and Operations of WINFA".

Reflecting on the impediments to gender mainstreaming, the representative of WINFA pointed to a continuing conceptual confusion surrounding the meaning of 'gender' and, therefore, 'gender planning'. She drew attention to the gap between the awareness of the valuable contribution made by women to the agricultural sector and action-oriented commitments from credit institutions, policy makers and planners concerning the socio-economic and political factors governing the survival of these women.

The WINFA representative called for greater support for women in increasing their leadership capabilities, self-confidence and opportunities to influence policies/programmes.

ECLAC/CDCC study of gender mainstreaming in the Caribbean

In concluding the session on the status of gender mainstreaming in the Caribbean, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat made a presentation on the findings of its study on gender mainstreaming. The research was done in 10 countries, namely, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago and was funded and supported by the CIDA Gender Equity Fund.

She reported that governments in the Caribbean have attempted in various ways to advance gender equity, not only through substantive policy but also through administrative reform. Through these attempts, governments have both made progress and confronted conceptual and operational difficulties.

A national machinery for women existed in all the countries in the study, except for Montserrat. Themes which emerged during the research were the chronic underresourcing (staff and funding) of the administrative units; the ill-defined mandates of the units; the tension between resource allocation to policy analysis and formulation as opposed to servicing the "constituency"; the lack of awareness of and commitment to gender issues, generally; the growing perception that men were the victims of unequal opportunities; the location of

departments and low levels of power and authority associated with the machineries; the isolation from sectoral and planning ministries because of service orientation; and the ghettoisation and stigmatization of women's issues.

Notwithstanding resource limitations, gender mainstreaming initiatives were evident throughout the region and three broad approaches to gender mainstreaming could be discerned:

- (a) Gender-sensitization training;
- (b) Institutional mechanisms; and
- (c) Planning instruments and processes.

While the research process did not elicit any systematic evaluation of the training programmes implemented, the ECLAC/CDCC representative pointed out that gender training programmes were typically of short duration and were unlikely to ensure competency in gender analysis or planning.

In addition to the national machineries for women, a number of institutional mechanisms had been established throughout the region, from the relatively unstructured "Gender Focal Point" to inter-ministerial committees and commissions on the status of women. In all countries where the mechanism existed, the main function of a commission was an advisory one. The commissions also had responsibility for the monitoring of the status or progress of women. Inter-ministerial committees had been established in Jamaica, Guyana, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. In a number of countries, inter-ministerial committees had been established as a main mechanism to ensure intersectoral planning and implementation of policies and programmes. There were, however, some limitations which diminished the effectiveness of the committees. The committees tended to be comprised of persons without authority for decision-making within the public sector with insufficient gender expertise. Similarly, gender focal points tended to be individuals (and not units) who held junior positions within the public sector, without decision-making authority and without the institutional support necessary to carry out the responsibilities assigned to them.

The ECLAC/CDCC research highlighted that commitment to collaborative planning and analysis within sectoral divisions of government was necessary for the full decentralization of the concern for gender equity within the public sector. Intersectoral linkages between planning units and national machineries which emphasized strategic thinking, therefore, needed to be strengthened.

The promotion of women's interests within the governmental sector had also been addressed through the formulation of gender action plans by the national machineries themselves. However the fact that these plans were developed without effective participation from sectoral or planning ministries reduced the level of commitment to implementation.

In concluding, the ECLAC/CDCC representative pointed out that gender mainstreaming could be strengthened through two levels of activity:

(a) Data collection and analysis of gender differences and relationships; and

(b) The incorporation of this understanding into the work programme, principally by the deployment of strong skills in advocacy and in participatory and consultative policy and planning methodologies.

In this regard, it has been advocated that the machineries should have the following functional mandate:

(a) Advocacy and policy oversight or monitoring;

(b) Ensuring the integration of the gender perspective in national and sectoral development planning;

(c) Implementers of social service programmes; and

(d) Policy formulators and implementers in specific areas, for example, domestic violence.

Report on the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender Management System

The representative of the Commonwealth Secretariat, Dr. Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, stated that the persisting low status accorded to women in societies everywhere, along with the new phenomenon of the emergence of gender gaps in education which showed a decreasing number of males within the education system, had led the Commonwealth Secretariat to take an approach to gender mainstreaming which sought to go beyond equating "gender" with "women". This new approach recognized that:

(a) Women and men had different and special needs;

(b) Women and men could not be effectively treated as homogenous groups because of other unequal social structures, for example, nation/region, race/ethnicity; class/caste, age and disability;

(c) In most societies, women suffered from discrimination relative to men in terms of their welfare, status and access to and control over the means of production; and

(d) It was critical to compile sex-disaggregated data to reveal the existing gaps between women and men; qualitatively analyze why these gaps existed and develop plans and programmes to equalize the situation.

The GMS developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat referred to a network of structures, mechanisms and processes put into place to guide, plan, monitor and evaluate the process of mainstreaming gender into all aspects of the organization's work, in order to achieve greater gender equality.

The GMS, it was pointed out, was a holistic and system-wide approach to gender mainstreaming for use by governments in partnership with civil society. The GMS was not rigid and was designed to be adapted to national circumstances. Where the enabling environment was not particularly favourable for gender mainstreaming in the public service, a GMS could be established in an institution, sector ministry or group of ministries.

Indicators of the enabling environment within which the GMS could productively be implemented included:

- (a) Presence of political will;
- (b) Adequate human and financial resources;
- (c) Appropriate legislative and administrative frameworks;
- (d) Women in decision-making positions at all levels; and
- (e) The active involvement of civil society.

Implementation of the Gender Management System required the establishment of structures, such as the national women's machinery (NWM); a gender management team; gender focal points within ministries; inter-ministerial committees, and gender equality commissions. In addition to the establishment of these structures, gender management system processes included the development of a gender action plan and the incorporation of gender analysis into the national development plans and plans of other sectoral ministries.

In providing guidelines for the incorporation of gender within development planning, the representative of the Commonwealth Secretariat suggested the following steps to be taken by government:

- (a) Review of the national Gender Action Plan or develop such a plan if none existed;
- (b) Review the National Development Plan to determine its gender awareness;
- (c) Set up the GMS structures and mechanisms based on those which already existed;
- (d) Strengthen the national Women's Machinery as the lead agency;
- (e) Establish or strengthen linkages between the NWM and other stakeholders;
- (f) Develop a gender training programme;
- (g) Build gender analysis and planning expertise in the various government sectors;
- (h) Collect sex-disaggregated data and create gender-sensitive indicators to target existing gender gaps for change;
- (i) Establish monitoring and evaluation and reporting mechanisms;
- (j) Develop a programme of public awareness;
- (k) Seek resources from donors and other agencies for gender mainstreaming.

The representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat drew attention to the fact that the GMS had now been implemented in a number of Commonwealth countries, including St. Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean region. Supporting this implementation, the Commonwealth Secretariat had produced a series of publications which were useful in guiding the gender mainstreaming processes within sectors as well as at the national level.

The experience of implementing the GMS through country missions had raised a number of challenges and opportunities. Most importantly, however, undertaking a GMS required a country to make a policy decision at the highest level to move from a "women in development" to a "gender and development" approach for achieving equality between women and men.

Session 2: Gender mainstreaming concepts and tools

The meaning of gender

In responding to the need for greater definitional clarity and understanding of gender, the resource persons to the workshop, Dr. Eudine Barriteau and Ms. Sonja Harris, spoke about the meaning and consequences of gender, gender analysis and gender planning.

In her review of the concept of “gender”, Dr. Barriteau pointed to the fact that there was much confusion as to what was meant or should be conveyed by the concept of gender even while there was general agreement within public policy that an understanding of gender was an important prerequisite to examining the impact of policies on women and men.

In her exposition of the historical development in the use of the term, Dr. Barriteau argued that gender was not synonymous with sex and the terms were not interchangeable. Prior to the late 1960s, the term gender was used primarily to refer to the differences between feminine and masculine forms within the linguistics discipline.

The use of the concept of gender, both as a critique of development and to facilitate development policy, originated in feminist concerns for explanations for women’s persistent and continuing experiences of subordination and adverse conditions in all dimensions of their lives. In developing these analyses, the anthropological work of Margaret Mead was highly instructive as it illustrated the cultural specificity and temporal nature of gender.

For Dr. Barriteau, gender denoted a complex system of personal and social relations of domination and power through which women and men were socially created and maintained and through which they gained access to, or were allocated status, power and material resources within society. Gender relations were therefore the continuous social, political, economic, cultural and psychological expressions and interactions of the material and ideological aspects of a gender system. She argued that there was both a personal and social dimension to relations of gender and these relations affected both women and men although in different ways.

Gender relations were not biologically determined but were social relations, like class and race. Because these relations were culturally determined, they could be transformed and, therefore, those who experienced domination as a consequence were not permanently victims, even though they experienced very adverse conditions.

Dr. Barriteau concluded that social relations of gender did not exist in a vacuum, but intersected with other relations of domination, such as those that arose from race, class, ethnicity, age, sexual preferences and any other hierarchical social relation.

Gender analysis, when applied to public policy, resulted in a rejection of the narrow and limited for a concern with the accommodation of women in development projects. Public policy informed by gender analysis started from the concern with ascertaining what was needed to have the goals or objectives of development programmes to serve the needs and interests of women.

Policy approaches for advancing gender equality

Both in the country reports and in the presentation of the ECLAC/CDCC study, the discourse focused on appropriate policy approaches for advancing gender equity. The “women in development” (WID) approach which guided the work of the national machineries for much of the 1970s and 1980s was contrasted with the “gender and development” (GAD) approach. For some countries the shift to gender and development had been expressed symbolically in nomenclature change and was a development which had some momentum within governmental policy approaches.

Sonja Harris, Consultant to the regional workshop, addressed the relative strengths of the gender and development and women and development approaches to the meeting. She pointed out that the movement around the WID approach took root at the start of the decade for women (1975) and evolved out of earlier concerns for women's unacknowledged role in development. WID aimed to integrate some women into the development process at the higher levels and to offer greater opportunities to low wage, unskilled or underemployed women. This approach was based on statistics on the higher rates of unemployment among women than men, on the relationship between women's traditional skills and their underdevelopment, on women's invisibility in large-scale development projects and on the perceived glass ceiling and cultural barriers preventing women from moving into political and other senior management areas of work.

The strategies emerging from the WID approach focused on integrating women's concerns (primarily economic) into development projects and policies and on increasing women's productivity and income. This approach gave priority to women's practical needs and women's condition.

The gender and development approach, on the other hand, emerged through the perceived need to develop alternative analysis and action and was part of the larger work of creating an alternative development model. It supported a world vision which moved beyond an economistic analysis to

include issues of environmental, sustainable and qualitative (personal, ethical, cultural) aspects of development.

Such an approach saw macroeconomic policies which excluded women as the problem. The goal of the approach was to advance equity through sustainable, balanced, participatory development. The strategy of this approach was in identifying and addressing the practical needs of men and women. Women's strategic interests were addressed through new approaches to policy, legislation and national programmes. The net result of this approach was that it dealt with women's strategic interest and, through policy, legal or programmatic interventions, women's position in society would be positively affected.

Gender equity, as a concept, emerged as a major goal or output from improving the strategic position of women. It was based on an understanding of the process by which Caribbean women became subordinated and their labour undervalued. This approach recognized that mere numerical equality or parity was insufficient to satisfy the different needs of men and women and that what was just and fair for both or all sides might require flexible, rather than equal, treatment. This concept was equated with that of social justice.

Ms. Harris referred to the CARICOM Secretariat 1995 document on Regional Policy on Gender Equality and Social Justice, in which gender equity, was described as *"the core principle in public policy, and a sustainable derivative to true democracy. It speaks to a new development approach based on outputs of justice, improved quality of life, shared participation of men and women in private as well as public arena activities and a balanced approach to development, especially related to social, economic and infrastructural development"*.

Within the gender mainstreaming discourse, Ms. Harris argued that there was an assumption of a mainstream of political governance hospitable to considerations of equality and equity. She questioned this assumption, however, by drawing attention to other areas of social inequity caused by government policies, such as the raising of tax ceilings to protect the poor and gradual removal of protective tariffs.

Still she considered that mainstreaming would be more effective at the "up-stream" level where policies were shaped than at the base where small projects were implemented. In operationalising gender mainstreaming through policy, Ms. Harris suggested a number of potential entry activities:

- (a) The identification of policy gaps, areas where project and programmes were not anchored by a policy framework;
- (b) Through influencing the shaping of new or adjusted policies; and

- (c) In impact assessments of policies.

Ms. Harris argued that gender mainstreaming could be considered a political activity in that it influenced policy towards more equitable considerations and outcomes. In practice it required technical, scientific and strategic skills.

Session 3: Good practices in gender mainstreaming

The ECLAC/CDCC Study on Gender Mainstreaming in the Caribbean suggested that within some of the countries effective advances had been made in mainstreaming gender analysis and planning through the development of institutional mechanisms, such as commissions and inter-ministerial committees. In this context, representatives from Belize, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis and Suriname made presentations on the development of effective approaches in their countries.

Belize: Thematic Inter-Ministerial Committee

The representative from the Women's Desk in Belize presented on the composition and functioning of an inter-ministerial committee on family violence in Belize. This body is composed of representatives from the ministries of health and education; the family court; the police; the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the media, certain NGOs; and the National Women's Commission. In deciding on the functioning of the Committee as well as its constituent representatives, a number of issues were raised on the role of the institutional members of the Committee in combating family violence. In this way, the perception that family violence was the sole responsibility of the Women's Desk was avoided.

Since the formation of the Committee, a study on the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Act was conducted. This study focused on early detection and the promotion of a non-violent society. In addition, special family violence units have been constituted at all police stations and data collection protocols have been implemented at police stations and health centres. The research informed the development of training modules in family violence for health workers, teachers and police.

Guyana: National Commission on Women

The National Commission on Women was established in Guyana in 1996. The main function of the Commission is an advisory one. The Commission also monitors the status or progress of women. The mandate includes meeting the reporting obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

In fulfilling its mandate to monitor and advise, the Commission has undertaken research in a number of critical areas. This research was published in a series of papers and presented to the public as well as to policy makers and informed the representation before the Constitutional Review Committee. The Commission has made a strong commitment to providing strategic thinking on critical areas of interest to women.

St. Kitts and Nevis: Gender Management Systems

The Gender Management Systems approach developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat was implemented in St. Kitts and Nevis in 1998. This was a direct result of an institutional commitment to mainstream gender throughout government. As a result of the technical cooperation between the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the following integrated system of mechanisms was established to further gender equity goals within the public sector:

(a) Gender management system team comprised of permanent secretaries from key sectoral and core ministries to develop broad operational policies and time-frames for the implementation of the Gender Management System;

(b) The Inter-Ministerial Committee for Gender and Development to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender quality perspective in all policy areas. The Inter-Ministerial Committee is comprised of permanent secretaries and chief technical officers and is charged specifically with decentralizing planning, implementation and monitoring of the mainstreaming of gender and development policies throughout government. The Committee is further responsible for promoting coordination within central government in order to ensure a gender perspective in all policy-making processes;

(c) Gender focal points, (these being senior members of staff within each ministry) with a mandate to provide support for the development of gender-sensitive policies and programmes; and

(d) National Council on Gender Equality comprised of a cross-sectional representation from NGOs. One critical function of this Council is to provide information and advice to the national machinery for women on appropriate approaches and methods to assist women.

Suriname: The importance of gender analysis

The representative from Suriname spoke on the emphasis which is being given to gender analysis within the Gender Bureau in that country. In that context she spoke about the processes of reflection, research and documentation as critical to formulation and implementation of policies and

programmes as well as to evaluation. In this context she spoke of a seven-step process:

- (1) Information gathering
- (2) Reflection
- (3) Goal setting
- (4) Planning
- (5) Activity implementation accompanied by advocacy
- (6) Monitoring/Evaluating/Reporting
- (7) Documentation.

The Gender Bureau has focused on capacity building of the Bureau. This capacity building focuses on increasing staff as well as staff skills in gender analysis, project management and financial management. To facilitate its research, the Bureau has worked closely with the Bureau of Statistics. This collaboration has strengthened the work not only of the Women's Bureau but also the Bureau of Statistics.

In addition to institutional strengthening, the Gender Bureau has sought to advance gender mainstreaming through workshops on gender analysis and planning for government officials. The Bureau has also used the media to further the goal of gender sensitization of the national community.

Session 4: Obstacles to gender mainstreaming

The participants in the round-table discussion agreed that gender mainstreaming in the region had been hampered by the relative weakness of the national women's machineries and by the absence of functional political commitment to the goal of gender equity.

It was felt that there existed an inadequate understanding of the term gender even where the shift had been made from women in development to gender and development. Gender was used synonymously with women and increasingly was used to refer to the concern for boys who were said to be in crisis within the education system. That gender was an analytical tool for informing the development of policy solutions was not clearly accepted in the region.

While the national machineries were required to be policy development and coordination sites, these units were chronically understaffed and underfunded. They continued to be underresourced to perform all the tasks associated with service delivery and with policy formulation. Other problems associated with the machineries included:

- (a) Lack of clarity about the function of the machineries;

- (b) Inability to gain the cooperation of senior administrators in the key sectors of the economy;
- (c) Inability to develop or maintain monitoring mechanisms to forge appropriate linkages with the key sectors in economy;
- (d) The tension between resource allocation to policy analysis and formulation as opposed to servicing the "constituency";
- (e) The lack of awareness of and commitment to gender issues generally;
- (f) The growing perception that men were the victims of unequal opportunities;
- (g) Low levels of power and authority associated with the machineries; and
- (h) The isolation from sectoral and planning ministries because of service orientation.

The participants drew particular attention to the debate around male marginalisation which has had some effect in directing attention away from the continued existence of systemic inequalities between women and men, to women's detriment. Although statistics show that women were bearing the brunt of economic deprivation as a result of the interplay between the sexual division of labour and their unequal insertion in the labour force, there was growing concern at the highest levels of policy making for the status of boys and men.

While there was no doubt that significant numbers of the male youth population were experiencing social and economic deprivation, it was disputed that gender was the principal or sole variable to explain this phenomenon. The participants called for sociological research which explored the gender and class differentials in educational attendance and achievement.

Session 5: Recommendations

In the context of persisting limitations, the participants agreed that gender mainstreaming initiatives could not await the establishment of the ideal enabling environment. The national machineries needed to employ their existing resources to greater effect even while lobbying for more resources and clearer mandates.

The participants identified a range of immediately realizable actions which could be undertaken despite obstacles identified. They agreed that gender mainstreaming initiatives could be strengthened through the following general steps:

- (a) Influencing the content of economic and social research;
- (b) Review and reform of policy statements;
- (c) Data collection; and
- (d) Development of indicators of gender equality and equity;

In addition, each country representative identified areas of work which were immediately realizable. These are set out in the following table.

| NEXT STEPS | Needs |
|---|--|
| Anguilla: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutionalize Bureau - Review job descriptions - Media – what is gender | |
| Antigua and Barbuda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobby NGO, etc., to get support and collaboration/public awareness of gender needs - Select one sector within which to advance gender mainstreaming - Strengthen intersectoral linkages; - Re-examine the Gender Action Plan - Eliminate duplication among the Directorate, the NGOs and other sectoral ministries. | Resources/human and financial Trained staff Technical assistance Training in management, information dissemination, gender analysis |
| The Bahamas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalize the draft policy for women - Assisting Bureau | Engage in discussions with the ministry officials on the work and functions of the Bureau. |
| Barbados: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish and strengthen linkages with stakeholders - Strengthen focal points | Training Stabilize the Bureau |
| Belize: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of data and information to the existing working group reviewing the Gender Action Plan. | Capacity building in gender budgeting. |
| Dominica: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen the Women's Bureau; capacity building - Review policy statement - Alliance building | Technical assistance |

| NEXT STEPS | Needs |
|--|---|
| Grenada: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy formulation on gender - Research - Clarify mandate on the work of Division of Gender Affairs | Institutional strengthening Trained staff |
| Guyana: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of national policy - Implement work programme of IMC - Train the Inter-Ministerial Committee for data collection - Build partnerships | Need support of the Commission and NGO community |
| Jamaica: Incorporate "gender" into the schools' curriculum and at teacher college level | Dialogue with Ministry of Education |
| Montserrat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring attention to obligation to implement gender mainstreaming - Ascertain intent as to gender mainstreaming - Get gender policy | Technical assistance Training staff in data collection |
| St Kitts and Nevis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build cadre of trained persons in the Ministry to ensure continuity - Networking for use of expertise – regionally | Support in gender training |
| Saint Lucia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess the Division and ascertain views of public on the work of the Division. | |
| Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get acceptance of draft policy statement on gender equality - Issue press release on the workshop and on the need for gender mainstreaming | |
| Suriname: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let ideas sink/reflection on gender analysis and planning - Wait for political environment to stabilize - Make strong statement of the incorporation of gender in the work of the public sector - Establish gender management structures | Extend staff of Bureau Develop list of gender data experts |

Session 6: Role of the regional and international agencies

ECLAC/CDCC secretariat

In meeting the needs identified by the representatives of the national machineries, the ECLAC/CDCC representative spoke about the core functions of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, namely, policy-oriented research and the provision of technical assistance. In this regard, in relation to gender mainstreaming, the secretariat had already conducted the study on gender

mainstreaming and was in the process of devising a technical assistance programme which would address the recommendations of the research.

The Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to promote the Gender Management Systems approach throughout the Commonwealth. This will be undertaken through country level work as well as through regional training workshops. Having regard to the depth and breadth of its experience in the area, the Secretariat is committed to disseminating best practices as well as promoting “smart partnerships”.

In support of the GMS, the Commonwealth Secretariat has produced a series of publications which will be developed further for use by key stakeholders.

CIDA Gender Equity Fund

The Fund continues to support work at the country-level in gender mainstreaming. The Fund will also seek to strengthen inter-agency collaboration

UNIFEM

UNIFEM’s mandate includes the support of the national machineries within the region.

Centre for Gender Studies, UWI

The Centre is in the process of developing modules on gender analysis and planning for training of public sector workers.

CAFRA

CAFRA as a regional NGO considered that it had a role to play in lobbying and advocating for gender mainstreaming within the secretariats of regional and international development agencies.

WINFA

WINFA will seek to build or strengthen its alliances with the national women’s machineries within the OECS in order to assist gender mainstreaming programmes.

Session 7: Concluding remarks

Ms. Nancy Spence of the Commonwealth Secretariat in her concluding remarks stated that the meeting had been very productive and enlightening. She drew attention to the in-depth and provocative discussions and welcomed the identification of practical steps which needed to be taken in the region to further gender mainstreaming.

Mrs. Spence reminded the meeting that this was the first of a series of regional workshops which the Commonwealth Secretariat would be hosting for the countries of the Commonwealth. The discussions at the present workshop would therefore be useful in informing the content of these upcoming meetings.

She welcomed the opportunity to work in the Caribbean region collaboratively with the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat and gave special thanks to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for its support of the regional workshop.

The ECLAC/CDCC representative commended the participants for their highly participatory and productive contributions to the meeting. She reminded the participants of her organization's mandate to support governments in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In that regard, she stated that ECLAC/CDCC would continue to work with the national machineries in developing and executing plans and policies in gender mainstreaming at national level. She also drew attention to the support given to ECLAC/CDCC by the Gender Equity Fund, CIDA, in a number of its projects within the Women and Development Programme.

She thanked the representatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat for their cooperation and support in the convening of the workshop and stated that ECLAC/CDCC would continue to look for opportunities in which it could collaborate with the Commonwealth Secretariat as well as with the other regional and international agencies in advancing gender equity in the region.

In concluding the ECLAC/CDCC representative expressed her organization's appreciation for the hospitality of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and in particular the Directorate of Gender Affairs.

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