

BARBADOS

PART ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In 1995, the Government of Barbados participated in the Fourth World Conference on women, which was held in Beijing, China. The Barbados Government was one of 189 countries which signed the Beijing Platform for Action, which is a comprehensive agenda outlining the key goals and objectives for achieving women's rights. The Platform for Action provides a powerful framework for change, nationally, regionally and globally. In fact, it could be argued that one of the significant achievements of the Platform for Action is that it provides a global framework for making connections between national, regional and global realities of gender inequality.

The Government of Barbados has implemented some positive measures to ensure the development of women and to make sure their human rights and fundamental freedoms are on equal terms with men. Barbados has made considerable progress in the elimination of direct discrimination against women in all spheres of activities. However, the agenda for change and achievement of women's rights is still incomplete in Barbados as there is still need for a National Policy on Gender. The need for a National Policy on Gender represents one of the obstacles to the gender mainstreaming of Government policies in key sectors to bring about the further progress improvement in the lives of women and by extension the lives of men.

The Barbados Government signed the CEDAW Convention in 1980. Much of the social legislative changes that have occurred regarding gender equality issues have taken place within the context of CEDAW. Examples of reform include The Constitution (Amendment) Act 2000-18 which gives women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children and the Family Law Act which gives equal rights to women within common-law unions including property rights.

In keeping with Article six of the Convention, legislation against domestic violence was enacted in Barbados based on the CARICOM model. The enactment of the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act and the Sexual Offences Act of 1992 attempts to address the issue of domestic violence in the following ways:

- bring domestic violence to an end;
- protect the victims of domestic violence; and
- Change the public and private attitudes which have failed to discourage domestic violence

The Barbados Government also signed the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, '**Belem do Para**', in June 1994. This Convention defines violence and abuse against women as an infringement of the fundamental

rights of Women.

Government in its change in focus from women to gender appointed the National advisory Council on Gender for a period of three years. The NACG will focus specifically on the following and report to the Minister on its activities:

1. Monitoring progress made in the implementation and required actions in respect of agreed Conventions and International Plans of Action.
2. Advising the Minister on matters affecting the interests of men and women particularly in the areas of respect, dignity, justice, human rights and human development.
3. Investigating and reporting to the Minister on complaints of discrimination against women and men and promoting policies and programmes aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination, sexual harassment, violence and marginalization among men and women.
4. Addressing concerns pertaining to gender, equity and mainstreaming to redress the differential impact of policies and programmes on women and men at all levels of society.
5. Assisting in the formulation of a National Policy on Gender and a National Plan of Action on Gender Affairs

With the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, The Barbados Statistical Service has established a Social Indicators Millennium Development Goals Committee that seeks:

1. To promote close collaboration between producers and users of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics and Indicators; and
2. To pool resources, ideas and efforts in order to enhance the quality timeliness and scope of these statistics and indicators.

There have been a number of meetings of this Committee. The meeting that was held in July 2003 focused on collection of data with respect to health specifically in relation to data coverage, availability and sources of data while the second in September discussed the collection of data in the area of education.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs in its efforts to carry out its mandate of gender mainstreaming has strengthened its linkages with a number of Non-governmental Organisations. The Bureau has partnered with the Centre for Gender and Development Studies to mainstream gender. One of the specific objectives of the Centre for Gender Development Studies is to introduce and maintain an integrated, interdisciplinary programme of gender and development studies including incorporation of gender issues in the content of disciplines within the University.

The Bureau has also established linkages with the National Organisation of Women and has embarked on a pilot programme of gender sensitization in secondary schools. One of the objectives of the programme is to raise the awareness of secondary school students of the importance and implications of gender and hence start the process of creating a society that accepts gender equality as a national goal. This programme took place in November 2002 and November 2003 and is expected to be continued in November 2004. It is held in November to focus attention on November 25th UN day for the Elimination of Violence Against women.

Linkages have also been strengthened with the Business and Professional Women's Club. The Bureau supported and financed the Club's efforts to empower women through its annual Self Development Seminar for unemployed women entitled "Educate to Eradicate Poverty and Abuse".

The Bureau has also established linkages with a number of men's organizations in particular, the Men's Educational Support Association (MESA). The Bureau provided financial support for MESA's self-development and counselling programme for its members and the Maurice Byer Polyclinic Men's Health Discussion Group to host a workshop for men on the Gender Dimensions of HIV/AIDS entitled "Men Speaking to men on HIV/AIDS".

The integration of a gender perspective into macro-economic policies is one the major thrust of the Beijing Platform for Action. Government has taken steps to integrate gender into the budgetary processes and has participated in a pilot sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat to develop a gender sensitive approach to budgetary allocations. A three day workshop was held during the period April 26–28, 1999 for Budget Analysts, officers of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and a number of other Ministries.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs is also expected to formulate a national policy on gender and development. In this respect, the Bureau will adopt a multi-sectoral approach where the inputs from the National Advisory Council on Gender, the inter-ministerial focal points, the non-governmental community, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders will be sought. This strategy of incorporating the perspectives of a wide cross section of groups and organizations is integral to the process of ensuring that the concerns and experiences of men and women are taken into consideration in the design ,implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes.

PART TWO:

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE FURTHER INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Government of Barbados has implemented a number of policy measures to ensure the development of women and to make sure their human rights and fundamental freedoms are on equal terms with men.

Barbados has made considerable progress in the elimination of direct discrimination against women in all spheres of activities.

In response to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, five priority areas of concern were identified. These are:

- (a) mainstreaming gender in all areas of development
- (b) women in poverty
- (c) violence against women
- (d) women in decision- making
- (e) women and health especially reproductive and sexual.

WOMEN AND POVERTY

In Barbados pockets of poverty continue to exist alongside prosperity. More women than men tend to fall below the poverty line. As a result Government established a number programmes to assist persons who are living below the poverty line.

In order to ensure that marginalized groups are taken into consideration in Government's policies and programmes. Government established a number of institutional mechanisms 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 are to:

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.

- iii. Ensure a faster and more meaningful delivery of services.
- iv. Create the climate for young people to gravitate towards the growth and development of small/micro- business enterprises.
- v. Pioneer the development of a new entrepreneurial class.

The Bureau also:

- i. Develops a strategy for the alleviation and eventual eradication of poverty through community involvement.
- ii. Provides 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. Some flexibility is exercised for families above the poverty line who may be facing extenuating circumstances. Funds are not provided directly to individuals, but rather to the agencies of the ministry which liaise with the institutions, agencies, business houses from which services/items were or are to be procured by the individuals on groups. Funds approved for organizations are usually to support projects aimed at alleviating poverty.

The major beneficiaries of this programme are single mothers who are heads of households and the elderly, who again are predominately female.

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 Urban Enterprise Fund is aimed at reducing the high level of unemployment which exists in the urban area through the development of a sustainable micro business sector. It provides funding and technical assistance to small entrepreneurs in the development of their businesses. On the other hand, the UHLP is a lending facility providing finance for home construction and associated housing purposes.

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

The focus of the programme is on recipients of social assistance and other families in need, identified by social agencies and similar organizations as extreme cases of poverty meeting their needs in respect of employment, training, financial assistance, adequate housing and identification to improve their circumstances, from the core of the strategy. Once needs are determined, these persons are encouraged to participate in any of the available programmes which are best suited to facilitate the desired outcomes as far as their respective needs are concerned. Both public and private section resources are utilized in order to access specialist intervention and maximize gains from their involvement in these programmes.

A successful project embarked upon through the relief 2000 programme was the Fundamental Dining Services Project. This was a three month employment – training programme carried out in collaboration with the Welfare Department and the Community Development Department. It involved the training of 25 unemployed single mothers in Dining Room services specifically for employment in the hospitality sector. Another successful project was the Residential Housekeeping Course. This course prepared thirty (30) participants for housekeeping in private homes.

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

Investment and Development Corporation and the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme.

Women are not prohibited from acquiring loans from banks or other financial institutions to purchase houses or other forms of property. Both male and females are entitled to the same rights but some institutions may request the husband's signature as a guarantor of the loan. 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 Domestics from \$150.00 to \$170.00 per week.
- \$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.

TRAINING IN SELF DEVELOPMENT

One of the major obstacles 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 a 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.

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 groups to engage in education and support services.

In 1999, The Barbados Government established a shelter for Battered women in fulfillment 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 services.

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.

The National Forum Against Domestic Violence (NFADV) was established in 2002 with a vision to make every Barbadian aware of the effects of domestic violence on individuals and groups, and in so doing reduce the incidence of domestic violence and facilitate the restoration of the family unit.

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.

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. For instance, 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. To achieve this, the mother's progress is regularly monitored throughout pregnancy and early intervention is initiated where risks of complications are evident. Pregnant mothers are encouraged to register at the clinic before the twelfth week of pregnancy.

Family Clinics have also been integrated into the MCH Program. The objective is to educate women and their partners in order to reduce the incidences of unplanned pregnancies. Activities of this clinic include medical examinations, the provision of contraceptives and Family Life Education. 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.

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.

Adolescent health programs have been developed to assist adolescents in the 12-19 age group, to cope with the many socio-economic, psychological, nutritional, health and interpersonal problems that confront them on a daily basis. Between 1997 and 1999, approximately 1100 adolescents on average each year visited the Polyclinic nearest their home in connection with this program. This program needs to target a larger proportion of the adolescent population, especially since many risk-taking behaviors are established during this phase of life.

Negotiating sexual relations has been identified as an area of weakness for Caribbean women. Only in recent times is this aspect to be addressed by the HIV/AIDS Commission in their 'Female-led Campaign'. The methodologies used in such a program will be a critical aspect. The Barbados Family Planning Association (BFPA), is addressing this aspect through an interactive youth to youth approach, which includes the teaching of negotiating skills to adolescents.

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:

- i. To achieve a 50% reduction in the mortality rate within three years.
- ii. Improve the quality of life for persons living with AIDS and increase their life

expectancy.

- iii. To achieve a 50% reduction in the rate of new infections within the next five (5) years, and
- iv. 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.

A recent effort has been the training of teachers and principles in some schools to assist with counselling and training in the school environment.

GENDER AND HEALTH

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:

- i. Distinguish the difference between HIV/AIDS, and examine the modes of transmission.
- ii. Identify and examine some of the factors and situations which would expose individuals to the virus.
- iii. 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.

In terms of abortion, the Medical Termination of a Pregnancy Act 1983-4 provides for the lawful termination of pregnancies. In accordance with this Act, the treatment for the termination of a pregnancy of not more than 12 weeks duration may be administered by a medical practitioner if the practitioner is of the opinion, formed in good faith:

- a. that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the pregnant woman or give injury to her physical or mental health; or
- b. that there is substantial risk if the child was born, it would suffer such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

For pregnancies with durations of 12-20 weeks, two practitioners to give the approval and for pregnancies of over 20 weeks, three practitioners are required. Written consent of a parent or a guardian must be given for treatment for the termination of pregnancy for a patient under the age

of 16 years, or a person of unsound mind of any age.

WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

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.

The requirements for electing persons to Parliament or appointing them to the Senate are not gender specific, nor are women considered among the groups who do not qualify under the law. There is also equal opportunity for women to represent Government at the National and International Level.

There are no legal barriers to women participating in government many 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. This is also compounded by self imposed restrictions emanating from gender socialization patterns.

While the two political parties in Barbados namely, the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party have been known to embrace the participation of women and have established "Leagues of Women" within the parties, unfortunately, 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.

Despite these provisions the participation of women at the decision making level in Barbados remain problematic. Women are also under-represented in political decision making.

However, the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement in their political status is critical to the achievement of both transparent and accountable governments and administration in all areas of life.

The equal participation of both women and men in decision making is key to achieving a balance that reflects the composition of Barbadian society, of which women comprise 51.9% of the population, according to the 2000 Census Report. This balance is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning. Equality in political decision making is integral to the achievement of the integration of a gender perspective in government policy making.

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, in collaboration with the School of Continuing Studies focusing on "Education for Women in Politics".

In 1998 the regional NGO, the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action, (CAFRA) together with the National Organization (NOW), and the Women's Forum of Barbados hosted a two day roundtable of women in politics, which has as its theme "Women as

Transformation Agents”. The roundtable’s goal 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.

In the Foreign Service, there is some improvement in the ratio at the Ambassador/ Consular levels, but women are still under represented, filling just three (3) of the eleven positions. 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.

Women in Decision- making Positions 2000 - 2001

Position	Total	Male	Female
Elected Members of Parliament	28	24	4
Members of Cabinet	20	16	4
Parliamentary Secretaries	2	2	0
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
Judges of Appeal	3	3	0
Magistrates	10	6	4
Parliamentary/ Crown Counsels	21	5	16
Ambassadors	11	8	3

Source: Compiled from the Barbados Public Service Staff List 2000 - 2001

PART THREE:

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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:

- i. Facilitating gender mainstreaming of national development policies and programmes, so that equality and equity between men and women can be achieved.
- ii. Advising Government Agencies and NGOs on policy matters affecting the status of women and men and to monitor the impact of these policies.
- iii. Liaising with Regional and International Agencies and NGOs on gender and development issues.
- iv. Implementing, monitoring and evaluating government policies, plans and programmes pertaining to gender and development.
- v. 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)

The Bureau of Gender Affairs is financed by the Government of Barbados. During the years 1997 –2004 the Bureau’s annual budget was as follows:

Years	Amount (\$)
2003-2004	735,165
2002-2003	1,016,598
2001-2002	839,882
2000-2001	839,882
1999-2000	565,969
1998-1999	601,983
1997-1998	572,465

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON GENDER

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 includes, identifying, monitoring and making recommendations to the Minister with responsibility for gender affairs on issues as they relate to gender.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING/SENSITIVITY TRAINING

Gender Mainstreaming has become an integral component of the process for achieving gender equality and sustainable development. The ever-emerging development challenges necessitate that programmes and policies be constantly reviewed in responses to these changes.

A multi-sectoral approach has been adopted by the Bureau of Gender Affairs to promote equality between men and women and to analyze and redress the differential impact of policies and programmes on women and men.

The Bureau sees gender equality as a core development issue and as a development objective in its own right. It therefore plays a key role in mainstreaming issues of concern to both women and men as seeks to promote changes in attitudes and practices wherever these operates as barriers to the attainment of gender equality.

The Bureau in an effort to meet its mandate of mainstreaming gender across all Government’s plans, programmes and policies; as well as in keeping with its commitment to the establishment of an inter-ministerial Committee on gender, identified a number of persons across the public sector who would be its focal points in the various departments. Currently, the Bureau has a total of sixty-eight (68) focal points representing forty- one (41) Ministries and Departments.

It was however recognized that in order for these persons to be able to function effectively, they needed to be sensitized in aspects of gender and development and in gender analysis and

planning.

The Department therefore set out to conduct a series of workshops which were started in the Financial Year 2002-2003. Training is being offered in a two part series:

- One two-day workshop which exposed participants to the concepts of gender and development; and
- One follow-up two-day workshop that exposed participants to skills and tools for gender analysis and planning.

To date some six workshops have been held which represents three related to the concepts and three to analysis and planning. Of the sixty-eight persons identified as focal points, approximately thirty-eight persons have completed the training. Approximately twenty persons have attended part of the training and ten persons have had no training at all. It has been projected that by the year 2005 a core group of approximately 30% of senior persons in the Public Service would have been exposed to the training in gender analysis.

CONSTRAINTS

The Bureau has encountered some fall outs with its training for a number of reasons:

- In some cases, Departments have been unable to release personnel at the time of the Workshop.
- Different persons were sent to part two of the training rather than the same person that had been sent to part one, some of whom were not initially identified as the agency's focal point.
- Some persons have been re-assigned to other departments and have only received part of the training.
- Only a small percentage of the persons identified as focal points are in senior positions and therefore training may not have an immediate significant impact on the planning process.
- Some persons even when released, have not attended the full workshop because of other commitments and would have therefore missed concepts which were covered in their absence.

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON GENDER

The Bureau convened a National Symposium on Gender in January 2002, at which a wide cross-section of the Barbadian public was invited to share in the process of developing a national planning instrument on gender, and to guide the government (through the Bureau) in its efforts to achieve gender equality in its development thrust. The objectives were:

- To identify and discuss the issues and emerging trends that has highlighted the need to focus on gender.
- To explore and deepen the understanding of gender and the state of gender relations in Barbados
- To identify and examine the factors that contributes to gender inequalities.
- To discuss and agree on the way forward for the Bureau of Gender Affairs.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs is also expected to formulate a national policy on gender and development. In this respect, the Bureau will adopt a multi - sectoral approach where the inputs from the National Advisory Council on Gender, the inter-ministerial focal points, the non-governmental community, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders will be sought.

This strategy of incorporating the perspectives of a wide cross section of groups and organizations is integral to the process of ensuring that the concerns and experiences of men and women are taken into consideration in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes.

The Bureau has developed a ten year strategic plan. The goals of this plan are:

- The development of a frame work, methods and tools for incorporating, monitoring and evaluating gender in policy making and planning.
- The creation of an environment in which men and women have an equal opportunity to pursue their desired life goals without obstacles.
- Further development of linkages with local regional and international agencies and organizations dealing with gender and development issues

PART FOUR

MAIN CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THEM

THE WAY FORWARD

The Government of Barbados has acknowledged the critical role of women to national development, which has led to the implementation of a number of projects and programmes aimed at improving the status of women among those being the establishment of a national machinery for the advancement of women, namely the Bureau of Women's Affairs, now the Bureau of Gender Affairs.

However, the Bureau of Gender Affairs is compounded with numerous challenges in fulfilling its mandate. Among the most constant are the prevailing values, beliefs and structures, which are deeply imbedded in the psyche of our people.

These beliefs, structures and values need to be challenged and persons encouraged to re-think the way they do things in order to facilitate the process of transformation.

One of the major problems confronting the Bureau of Gender Affairs is its inability to effectively carry out its mandate. This is due to the institutional weakness of the Bureau, which has been identified in numerous reports on the Bureau.

In 1993 the Government of Barbados received support from the Inter-American Development Bank to assist with the institutional strengthening of the Bureau. The IADB project aimed to strengthen and broaden the institutional capacity of the Bureau to perform its role with respect to the integration of women into development structures and processes. The project also had as objectives:

- i. The expansion of the Bureau's research and data gathering capacity to focus on policy oriented research;
- ii. Strengthening the capability of the Bureau for policy/programme coordination and for monitoring and evaluating gender aware sectoral programmes; and
- iii. Engaging the full participation of women's NGO's, other NGOs and social partners.

Overall, this assessment indicates that in the eight years since the Platform for Action was signed, that there has been progress in ensuring the protection and promotion of women's rights in Barbados. However, there is still need for significant changes to be brought about in a number of areas. Specific groups of women in Barbados continue to be disadvantaged, for example, single mothers who head the households, women with disabilities and women who are victims of domestic violence. Women are now more likely than men to be living in poverty, particularly single mothers and elderly women.

There is a need for the development of a national policy statement on gender and for the continued institutional strengthening of the Bureau of Gender Affairs. While some progress have been made in increasing the staff of the Bureau as an institution it remains very weak. For example, the Bureau remains inadequately staffed and is unable to implement critical work in the area of research, which is the basis for efficient and effective programme planning.

A 1999 UNECLAC study of Gender Mainstreaming in the Caribbean included a review of programmes implemented by the Government of Barbados. The study sought to describe and analyse how Caribbean governments institutionalize or routinize the responsibility for gender equity throughout government activities, both administratively and in policy and programmes. The study also sought to examine the effectiveness and impact of such gender mainstreaming initiatives.

This report highlighted a number of weaknesses and challenges facing the Bureau in implementation of its gender mainstreaming programmes. For example, it pointed to the “low level of influence or clout associated with the Bureau” which made it difficult to influence policies and was therefore a challenge to the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming System.

The UNECLAC report concluded that *“the gender mainstreaming thrust within State machineries can only be accomplished with the requisite political will and commitment to transforming administrative structures and modes of decision making. Beyond commitment, however, is the recognition that gender equality policies and programmes need to be supported by an investment in capacity building for all staff so that staff have the necessary skills and information to engage in gender analysis of public sector policies and programmes”*.

The Bureau will continue to mobilize the NGO sector for collaboration on social and economic issues, advocate for the amendment of legislation to reflect gender equality, advocate for the empowerment of at risk persons and develop a monitoring and evaluation device to see the effectiveness of its programmes and initiatives. There is therefore need for the provision of adequate resources to the Bureau, both human and financial to assist with the implementation of its programmes.

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