

While it is now widely recognised that gender is a key issue that must be taken into consideration when formulating development policies and plans and programmes, it has been more difficult to translate the rhetoric about the importance of gender into policies that improve Caribbean women's condition and their position of disadvantage vis-à-vis that of Caribbean men, and into programmes that meet the specific needs of men and women in Caribbean society.

— *Women, Gender and Development in the Caribbean: Reflections & Projections* by Patricia Ellis, 2003

Regional Profile

Caribbean and the Americas: Overcoming the Barriers

The countries that make up the Commonwealth Caribbean and the Americas region are diverse. Among member countries is Canada, the second largest country in the world, one of its richest, ranked fourth in the UNDP's 2004 Human Development Index (HDI), with a GDP per capita of US\$29,480, and a combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools of 95%. Canada is also a key member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Organisation of American States (OAS), Asian and Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) and G8 economic groupings.

Other countries in this region are small states, mainly belonging to an archipelago of small island states, clustered in and around the Caribbean Sea (though The Bahamas is in the West Atlantic). Some are relatively well off and have fairly sophisticated economies. Others have populations under 100,000, still rely on the export of bananas and sugar for income, and are thus open to fluctuations in global trade.

Revisions and reviews of trade initiatives, such as the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), including the Everything but Arms amendment, and trade-related aspects of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, will affect Commonwealth Caribbean small states in view of the fact that World Trade Organisation (WTO) regulations will determine the agenda and thus shape bilateral agreements.

Off-shore banking and financial services, E-commerce and tourism have emerged as important industries for some Caribbean countries. However, these small states are also prone to climate and environmental disasters, as experienced

with Hurricane Ivan in 2004. Some are classified as Disadvantaged Countries. One country, Guyana, has been recognised as a Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC).

No Commonwealth Caribbean country is at the low human development end of the HDI. Five states— Barbados, St Kitts and Nevis, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and Antigua and Barbuda — are ranked as having high human development.

The quality of life has generally been rated as 'medium' to 'high', yet many people still live below the poverty line and the feminisation of poverty is evident. Over the past decade, the proportion of households headed by women, both poor and non-poor, has continued to increase. Women heads of households are often the sole breadwinners for their families, but earn significantly less than their male counterparts.

The incidence of poverty is lower in Latin America and the Caribbean, but progress in further reducing poverty has been slow. Greater improvement is required if the region is to attain the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving poverty by 2015.

The advancement of gender equality in the Commonwealth Caribbean and Americas has been uneven. On the one hand, there has been clear progress in enshrining equality in countries' constitutions, eliminating direct forms of discrimination, adapting legal frameworks, and developing innovative laws on electoral quotas and domestic violence. On the other hand, it is evident that existing barriers facing women not only reduce their access to employment, but also to health care, education, social

Box 33.1: Increasing and Strengthening Capacity

The Centres for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies have developed institutionally in the post-Beijing decade, and continue to play a strategic role in providing gender training in a range of fields for undergraduates, post-graduates and mid-career professionals in the public and other sectors.

NWMs in the Caribbean have also sought to overcome capacity constraints through:

- The use of United Nations Volunteers;
- Upgrading staff training to post-graduate levels;
- The use of networks on planning committees/commissions;
- Co-operation with training institutions; and
- Increased collaboration with the civil society and the private sector.

Other NWMs have expanded their areas of specialisation, collaborating with experts from other ministries. Canada and St Vincent and the Grenadines reinforced their small but highly skilled teams by using outside experts on specialised issues, and making effective use of gender networks, civil society/NGOs, professional and academic associations, research and training institutes, and linkages with umbrella organisations.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has also assisted in capacity-building through introduction of the gender mainstreaming approach based on the Gender Management System (GMS) framework. St Kitts and Nevis became the first Caribbean country to pilot the GMS, with the assistance of a Commonwealth expert on a nine-month assignment. Jamaica has applied the GMS to its health sector through its Ministry of Health. By 2000, St Kitts and Nevis and Barbados, with the support of the Secretariat, were able to run gender-responsive budget initiatives.

networks, and participation in political, economic and social decision-making processes. In addition, while some women attain an average level of schooling, male underachievement in education has been an emerging issue.

Gender socialisation, which impacts on traditional notions of gender roles both in and out of the home, as well as poverty and lack of employment, limited access to information, and resources and barriers to skills development can contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Some countries like Canada, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago have put in place national HIV/AIDS policies and programmes, while others like the Bahamas are in the process of developing their programmes.

Priorities for Action

In response to the Commonwealth Survey 2003/04, all countries in the region ranked women's poverty and violence against women, especially domestic violence, among their top priorities for national action. Most countries in the region have linked progress in women and the economy with the eradication of poverty among women. They have similarly linked the development of laws and institutions dealing with the human rights of women with combating violence against women. Overall, they identify the development and strengthening of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women as priority areas.

Gender, Poverty and Employment

Where there is a lack of competitiveness in trade, globalisation impacts negatively on women. This is currently the case for most Caribbean countries, for example, Jamaica with its primary/low value-added products such as sugar, bananas and garments. These sectors employ a high percentage of women and further fallout would result in a disproportionate loss of employment among women.

Jamaica is addressing the issue of lack of competitiveness by pursuing measures to reduce production costs through improved technology and other efficiencies. Constraints include a level of crime and violence that dictates high

insurance rates and security costs for businesses.

In the region, country-led initiatives have been promoted for guiding poverty eradication efforts, supported by donors and partners. Sector programmes and budget support are placing new emphasis on co-ordination, complementarity, and integration with government processes and procedures. Thus, budgets and public financial management systems in general have received increasing attention.

Barbados, Belize and St Kitts and Nevis, with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat, piloted gender-responsive budgeting. Governments in the region while faced with tough choices and budget discipline must continue to earmark a significant portion of resources for gender equality programmes in order to sustain the overall pro-poor development gains for women and men, girls and boys alike. For example, in The Bahamas, the appointment of the Task Force on Domestic Violence was a good start to co-ordinating the resources in the country.

Future initiatives need to ensure that resources are properly utilised and not wasted through the duplication of services/projects/programmes by the various splinter agencies.

Education and training have been linked to poverty eradication. Education

remains a priority focus with technical and vocational training being used as an avenue to reach unemployed women and high school drop-outs.

Belize's National Gender Policy recognises that many of women's concerns are as a result of being the poorest of the poor. The Government is committed to implementing programmes to address the issues of unemployment and wealth-generation. It also recognises that violence and HIV/AIDS affect women more because of their financial dependency on men, inability, in some cases, to negotiate safe sex, being forced to drop out early from the education system, and having limited skills and access to jobs.

In The Bahamas, all persons on the government welfare system are encouraged to pursue additional training at the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute. To those who qualify, the government pays all of the students' costs for participating at the Institute. All courses are available to women and the government continues to maintain its onsite day care facility for mothers who require this service.

In Canada, women make up close to half of the labour force and the majority work full-time. However, women still do most of the unpaid work in the household, especially for the care of

Women are trained in non-traditional skills in Trinidad and Tobago, here in making cabinets

children. They also have greater difficulty in accessing opportunities in high-wage growth sectors of the economy. Tackling poverty, especially for single-parent households, remains a challenge but improvements are being made.

National Women's Machineries

All countries in this region have National Women's Machineries (NWMs). These are located in different government structures with varying degrees of influence. At the time of reporting, a small number of countries still have no gender policy though for many of these, such policies are in the process of formulation or approval. Public policies have been developed in a number of sectors that address gender concerns.

National policies based on gender mainstreaming have been developed in most countries in the region. Guyana, for example, is working towards the gender mainstreaming of its National Development Plan.

The need for training in 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, adopted at the Third Conference in 1999, also recommended that the Gender Management System (GMS) developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat be adopted by the region as an approach to gender mainstreaming. However, a review of progress in 2004 indicates that this has not been fully implemented. Institutional changes and mechanisms have not been made fully operational.

Much responsibility is placed on the NWMs to take forward gender equality in the region. Inter-ministerial committees to co-ordinate mainstreaming of gender equality programmes have been set up in Jamaica, Guyana, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago. The gender mainstreaming framework, based on the multi-stakeholder approach, has, however, yet to be fully institutionalised.

To be effective such structures and processes require political commitment, resources and capacity-building support.



Unfortunately, structural adjustment and cutbacks in the public sector have impacted significantly on the social sector. In turn, this has had budgetary implications for NWMs which are located mainly in the social sector ministries.

On the whole, NWMs in the region still face constraints in terms of declining levels of staffing and resources. Issues of leadership, authority, influence and skills are also challenges. The efficacy of gender training for the public sector and other sectors is constrained by traditional attitudes and cultural factors. There is also a lack of capacity for monitoring and evaluation, making it difficult to measure impacts and successes. There is a lack of sex-disaggregated data, a critical need for NWMs if they are to influence policy and for the sectors to mainstream gender equality.

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence is one of the top priorities for all Commonwealth countries

in this region. For some years, Caribbean women's organisations, Canadian government structures, NWMs, civil society, the courts and the police have been engaged in dialogue and action to ensure protection and justice for victims of such violence, most of which is domestic violence.

Some progress has been recorded. Data from Canada indicates that the incidence and severity of spousal violence against women appears to have decreased. Elsewhere, however, countries report fluctuating results. Some studies have shown an increase in rape and sexual offences. In The Bahamas for example, domestic homicides made up at least 42% of all killings in 2000 and 53% in 2002. It has not helped that the quality of data on violence against women in the Caribbean is inadequate, thus making efforts to monitor progress difficult.

Caribbean countries have been making use of model legislation prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat and Caribbean Community (CARICOM). These model laws

Box 33.2: Gender and Trade Issues

The International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) is an international network of gender advocates working to promote equitable, social, and sustainable trade. The IGTN is made up of seven regional networks (Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, North America and Pacific) of women involved in research, advocacy and economic literacy around issues of trade and development.

The network was established following a Strategic Planning Seminar on Gender and Trade in Grenada in December 1999. The IGTN produces a bulletin that provides analysis on gender and trade issues and updates on World Trade Organisation negotiations from its Geneva representative.

IGTN has been an invaluable partner of the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaborating on the GMS series publication *Gender Mainstreaming in the Multilateral Trade System: A Handbook for Policy-makers and other Stakeholder* by Dr Mariama Williams. Many of the modules of the manual first appeared in article format or primers on the IGTN website (www.igtan.org).

In the Caribbean, IGTN works closely the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) based in Trinidad and Tobago.

have contributed to speeding up the enactment of gender-sensitive laws on sexual harassment, sexual offences, domestic violence, maintenance and maintenance orders.

By 2000, most Caribbean countries had ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Protection, Prevention and Eradication of All Forms of Violence Against Women. Most countries in the region have enacted laws on domestic or family violence.

A multiplicity of actions have been taken particularly on domestic violence. The implementation and enforcement of laws have been strengthened through police training and sensitisation of magistrates and judge. Other activities include the establishment of safe houses, crisis centres, hotlines for reporting, counselling services and victim support. Public campaigns on the undesirability of domestic violence are also conducted. Other programmes seek to empower women economically and through better educational opportunities.

Laws on sexual offences now also include changes that comply with the recommended CARICOM model law provisions on, for example, the criminalisation of rape within marriage. Countries like Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Dominica have made court proceedings, in relation to sexual offences, more sensitive to the needs and interests of both adult and child victims. In The Bahamas, it is now an offence for a person infected with HIV to knowingly have sexual intercourse with any other person without disclosing their HIV status.

Among other forms of violence, Canada is addressing key issues such as trafficking in women and race-based as well as gender-based violence against Aboriginal women.

HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is emerging as a threat to development in the region. Caribbean small states have the highest HIV prevalence of any region outside of Sub-Saharan Africa. The prevalence rate ranges from approximately 3.5% (in The Bahamas) to 1.2% (in Jamaica) among adults. More than one country regards

HIV/AIDS as a development problem which diverts resources from elsewhere and threatens economic productivity.

Small island developing states are most vulnerable to the pandemic as their small populations cannot withstand the loss of human capacity. In the Caribbean, efforts to identify HIV/AIDS have been sustained and standardised by the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre/Pan American Health Organisation (CAREC/PAHO). According to CAREC/PAHO, a total of 24,567 AIDS cases have been reported between 1982 and 2002 by 20 of its 21 member countries. Given the margin for under-reporting, projections could be in the range of 30,000 to 35,000 cases. The annual incidence of AIDS cases could be 52.43 per 100,000 persons, compared to 13.6 per 100,000 in 1991.

AIDS is now the leading cause of death in the 15–45 year age group in the Caribbean. The epidemic is essentially a youthful one with 15–24 year olds, and specifically female in that age group, most at risk. Data shows that although there is a higher absolute rate of AIDS cases among males (a ratio of 2:1), the incidence of AIDS among females in the 15–24 age group is three to six times higher than that of males.

The most recent national estimates shows that HIV prevalence among pregnant women has reached or exceeded 2% in five Commonwealth countries, namely, The Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, St Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. As result of the high rate of heterosexual transmission of HIV, mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) now accounts for 6% of reported AIDS cases – estimated to be 600 cases in 2002. It is estimated that half of all HIV positives are women, in part because of the sex trade in young women and impacts of tourism.

Brain-Drain

Another issue of concern in the Caribbean is the loss of teachers, skilled professionals and health workers as a result of migration and targeted recruitment by other countries. Their departure from the economic and social life of their countries has placed strains on the education and health services that

women, especially poorer women, need to access.

The international migration of professionals is now a global problem and some efforts have been made to regulate it. In 2003, a Commonwealth Code of Practice for the Recruitment of Health Workers was adopted and signed by three Caribbean states: Barbados, Dominica, and Trinidad and Tobago. In 2004, a similar Protocol for the Recruitment of Commonwealth Teachers was adopted by Commonwealth Ministers of Education.

Regional Platforms for Equality

Regional integration is a very important process and is spearheaded by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The CARICOM Secretariat's Bureau of Gender Affairs has been instrumental in promoting gender equality issues in regional development strategies and programmes. CARICOM has also developed a regional Plan of Action for mainstreaming gender equality into its key programmes. With other partners, such as the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), UNIFEM, the Centres for Gender and Development Studies in the three campuses of the University of the West Indies and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), CARICOM has been central to the co-ordination of the baseline research for regional reports.

The CARICOM initiative undertaken under the umbrella of the Pan-Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, illustrates a functional co-operation approach to accelerating the region's response. The region has made progress in the provision of treatment and care for persons living with HIV/AIDS. However access to anti-retroviral treatment is still unequal across the region, due largely to price discrepancies for the drugs.

Canada continues to promote its gender equality priorities in key multilateral organisations including the OAS, Inter-American Commission on Women, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) grouping.

Partnerships and Links

Civil society organisations, regional and international agencies have played a prominent part in advancing gender equality in the region. For example:

- UNECLAC has conducted various studies in the region and provided technical assistance, as well as supported national and regional initiatives;
- The Regional Co-ordinating Unit of the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of West Indies has played a direct role in the development of relevant research programmes, gender analysis and planning modules to support capacity building in the region;
- CIDA's Gender Equality Programme supports work at the national level on gender mainstreaming and strengthening inter-agency collaboration;
- The Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action, a regional NGO, has played a central role in lobbying on issues including violence against women, and for gender and trade, and advocating for gender mainstreaming;
- The Commonwealth Secretariat held regional gender mainstreaming workshops, shared its GMS resources, and provided short and long-term experts for countries.

Model legislation prepared for Caribbean member countries by the Commonwealth Secretariat and CARICOM focused on:

- Citizenship;
- Equality for women in employment;
- Equal pay;
- Inheritance;
- Maintenance and maintenance orders;
- Sexual harassment; and
- Sexual offences.

In the Caribbean and Americas region, as in other regions strategic linkages have been forged to maximise the work on gender equality. The regional framework facilitates and supports in a most effective manner the adoption and implementation of global approaches to gender mainstreaming, and enhances cross-collaborative work and advocacy at all levels. Most Caribbean countries have adopted the Charter of Civil Society.



National, regional and international agencies, women's organisations and other civil society partners play a key role in the region as advocates, supporting capacity building in partnership with NWMs and other government departments.

Some countries reinforced their small NWM teams by using specialists and outside experts, gender networks and other links (see Box 33.1, page 130). Belize has established a National Women's Commission, to support the participation of NGOs, and a Women's Issues Network to ensure that the wider constituency of women, including community-based organisations, is able to communicate directly with government on issues of concern. Grenada and St Lucia have established similar structures.

Regional analysis indicates the need for the development of a regional or Knowledge-Based Network to improve communications and share experiences and resources. Canada has in place a National Clearing House on Family Violence, a central reference, referral and distribution service for information on prevention, protection and treatment. Training institutions, such as the University of the West Indies, have clearing house facilities for training resources and policy materials. In addition, the Commonwealth of Learning based in Vancouver, Canada, manages a Gender Training Electronic Database as part of a UN-Commonwealth initiative¹ to support capacity-building for gender mainstreaming and gender equality issues.

The Way Forward

There is a critical need for further advocacy, policy focus, strategic actions and investment in gender equality issues in the region. Capacity-building and

technical support is required in many areas in order to make gender equality a reality. This need is all the greater because of poverty, HIV/AIDS, unequal power relations between men and women, and the strategic role of men, boys and young people as partners.

Country Reports

On the following pages are summaries of reports submitted by Commonwealth Caribbean countries and Canada on the progress of gender equality.

End Note

¹ Gender Training Resources Collection, a web-based collection of materials for capacity-building for gender mainstreaming from the United Nations and Commonwealth Systems, from 1990s to 2000s. This houses many useful resources on the Commonwealth Secretariat's GMS publication series and other development materials. Visit website : www.col.org/GenderResources

Antigua & Barbuda

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	79	65	68
Female population (% of total)	--	--	57.4
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	--	--	--
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	3.6	--	--
EDUCATION**			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	12	--	--
Male	--	--	10
Primary education***			
Ratio of girls to boys	--	--	1.63
Secondary education***			
Ratio of girls to boys	--	--	2.53
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	--	--	--
Male	--	--	--
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	76	77	78
Male	71	72	72
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)			
	--	18	13
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15-24)			
Female	--	--	--
Male	--	--	--

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2002 (2000)

** Female figures 1960 estimate (Unesco), male figure from CIA Factbook 2003

*** Human Development Report 2003 (UNDP, 2003)

-- Figures not available

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda has identified the following, in order of priority, for national action:

1. Education and Training of Women
 2. Women in Power and Decision-making
 3. Women and Poverty
 4. Violence Against Women
 5. Human Rights of Women
- Followed by 6. Women and Health; 7. The Girl-child; 8. Women and the Environment; 9. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women; 10. Women in the Media; 11. Women and the Economy; and 12. Women and Armed Conflict.

A Decade of Action

Antigua and Barbuda acceded to CEDAW in 1989 and is also party to the Declaration to Eliminate Violence Against Women and other international conventions related to the rights of women and children. The National Women's Machinery (NWM) is the Directorate of Gender Affairs in the Ministry of Health and Social Improvement. There is no legal discrimination against women in any field and women's suffrage was achieved in 1951.

Women in Poverty/Education and Training of Women

Jobs are being created for women in order that they may be able to improve their quality of life and give their children quality care. Many women and men are self-employed in the areas of craft production, clothing production, plant growing and the preservation of fruits and vegetables and the NWM conducts skills training which helps women take advantage of income-generating opportunities and earn more. Evening literacy classes are planned for adults by the Co-ordinating Council of Women, an NGO. Current educational enrolment for females is high.

Young people are torch-bearers for Commonwealth values, including development and democracy, gender equality and peace

Women in Power and Decision-making

In 2004, Antigua and Barbuda had its first female elected representative in Parliament. The civil society has contributed towards the achievement of this milestone. However, no women have been appointed to Cabinet positions in the new government.

Over 60% of civil servants are women, with many serving in high positions.

Violence Against Women

The NWM is working with the Government, police and legal department to prevent and protect women from violence.

Women and Health

The Co-ordinating Council of Women works closely with the NWM and other NGOs on health matters. Training sessions are planned for volunteers who will work in the community.

National Women's Machinery

The Directorate of Gender Affairs is the National Women's Machinery and is located in the Ministry of Health and Social Improvement. It was originally set up in 1982 as a Women's Desk and was reclassified as the Directorate of Women's Affairs after the 1985 Third International Women's Conference in Nairobi. After the 1995 Fourth International Women's Conference in Beijing, it was renamed the Directorate of Gender Affairs.

The Executive Director of the NWM works with an Assistant Executive Director and project officers. The NWM works in the area of gender and development with the main focus being the family.

Generally, the NWM has been able to build collaborative relationships with all ministries and government departments.



Partnerships

The NWM works closely with the Co-ordinating Council of Women (which deals with family life), NGOs and civil society on various projects and programmes. Among its various international development partners, the Commonwealth Secretariat has provided support and assistance to the NWM since the 1980s in policy advice and publications. The NWM looks to further support in research and in training in family living and community improvement programmes.

Concerns for the Future

The NWM believes that Antigua and Barbuda needs to concentrate on the eradication of poverty in families and improvement in nutrition; promote greater awareness of the need to elect qualified women to Parliament who can work for the health and welfare of families; improve the education and skills especially among the illiterate; and encourage family values and support for development among prisoners and those in correctional departments.

The Bahamas

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	253	276	303
Female population (% of total)	50.4	50.5	50.8
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	46	47	47
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	12.5	11.8	9.7
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	4.8	4.2	5.5
Male	6.4	5.9	6.7
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	97	...	79
Male	96	..	86
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	88	..	79
Male	87	..	86
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	26	34	..
Male	11	16	..
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	73	73	74
Male	65	65	65
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)			
	24	20	15
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	..	...	3
Male	...	...	2.6

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2002 (2000)

.. Figures not available

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of The Bahamas has identified the following, in order of priority, for national action:

1. Violence Against Women
 2. Women and Health
 3. Education and Training of Women
 4. Women and Poverty
 5. Human Rights of Women
- Followed by: 6. Women and the Economy; 7. The Girl-child; 8. Women in Power and Decision-making; 9. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women; 10. Women and the Environment; 11. Women in the Media; 12. Women and Armed Conflict.

A Decade of Action

The Bahamas, one of the wealthiest countries in the region, acceded to CEDAW in 1993 and is preparing its first report. The Bureau of Women's Affairs is the National Women's Machinery (NWM) in the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development. The country is ranked at 46 in the Gender-related Development Index in the *UNDP Human Development Report 2004*.

Violence Against Women

An Action Team, comprising the NWM, police and NGO community, collaborate to hold public forums on domestic violence which forms the majority of cases of violent. The police service has also introduced mandatory training of its officers and new recruits in handling such cases; a female senior officer heads the Domestic Violence Unit. The police have been able to travel through the archipelago raising awareness of the problem.

The Government continues to provide grants to the Crisis Centre of The Bahamas and to the newly launched Links Safe House for Women in Crisis. The latter is the first of its kind in the country and was realised through a partnership between the Nassau Chapter of Links, the British American Bank and the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development.

A Task Force on Domestic Violence has also been established, bringing together key agencies working in the field and those agencies from related areas. Consideration is being given to upgrading a local programme that caters to rehabilitating the offender. It has had a fairly good success rate, but is not a mandatory tool when dealing with offenders before the courts.

In terms of legal reform, the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act has been recommended for review to introduce stiffer penalties and to expand the definition of harassment which is now only limited to the workplace. Stalking will be introduced as an offence; and all persons, not just married persons as at present, will be covered by domestic violence legislation.

Women and Health

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is approximately 3.5% of the adult population between 15–49 years and with unofficial statistics showing a higher rate in the female population than the male, special attention is being paid to HIV/AIDS programmes.

Since a UNDP-assisted project looked at gender-focused interventions in 1998, there is a greater awareness about the pandemic in the community. This has also been due to NGO efforts. There is greater collaboration between the National AIDS Office and the Bureau of Women's Affairs, and public discussions now focus on subjects such as discrimination by employers against workers who are HIV-positive.

Women in Poverty/Education and Training of Women

Education and training have been linked to poverty alleviation. Bahamians on the government welfare system are encouraged to pursue additional training at the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute and equip themselves with income-generating skills. For those who qualify, the Government pays all student costs.

Access to technical and vocational training is especially used as an avenue to



reach unemployed women and high school drop-outs. All courses are open to women and the Government maintains on-site day care facilities for mothers who require this service.

The poverty study carried out with assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank has been completed. The NWM was not part of this process.

Women in Power and Decision-making

No particular action has been taken to increase women's participation in politics or other leadership positions, but the Government continues to provide women with an enabling environment to do so.

As of September 2003, the Governor-General and Deputy Prime Minister are females. In addition, 7 out of 16 Senators are female (including the Senate President), 8 out of 40 MPs, and 4 out of 16 Cabinet Ministers (Financial Services and Investment, Transport and Aviation, Social Services and Community Development, and National Security).

Women have held various other strategic positions, including that of Chief Justice (who has now moved been appointed as President of the Court of Appeal).

Gender Mainstreaming

Not much focus has been put on this area. Additional assistance will be required at national level to promote the shift to gender mainstreaming and promote its benefits in the various sectors. There is still a very splintered approach to programmes to promote gender equality.

National Women's Machinery

The Bureau of Women's Affairs is the National Women's Machinery (NWM) and was established in 1981. It had originally been located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but from 2002 has been in the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development. This has enabled it to extend its work outside the capital and into several of the other islands.

When the NWM was set up, it was headed by an Assistant Director who was subsequently reclassified as a Senior Assistant Secretary. The head reports directly to the Permanent Secretary of the ministry as the NWM does not fall under any ministerial department. The head has a Chief Executive Officer and support staff.

The NWM has never had its own budget and has relied on its host ministry for funds. For the first time in 2003, however, the national budget contained a budget line item of US\$5,000 against the NWM's name. All administrative costs are absorbed by the ministry. None of the funds are earmarked for gender mainstreaming activities, though limited funds may be available from the host ministry for this.

The NWM works with all ministries and departments, but especially with the Department of Statistics, the AIDS Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Department of Statistics, in particular, has taken advantage of training offered at regional level and compiles relevant statistics where available.

A key achievement of the NWM since 2001 was the reform of inheritance laws

Commonwealth Young Ambassadors for Positive Living Programme in the Bahamas: youth meeting on HIV/AIDS

by removing the rule of primogeniture, thus permitting all children, and not just the oldest male, to inherit from a parent who dies intestate.

Partnerships

The NWM works closely with NGOs and civil society as it did with the National Organisation of Women's Associations in The Bahamas on reform of the inheritance laws. It also works with them on health awareness campaigns and domestic violence issues. The NWM hopes to involve the NGO community in discussions on various other areas of particular concern to women.

Concerns for the Future

The Bahamas will focus on combating violence against women, and HIV/AIDS and on improving women's health and education.



COURTESY: COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN YOUTH CENTRE

Barbados

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	257	266	267
Female population (% of total)	52.1	51.8	51.7
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	47	47	46
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	20.2	22.9	11.5
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	0.7	0.5	0.3
Male	0.6	0.4	6.3
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	77	--	105
Male	78	--	105
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	--	--	83
Male	--	--	86
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	30	34	54
Male	24	23	22
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	78	78	78
Male	73	73	73
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)			
	14	14	12
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	--	--	--
Male	--	--	--

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2002 (2000)

-- Figures not available

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Barbados has identified the following, in order of priority, for national action:

1. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
 2. Women and Health
 3. Violence Against Women
 4. Women and Poverty
 5. Women in Power and Decision-making
- Followed by: 6. Women and the Economy; 7. The Girl-child; 8. Human Rights of Women; 9. Education and Training of Women; 10. Women and the Environment; 11. Women in the Media; and 12. Women and Armed Conflict.

A Decade of Action

Barbados was one of the first Commonwealth countries to ratify CEDAW (in 1980). Its National Women's Machinery (NWM) is the Bureau of Gender Affairs located in the Ministry of Social Transformation. The country is ranked at 27 in the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) in the *UNDP Human Development Report 2004*.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

One of the NWM's main functions is to facilitate gender mainstreaming of national development policies and programmes. Each government department has a focal point trained to gender analyse plans and policies. In 2001, a National Advisory Council on Gender was established to identify, monitor and make recommendations to the minister responsible for gender affairs on various issues.

In 2002, a national symposium convened by the NWM, attended by a wide cross-section of people and organisations, met to identify gender issues and emerging trends and also to agree on the way forward for the NWM. In 2003, the NWM became a member of the National Social Indicators and Millennium Development Goals Committee, which is the component of a CARICOM programme on improving the

compilation of social/gender and environment statistics.

Women and Poverty

Pockets of poverty exist alongside prosperity and more women than men tend to fall below the poverty line. In 1998, the Poverty Alleviation Bureau was set up to address poverty issues, working with government agencies, NGOs, community-based organisations and individuals to avoid duplication and wastage. One of its aims is to create a climate for young people to gravitate towards the growth and development of small and micro-businesses. A Poverty Eradication Committee was established to consider applications to the Poverty Alleviation Fund which provides assistance to the most vulnerable groups.

The Relief 2000 programme aims to provide assistance to recipients of social assistance and other families in need who have been identified as extreme cases of poverty. Its core strategy is to meet employment, training, financial assistance and housing needs and thus break the poverty cycle. Follow-up programmes draw on public and private sector expertise and resources. One successful project involved the training of 25 unemployed single mothers in dining room services specifically for employment in the hospitality sector.

Violence Against Women

Violence against women remains prevalent. To reduce and eventually eradicate it, the NWM works to eliminate inequalities between women and men, and provides services for victims and offenders. In 1999, a shelter for battered women was established, funded by the Government and run by an NGO. The shelter provides counselling and operates a 24-hour hotline service.

Police are now trained in domestic violence intervention. In 1998, a Victim Support Group was set up by the police to offer emotional and practical support for victims of crime and domestic violence. Counselling is also offered by a number of social service agencies, and NGOs provide education and training in Domestic

Violence Intervention.

The NWM and NGOs have initiated various awareness programmes on domestic violence and the National Forum against Domestic Violence was established in 2002 to make everyone aware of the effects of domestic violence on individuals and groups, and to restore the family unit.

Table 36.1: Domestic Violence in Barbados, January–July 2003

Cases	Numbers
Murder	2
Assaults (major)	0
Assaults (minor)	68
Kidnapping	0
Sex crimes	0
Threats to kill	49
Other threats	18
Criminal damage	3
Harassment	2
Trespass	0
Disputes	241
TOTAL	383

Women and Health

Barbados is committed to equitable health care for everyone. Statistics show women having a long life expectancy, and low maternal and infant mortality. Prevalence of AIDS is about 2.5% but women constitute a growing number of victims. Education in risk factors and medical services are offered at all polyclinics, family clinics and in adolescent health programmes.

In 1995, the Government initiated a programme to administer AZT at the 14th week of pregnancy to every woman testing HIV-positive. This treatment has now been replaced by anti-retroviral drugs which are also given to the child 72 hours after delivery in order to reduce mother-to-child transmission. Anti-retroviral therapy is also available to all Barbadians who are HIV-positive.

The National Commission on HIV/AIDS under the Prime Minister's Office has conducted a campaign entitled Speak Sister which focuses on the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS.

National Women's Machinery

In 1995, the Bureau of Women's Affairs, as the National Women's Machinery (NWM), was located in the Ministry of Labour and headed by a Director with one research officer and support staff. In that year, a project to strengthen the NWM as an institution began as a joint initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Government of Barbados. The purpose was to increase employment and income-earning opportunities for Barbadian women through programme support to the Bureau as the executing agency. A committee oversaw this project and temporary and other staff recruited.

In 2000, the NWM was re-designated the Bureau of Gender Affairs and in 2002 the project for institutional strengthening ceased. The NWM is now located in the Ministry of Social Transformation where it is one of eight departments. It does not possess the autonomy of most departments since the ministry provides all administrative and accounting services. The current staff is made up of a Director, 2 programme officers, 1 research officer and support staff.

The NWM is to formulate a national policy on gender and development. In this respect, a multi-sectoral approach will be adopted with inputs from the National Advisory Council on Gender, the inter-ministerial focal points, NGOs, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

For the 2002/03 financial year, the budget allocated to the Bureau was Bds\$1,016,598, which was reduced in 2003/04. While Bds\$84,615,414 has been allocated to the Ministry of Social Transformation, 0.87% or some Bds\$735,165 has been allocated to the Bureau.

As NWM, the Bureau conducted a national symposium on gender in January 2002 which brought together organisations and individuals to examine the current status of gender relations and equity. The need for further discussion of the concept of gender and factors contributing to gender inequality was emphasised.

The first phase of the training of focal points who assist with implementation of Gender Management Systems in all ministries and departments has been completed. In 2003, programmes on sexual harassment were conducted, and the role of the Bureau was publicised.

The Bureau especially enjoys close working relations with the Ministry of Health, which provides resource persons for HIV/AIDS workshops, and the Statistical Department. It also has good relations with key government departments such as the Ministry of Education, Labour Department and Child Care Board.

Partnerships

The NWM and NGOs work together in a number of areas. With the National Organisation of Women, the NWM has implemented a pilot school outreach programme on gender awareness, gender-based violence and conflict resolution. The NWM also provides grants to several NGOs to assist with the implementation of programmes. The Bureau's Director sits on the Board of Management of a shelter for victims of

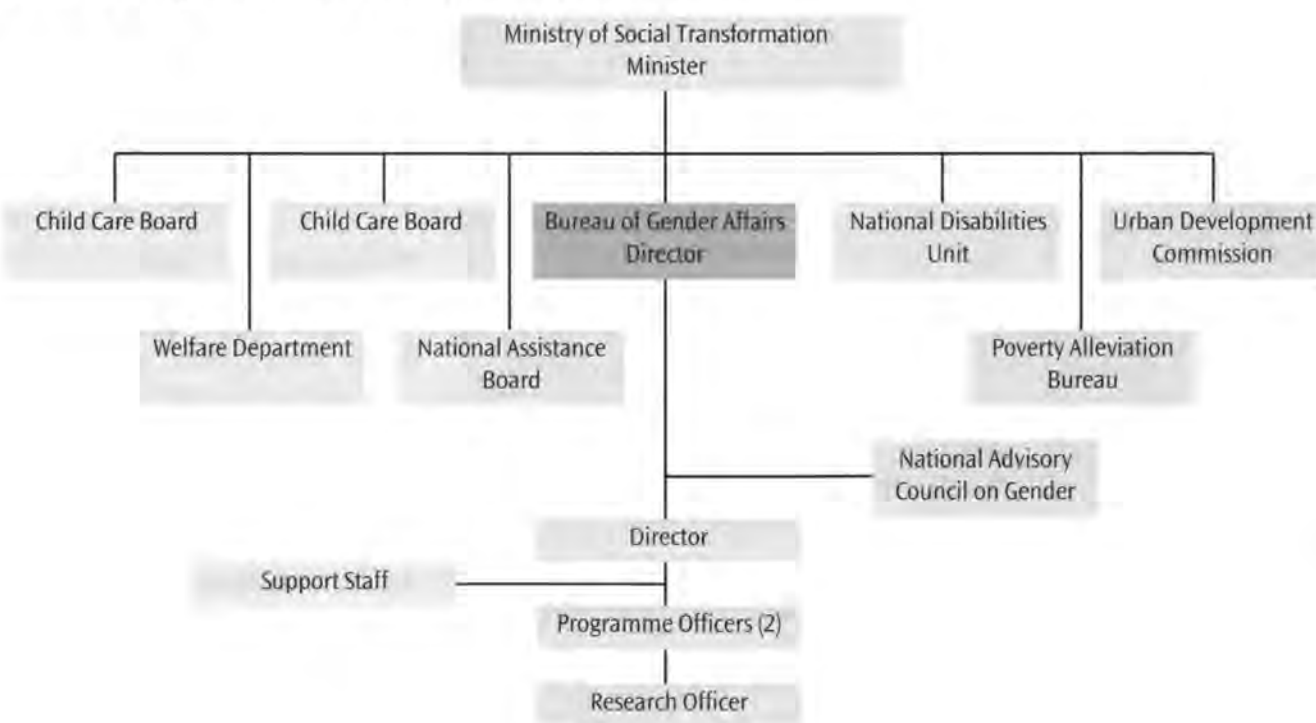
abuse run by the Business and Professional Women's Club. Financial grants have also been given to the Men's Educational Support Association.

The NWM has worked with the Commonwealth Secretariat on a number of activities. It uses the Secretariat publication's *Guidelines for Police Training on Violence against Women and Child Sexual Abuse* in the training of police officers.

Concerns for the Future

The NWM will concentrate on developing a National Policy on Gender and implementing programmes for mainstreaming gender in all ministries and departments. An initial approach to ministries for submissions to assist with the development of a national policy met with little response. The NWM is now working on its own draft policy which will then be circulated to government agencies, NGOs and others for comment. It will also seek external assistance for this process.

Chart 36.1: Organisation Structure of Barbados NWM



Belize

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile 1990 1995 2000

Gender Profile	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	189	216	240
Female population (% of total)	49.2	49.2	50
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	21	23	24
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	..	17.7	20.3
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	11.8	9.1	6.8
Male	10	7.7	6.7
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	97	99	102
Male	98	99	98
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	30	..	66
Male	27	..	61
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	1	1	..
Male	1	1	..
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	74	74	75
Male	71	72	73
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	39	36	34
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	..	..	2
Male	..	..	1.1

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2002 (2000)

.. Figures not available.

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Belize Government has identified the following, in order of priority, for national action:

1. Violence Against Women
 2. Education and Training of Women
 3. Women and Poverty
 4. Women and Health
 5. Women in Power and Decision-making
- Followed by: 6. Women and the Economy; 7. Human Rights of Women; 8. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women; 9. The Girl-child; 10. Women in the Media; 11. Women and the Environment; and 12. Women and Armed Conflict.

A Decade of Action

Since the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action was agreed, Belize has approved a National Gender Policy and a Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy. The Women's Department in the Ministry of Human Development, Local Government and Labour is the National Women's Machinery (NWM), and is represented on several multi-sectoral committees and commissions. The Department is at the heart of gender policy and programmes in Belize.

Belize acceded to CEDAW in 1990 and to its Optional Protocol in 2002. It is ranked at 80 in the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) in the Human Development Report 2004.

Violence Against Women

In 2001, there were 668 cases of domestic violence in Belize, of which 616 were reported by women. One NGO (the Belize Organisation for Women and Development) has claimed separately that 1 in 2 women were victims of domestic violence (1998) and that this may be under-reported. Belize has adopted a zero-tolerance approach. A multi-sectoral committee developed a plan of action and monitoring, family violence units have been set up at police stations across the country, and police, social workers and community leaders trained in the dynamics of domestic violence and basic

Belize Women's Department organises workshops and courses on conflict resolution, gender awareness, women's self esteem, HIV/AIDS and other health issues, in addition to basic counselling and initiated public education and awareness programmes on TV and radio including cultural activities

intervention techniques. The Ministry of Health, through its health information system, manages data on domestic violence collected by the various agencies using a single registration form, and implements a protocol for the management of domestic violence cases at hospitals and health centres. Several publications on domestic violence, including a basic counselling manual, have also been published.

A public education campaign was held and gender-sensitisation sessions organised for Cabinet Ministers and senior public officials.

Education and Training of Women

There has been a steady rise in the literacy and education statistics for women. The NWM has commissioned a study on discriminatory practices in the education system and a campaign to eliminate discrimination is being implemented. Skills training for women has been provided.

Women and Poverty

Employment opportunities for women are being improved though many women remain among the poorest of the poor. Belize has amended legislation to place an economic value on home care/child care in instances of divorce or separation; increased the minimum wage for domestic workers and shop assistants to that of other workers; and drafted legislation on equal pay for work of equal value. A Small Farmer and Business Bank was established to facilitate loans to women entrepreneurs. A gender perspective has reportedly not been applied to the national poverty strategy and action plan but a poverty assessment is being carried out and the NWM will seek to influence the resultant plan.

Women and Health

Statistics indicate that HIV infections are on the rise, especially among females. The World Bank reports that in the 15–24 year age group, female infections are nearly double those of males. Financial dependence on men has meant that

women cannot negotiate safe sex.

The NWM has run courses on HIV/AIDS and other health issues. It is represented on the National AIDS Commission, comprising government and non-governmental organisations and development agencies. Both the National Gender Policy and Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy cover AIDS issues.

Women in Power and Decision-making

A study was commissioned on women and decision-making. The NWM reports that in 2003, there was one woman among 25 Ministers, five chief executive officers in the public service, five women as heads of statutory bodies, and 14 women as heads of department in the public service.

Other Concerns

Legislation has been introduced or amended to recognise marital rape in the Criminal Code and common-law unions for the purpose of inheritance and property rights; to establish that custody of children no longer depends on a mother's private life; to increase social security benefits for widows and orphans; and to improve maternity benefits; The Sexual Harassment Act and Human Trafficking Prohibition Act have also been amended.

Other major activities, include the development (with an NGO) of a training manual on the definition of gender from a Belizean perspective. A Women's Agenda was developed as part of the campaign manifesto of the ruling party.

With the Commonwealth Secretariat's assistance, the national budget underwent gender analysis, focusing on expenditure for administrative purposes, mainly staffing. In 1997–1999, Belize set up an inter-ministerial committee to monitor and co-ordinate the gender mainstreaming process. It also set up a National Women's Committee to support the participation of NGOs and a Women's Issues Network to ensure that wider issues of concern were communicated to the government.

Domestic violence issues have been



mainstreamed into the health, education and home affairs (police) sectors. Gender sensitive indicators are among the social indicators being developed by the Central Statistical office and HIV/AIDS data is being disaggregated by sex.

The NWM ran workshops and courses on conflict resolution, gender awareness, women's self-esteem, HIV/AIDS and other health issues, in addition to basic counselling and initiated public education and awareness programmes on TV and radio.

National Women's Machinery

The Women's Department is one of four departments in the Ministry of Human Development, Local Government and Labour. The department is divided into two sections, one for developing policy, the other responsible for service delivery in the development, implementation and evaluation of women-specific projects. It is headed by a Director.

The NWM has a staff of 14 and works on a budget of an average of Bze\$125,000 annually.

Partnerships

The NWM works with all ministries and government agencies. Collaborative work with the Ministry of Health, the Police Department and Family Court, for example, has facilitated the development of the registration form on domestic violence and the management of statistics collected by the National Health Information System. It has worked especially closely with the Women's Issues Network of Belize in gender mainstreaming, campaigning for the elimination of discrimination in the education system, and the successful

minimum wage campaign. The department feels that women's NGOs in Belize need to be strengthened in order to assist with lobbying and advocacy work.

External partners include international organisations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, and various UN and regional agencies. Commonwealth assistance has included policy assistance and advocacy, and technical assistance on gender-responsive budget initiatives. Commonwealth publications on gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, and on good practice have been especially useful.

Concerns for the Future

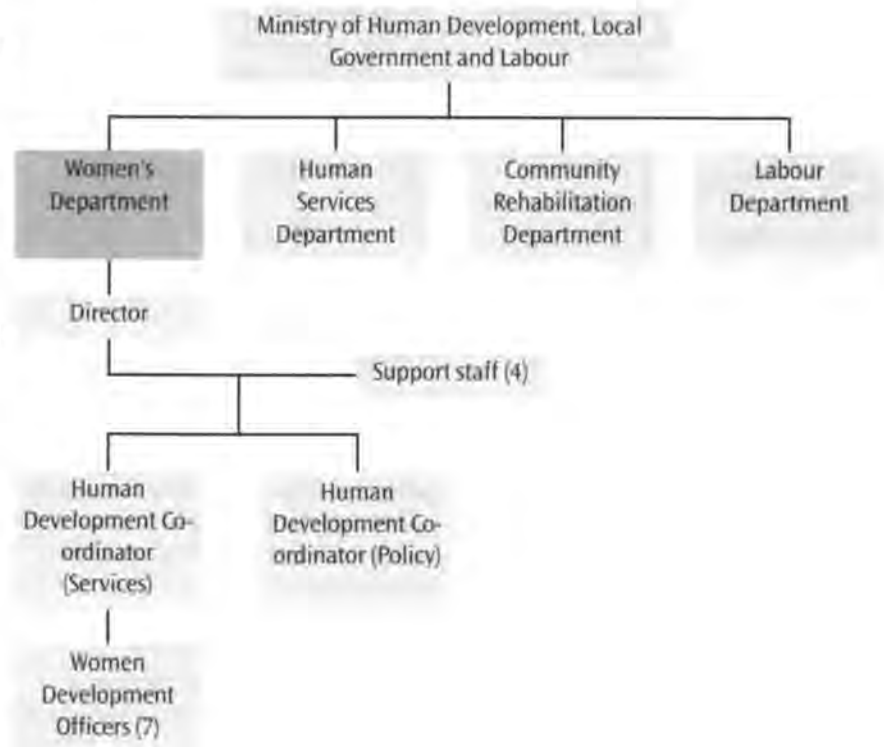
The NWM has identified three areas for future action:

Poverty continues to hold back the advancement of women, many of whom are the poorest of the poor. Violence and the rising incidence of HIV infection, for example, affect women more because of their financial dependency on men. The national gender policy is committed to addressing issues of unemployment and wealth generation.

Hitherto, national efforts have focused on domestic violence but with increasing reports of rape and sexual offences, work will be extended to encompass other forms of violence against women.

There is an upward trend for infection rates of HIV among women. The total number of cases from 1986 to the end of June 2003 was 2,250. However, of new cases tested between January–March 2003, 55 were women and 57 were men. In new cases from April–June 2003, 60 were women and 54 men. Action to redress unemployment and provide further education for women and men on the disease is planned.

Chart 37.1: The Position of the WD in the Ministry and its Structure in 2003, Belize



Canada

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile

	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION			
Total population (000)	27,800	29,400	30,800
Female population (% of total)	50.4	50.5	50.5
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	44	45	46
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	8.1	9	6.7
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	—	—	—
Male	—	—	—
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	97	94	100
Male	97	96	100
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	89	90	98
Male	88	92	97
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	104	95	68
Male	85	81	51
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	81	81	82
Male	74	75	76
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)			
	7	6	6
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	—	—	0.1
Male	—	—	0.3

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics
.. Data not available.

Priority Concerns

Canada is a federal state comprising 10 provinces and 3 territories. In the Canadian context, many of the critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 *BPfA* and the 1995 Commonwealth PoA and its 2000–2005 Update are interconnected rather than treated separately, and a number are areas of shared responsibility or fall primarily within provincial or territorial jurisdiction. Canada has a clear legal foundation for gender equality in its Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In addition, the federal and all provincial and territorial governments have adopted human rights legislation that prohibits discrimination based on such characteristics as race, nationality and ethnic background, colour, sex and disability.

Canada has highlighted those areas that reflect the priorities of the National Women's Machinery (NWM) and for which there is a common recognition among women's machineries across jurisdictions of where attention has been focussed in recent years¹.

These priority areas include:

- Women and the Economy including Women in Poverty;
- Human Rights of Women and Violence Against Women; and
- Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

A Decade of Action

Canada, geographically the second largest country in the world, has consistently ranked in the top 10 countries of the UNDP's Human Development Index. Canada ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981 and presented its report most recently to the CEDAW Committee in 2003. It acceded to the CEDAW Optional Protocol in 2003.

Due to its constitutional structure, although Status of Women Canada (SWC) is the central agency of Canada's NWM, it is not the sole component. Every federal government ministry is responsible for implementing the Government of Canada's commitment to gender-based

Box 38.1: Balancing Work and Family Life

In 2000, the Government of Canada amended the Employment Insurance Act (EI) to extend parental benefits from 10 weeks to 35 weeks, resulting in a combined maternity/parental benefit period of one year. In addition, to improved flexibility, the second two-week waiting period, normally served by fathers claiming parental benefits, was dropped. Parents are also now allowed to work while receiving benefits, a change expected to help mothers make a gradual return to the workplace, if they so choose.

Initial results showed that there was a substantial increase in the number of employed parents staying at home with their newborn children. About 211,000 parents accessed benefits in 2001/02 compared to almost 180,00 in 2000/01, an increase of close to 18%. About 90% of new parental claims were for women. However, parental claims by men increased by almost 80% from 13,000 in 2000/01 to 23,120 in 2001/02, showing that the new rules gave fathers a greater opportunity to share the caregiver role during the first year of the child's life.

The success of this initiative is also due to the fact that all jurisdictions in Canada amended their labour legislation to enable parents to take advantage of the longer parental benefit period and still maintain job protection.

To respond to situations where a child is hospitalised during parental leave, in 2002 the parental benefit period was increased by the number of weeks of hospitalisation, up to a maximum of 104 weeks. Maximum benefits for parents claiming a combination of maternity, parental and sickness benefits (where the sickness benefits are related to the parent) for themselves was also extended from 50 to 65 weeks.

In 2000, EI amendments made it easier for parents returning to the workforce after an extended absence caring for children to qualify for regular benefits if they lose their jobs. Given that the duration of interruptions from the labour market is on average three times longer (4.5 years) for women than for men, women are more likely to benefit from the re-entrant parent provision.

Since January 2004, six weeks of EI Compassionate Care benefits are available to enable eligible workers to take a temporary absence from work to provide care or support to a child, parent, spouse or common-law partner who has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death within six months. Eight weeks of job protection for compassionate leave are provided for federally regulated employees. Six provinces and two territories also provide protection and in 2005, it is expected that other jurisdictions will introduce similar changes.

policy analysis within its mandate. There are also women's machinery offices in provincial and territorial governments that work with other ministries within their jurisdiction.

Canada is ranked fourth on the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) in the *UNDP Human Development Report 2004*.

Women and the Economy including Women in Poverty

Poverty reduction efforts are viewed as part of, not separate from, efforts to improve the economic well-being of women generally. Economic autonomy enables women to provide for themselves and their families, reducing the risk of poverty. Recognising the strong links between children's and women's economic well-being and the importance of early childhood development, providing support for families with children, especially low-income families, has been a priority.

In addition to amendments to the Employment Insurance Act in areas relating to parental benefits and compassionate care leave (see Box 38.1, *this page*) that enable families to better balance work and family life, Canada has undertaken numerous initiatives that contribute to reducing poverty. For example, the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) provides additional money to low-income families with children. In 2002–03, the CCTB provided C\$8.1 billion to 3.2 million families with 5.7 million children, or more than 80% of families with children in Canada. A progress report in 2002 estimated that as a result, approximately 55,000 children in 22,900 families were no longer living in a low-income situation. This meant that there were 5.1% fewer low-income families. The NCB Supplement was increased in July 2003 and further increases are planned for July 2005 and July 2006.

Further, in 2000, federal, provincial and territorial governments reached an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement, including a federal transfer of C\$500 million per year in support of a range of ECD initiatives. In 2003, a Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care was approved to

specifically support early learning and childcare, including a federal contribution of C\$1.059 billion over 5 years. Also in 2003, the federally funded First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative and Aboriginal Head Start programmes provided over 17,500 early learning and childcare spaces for children in Aboriginal communities.

In 2003, a federal Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs report resulted in the creation of a number of government commitments, such as the creation of a national Women's Economic Forum, the development and planning of an Aboriginal Women's Business Planning Guide entitled *Journey to Success*, and a new Canadian Women's Innovation Award.

Canada is also working to ensure immigrant women and men are better enabled to successfully integrate into the labour market and other aspects of life in Canada. Efforts are being made to simplify processes for the recognition of foreign

credentials, to provide additional language training appropriate to labour market needs, and to provide immigrants with comprehensive information on occupational requirements.

The federal government and most provincial and territorial governments have adopted pay equity laws or policies. At the federal level, the report of a task force created to look at potential for improvements to pay equity measures is being considered by the government.

In terms of employment equity, strengthened federal legislation covering women, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities and Aboriginal people, that came into force in 1996 gave the Canadian Human Rights Commission the authority to conduct audits and gain compliance among federally regulated employers. As of March 31, 2002, 78 employers had been found in compliance although only eight had complied at the end of the initial audit. Of the remaining employers, the

majority signed undertakings to reach compliance.

Public pensions have been essential in reducing poverty among elderly women. The Canada and Quebec Pension Plans cover workers in all jurisdictions and provide retirement, survivor and disability benefits. They include provisions to help protect a contributor's benefits from periods of low or no earnings, including periods raising young children, credit-splitting and full indexation of benefits, features seldom available in private plans.

The other key component of Canada's retirement income system, the Old Age Security programme, includes support to low-income women, particularly through the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and the Allowance. These programmes are instrumental in improving the financial security of women by providing assistance to those with little or no other retirement income and are particularly important for women, who comprise 65% of GIS recipients and 91% of Allowance recipients.

Human Rights of Women and Violence Against Women

During the last decade, Canada has undertaken a number of initiatives to support the human rights of women including measures to address violence. In 2002, Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women released a report entitled *Assessing Violence Against Women: A Statistical Profile*, which indicated that the incidence and even the severity of spousal violence against women appears to have declined slightly over the past decade. This may be the result of several factors, including increased confidence in the administration of the criminal justice system (more reports to police), reduced societal tolerance for spousal violence, and the increased availability of shelters (from 18 in 1975 to 524 in 2002) and other needed services. In 2003, Ministers placed priority attention on the circumstances of Aboriginal women both on- and off-reserve, with violence as one of the priorities, and agreed to develop a plan of action to guide their work in this important area.

Box 38.2: Organisations and Action Groups

In Canada, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) have been among agencies that have supported gender-sensitive budgets in recent years. In 2002, CIDA participated in a meeting with a number of key international partners, governments/agencies, government officials and international development programme officers to generate knowledge and experience from agencies that have made significant contributions to gender-sensitive budgeting and to identify common issues and challenges. Areas for action were identified and ideas for follow-up shared. CIDA has some on-going projects on gender and budgets and it remains an area of interest for the department. The document 'Budgeting with a Gender Focus', was produced in 2001 and continues to reflect the approach of the Government of Canada. Given the recent commitments of Commonwealth Finance Ministers to report on furthering gender-responsive budget initiatives, further collaborative work in this area between SWC and Finance has begun.

Outside of government there are many Canadian NGOs actively working on gender-sensitive budget initiatives including the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). The CCPA co-ordinates the involvement of over 50 organisations across the country, representing social action groups and trade unions in an annual process known as the Alternative Federal Budget. It is a complete budget within a macroeconomic framework that is presented as a 'social alternative' to the Government's annual budget. The Alternative Federal Budget is used as a tool for civil society mobilisation within Canada.

In 1997, the Government of Canada confirmed its commitment to reduce family violence in Canada, particularly violence against women and their children through the Family Violence Initiative (FVI). The first five-year report of the FVI, completed in 2002, described progress achieved and affirmed the need to continue the course. The FVI continues to make significant advances in enhancing the national capacity for policy-relevant data collection and analysis as well as research and evaluation. As a result, policy-makers, researchers and community groups are better equipped with timely information to support action. SWC, as part of its contribution, has allocated its share of the FVI allocation of C\$1 million over four years (2003/04 to 2006/07) to national initiatives by Aboriginal women's organisations.

Eight provinces and territories have implemented civil domestic violence legislation that provides avenues of support for victims of domestic violence in addition to protections offered under the Criminal Code of Canada. Several jurisdictions have also created Domestic Violence Courts, which provide a range of specialised services, such as advocacy and support for women and children. These have expedited court processing, and provided better victim co-operation and support. Conviction rates have improved and appropriate sentencing has included treatment for abusers.

Criminal law reforms initiated since 2001 include measures to create a new offence of voyeurism, and stronger child pornography provisions. There is also increased protection for children from sexual exploitation through the creation of new offences to target criminals who use the Internet to lure and exploit children or who transmit, make available, export or intentionally access child pornography. In addition, reforms were made to help ensure that participating in the criminal justice system is less traumatic for the victim or witness.

The regulations supporting the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) address key areas to better protect women from violence. A sponsorship bar against sponsors in the Family Class exists where they have been found guilty of criminal convictions for offences related to bodily harm or the threat of bodily harm in the context of the family, including common-law and conjugal partners. A sponsorship bar also exists for those with criminal convictions related to crimes of a sexual nature, or an attempt or threat to commit such an offence against anyone. The federal government also provides information to immigrants and refugees emphasising that there are laws in place to protect women from violence and abuse. Funding is also available to immigrant and refugee service-providing agencies for referral to existing services in the community.

The policy development process of the

Box 38.3: Trafficking in Persons

In March 2004, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police announced that it would establish a human trafficking unit to co-ordinate domestic and international human trafficking investigations. Also announced at the same time was the review of the Criminal Code to assess the need for additional reforms to strengthen the criminal justice system's response to trafficking in persons (TIP). This review is on-going.

In March 2004, a training seminar on TIP for police, prosecutors, immigration, customs and consular officials, was co-hosted by the federal Department of Justice and the International Organisation for Migration. Also in 2004, the federal government launched an anti-trafficking poster to inform Canadians about human trafficking in Canada and explain that it is a serious crime. The poster will be distributed through police stations, victim's services, community centres, refugee and immigrant centres and other places throughout the country as well as overseas. The poster complements an anti-trafficking brochure that is also being distributed overseas in 14 languages.

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act includes offences with penalties including life imprisonment and/or a fine up to C\$1 million. In accordance with the Trafficking Protocol, sentencing considerations include the presence of aggravating circumstances, such as physical harm, degrading treatment and sexual exploitation, suffered by the trafficked person. There may be situations where a trafficking victim may seek protection in Canada as a refugee.

IRPA is an example of how legislative measures are being adopted in Canada to strengthen human rights protection. The IRPA provides that individuals subject to a removal order from Canada may request protection prior to removal to a country where they may be at risk. In the course of their training, officers responsible for these determinations are given extensive guidance on how to apply international conventions, including CEDAW, as well as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Guidelines on Gender-Based Persecution. Sensitivity to protection issues affecting women, children, and in relation to sexual orientation is also provided. Further, IRPA includes new offences relating to trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling (see Box 38.3, this page).

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

The Canadian Government is committed to building a society, which is inclusive and respectful of all Canadians. International agreements including the BPIA, Commonwealth PoA 1995 and its Update (2000–2005) have been important catalysts for progress towards equality. Canada's Federal Plan for Gender Equality, adopted in 1995, includes a government-wide gender-based analysis policy and over 300 commitments by a wide range of departments and agencies. The Federal Plan presented eight objectives, all linked to the twelve critical areas in the BPIA.

In 2000, the Government of Canada, building upon the foundation of actions taken under the Federal Plan for Gender Equality, approved the Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE) as a government-wide initiative to advance women's equality. The components of the AGE initiative include: engendering current and new policy and programme initiatives; accelerating implementation of gender-based analysis commitments; enhancing voluntary sector capacity; engaging Canadians in the policy process in a sustained, structured manner; and meeting Canada's international commitments and treaty obligations.

AGE is led by SWC, in co-operation with

other federal departments, including Justice Canada, Social Development Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and Health Canada. This interdepartmental framework for AGE highlights the importance of working horizontally across federal departments and in collaboration with various partners from both the public and private sectors to address gender issues and current gaps in public policy and programming.

National Women's Machinery

Canada has had a federal Minister Responsible for the Status of Women since 1971, following the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women which recommended establishing a policy agenda to achieve women's equality with the necessary structures and mechanisms to sustain progress over time. The Minister acts to ensure women's concerns are an integral part of government decision-making. Since 1976, a number of federal departments and agencies have

established mechanisms to integrate women's concerns into policy formulation. The creation of SWC in 1976 was a major step in this development.

As the federal government department mandated to 'co-ordinate policy with respect to the status of women and to administer related programmes, SWC provides leadership, expertise and strategic advice to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and to other federal departments and agencies on issues affecting women. Through policy research, analysis and development, international and intergovernmental activities, and communication, SWC actively promotes gender equality, the integration of gender equality in all federal government initiatives, and the full participation of all women in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.

In 1995, SWC assumed new funding, research and additional public information responsibilities. The Women's Programme (established in 1973), within SWC as of 1995, is the primary source of financial and technical assistance to women's and other equality-seeking organisations working to advance gender equality. SWC's regional structure allows it to establish and maintain contact with women's organisations across the country. In addition, SWC's Policy and External Relations Directorate, guided by AGE, works in collaboration with other government departments to address gender issues in their programming and policy development. Through its Policy Research Fund, the department also

Canada GBA training in South Africa



supports independent, nationally relevant forward-thinking policy research on gender equality issues, policy gaps, and emerging trends.

Following the adoption of the federal Gender-based Analysis (GBA) policy within the 1995 Federal Plan for Gender Equality, SWC created a GBA directorate in 1999 to increase the understanding and the use of the federal policy on GBA as well as to enhance department's use of GBA through capacity-building (see Box 38.4, this page).

Partnerships

Under the Canadian Constitution, the provinces and territories have primary jurisdiction in the areas of education, the administration of justice, social services and health care delivery. The advancement of women's equality is thus largely influenced by actions taken by provincial and territorial governments. Municipal governments also have an important role to play in addressing gender equality issues. Among other recommendations, the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women called for close partnership among governments to foster gender equality.

There are Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women at federal, provincial, and territorial levels supported by government mechanisms dedicated to advancing women's concerns. Many jurisdictions also have government-funded, arm's-length advisory councils on women.

Collaboration among the federal, provincial and territorial governments is undertaken through the FPT forum of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. Meeting on an annual basis since 1982, the FPT Ministers, among other things, work together on policy issues and raise public awareness in areas of concern to women, providing leadership in promoting women's equality across Canada. They have addressed issues such as violence against women, education and training, gender equality in the justice system, work and family balance, and women's economic future. They have also collaborated with other FPT ministerial fora to advance women's and girls' equality.

Canada has a well-developed network of over 1,500 women's organisations as

Box 38.4: Mainstreaming Gender Analysis

In Canada's Federal Plan for Gender Equality, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that all future legislation and policies include, where appropriate, an analysis of the potential for different impacts on women and men. This was reiterated in the Agenda for Gender Equality, the strategy adopted by the Government in 2000 to advance gender equality and which builds on the Plan. Using a multi-faceted approach, Status of Women Canada (SWC) can address critical gaps in gender equality in a deliberate, strategic manner, in a structured and measurable way to achieve concrete results and create strengthened accountability mechanisms and tools.

SWC provides the lead and vision of the Gender-based Analysis (GBA) planning and implementation process across the Government of Canada. SWC's goal is to provide a common understanding of GBA, promote the use of common tools, processes and indicators, and demonstrate how to achieve better policy and programme outcomes that support gender equality. The role of the Gender-based Analysis Directorate within SWC is to encourage and assist federal departments, agencies and other interested parties to set up their own processes to ensure that GBA is incorporated into all of their policy and programme development activities.

Practical experience is starting to show that individual capacity-building is not sufficient to ensure sustainability of GBA. SWC is, therefore, moving toward the promotion and support of an organisational capacity-building approach.

well as equality-seeking groups, which play a significant role in progress toward gender equality. They contribute to setting local, regional and national agendas for gender equality, provide direct services to women and children and educate all sectors of the public and government on issues relevant to gender equality. The importance of violence against women on the public policy agenda is an excellent example of how women's voices and experiences have shaped legislation, policies and programmes in recent years.

SWC's network of regional representatives maintains regular contact with such organisations across the country and provincial and territorial governments operate similarly in their jurisdictions. Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women also meet with a wide variety of organisations. Consultation provides the government with information about the ideas and concerns of Canadian women on public policy issues affecting them. For example, SWC organised a roundtable on gender and homelessness in 2000 to discuss the gender implications of national data collection relating to women's transition houses. Women's organisations also participate in public consultations organised by other parts of government, for example, the consultation on the annual federal budget which was organised by the Department of Finance. Canada regularly includes NGO partners as part of official government delegations to international meetings, such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Concerns for the Future

Canada's main gender equality challenges include continuing to learn from, and build on, its own and others' experiences; accelerating GBA and gender mainstreaming activities and ensuring demonstrable results; identifying and addressing gaps in relation to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable women, particularly Aboriginal women; and improving accountability mechanisms.

While Canadian women have made many gains towards equality, especially in the formal sense, governments in Canada recognise that full substantive equality has yet to be achieved. Due to a public environment that largely perceives women's issues as 'solved', it proves difficult to mobilise adequate political attention and economic resources. Many challenges remain, both long-standing and new, including the fact that within positive overall trends for women, not all women are benefiting and some continue to be seriously disadvantaged or at risk of facing further barriers. The CEDAW Committee, at the presentation of Canada's 5th report in January 2003, for example, highlighted a number of issues of continuing concern, including poverty among women, the situation of Aboriginal women, trafficked women, live-in care-givers and the implementation of GBA across the federal government.

End Note

¹ Further information on Canada's work can be found at the SWC website www.swc-cfc.gc.ca

Dominica

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile

	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	82	73	73
Female population (% of total)	..	..	50
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	..	..	..
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	..	27.2	..
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	..	..	..
Male	..	..	..
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	..	..	90
Male	..	..	93
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	..	..	84
Male	..	..	78
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	..	..	..
Male	..	..	..
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	75	77	78
Male	71	73	74
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	19	17	14
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	..	..	..
Male	..	..	..

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2002 (2000)

.. Figures not available

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Dominica has identified the following, in order of priority, for national action:

1. Women and Poverty
 2. Violence Against Women
 3. The Girl-child
 4. Women and Health
 5. Education and Training of Women
- Followed by: 6. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women; 7. Women and the Economy; 8. Women in Power and Decision-making; 9. Human Rights of Women; 10. Women in the Media; 11. Women and the Environment; 12. Women and Armed Conflict.

A Decade of Action

Dominica was one of the earliest Commonwealth countries to accede to CEDAW (1980). Its National Women's Machinery (NWM) is the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs.

Women and Poverty

Attempts are being made to integrate a gender perspective into national plans and programmes, specifically targeting impoverished women in poverty alleviation programmes. The National Development Foundation, which provides credit for small enterprise development, has encouraged women to access credit and been rewarded with an increase in numbers.

The Rural Enterprise Project has also sought to incorporate rural women in its programmes; however, reports indicate that greater focus is needed on women's employability and access to factors of production, such as land titles, which will help raise their productivity.

Through the 2003 Poverty Assessment Survey there is a better understanding of gender issues in health, education and the economy which are important to development goals. Recommendations will be included in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The National Council of Women umbrella organisation was represented on the Poverty Assessment

Many small states still rely on banana export which has been affected by globalisation. A facility for women to access credit for small development has been set up

Committee. The NWM was not invited to participate.

The Poverty Reduction Social Investment Programme targets vulnerable groups, especially poor women. The Government is also committed to a Land Registration Project which will facilitate land ownership and enable female as well as male landowners to raise the necessary capital for investment.

Violence Against Women

More women as well as men speak out against domestic violence. The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2001) has been passed and the police trained to handle reports. Other legislation introduced includes the Sexual Offences Act which deals with sexual abuse of the girl-child. A Legal Aid Clinic serves low-income women who wish to report violence. Various awareness programmes have introduced greater understanding on the causes and problems of domestic violence.

Women and Health

Much attention has been given to programmes relating to the reproductive health of women. A Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV Prevention Programme has been running for five years. Men have also been specifically targeted for awareness programmes. Dominica is rated second highest among Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECES) in absolute numbers of HIV/AIDS cases.

Women in Power and Decision-making

An increasing number of women are taking leadership positions in government administration and some professions, such as law, medicine and business. About 10% of Permanent Secretaries are women, and 81% at the next level down (Assistant Secretary). At the time of reporting, 12 out of 32 policewomen hold senior positions; and 10 of 15 secondary school principals and 14 of 44 medical officers are women.

In terms of political representation,



Dominica had 2 female ministers and one Parliamentary Secretary at the time of reporting. At the time of reporting, there were no female ministers. Two appointed women sit on the government benches in the Senate and two on the Opposition's. The Speaker of the House of Assembly is a woman. Women make up more than 50% of six village councils and are in substantial numbers in the two municipal councils.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

Dominica is aware that it has to strengthen the capacity of its NWM through increased resources and better networking/collaboration if women are to advance. Although it is under-resourced, the NWM has been strengthened since 1995. The Women's Bureau has also enhanced its networking with local, regional and international agencies which has improved its information sharing and overall service delivery.

National Women's Machinery

A Women's Desk was established in 1980, with a staff of one – the Director. It has gradually evolved into the Women's Bureau, which is now the NWM, and has 6 staff. During its existence it has shifted

location from the Community Development and Social Affairs section of the Economic Development Unit in the Prime Minister's Office and is now in the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs. It was also dormant for some period but was revived in 1997.

The Women's Bureau is one of 6 departments in the ministry. A National Advisory Committee provides guidance and advice and the core bureau staff consists of the Director, Co-ordinator for Research and Programme Development, Field Officer, Field Assistant and two support staff.

The budget allocation for the Women's Bureau has been significantly reduced given the current economic and fiscal situation. It was reduced from EC\$271,919 to EC\$258,171 in 2003/04. The bureau receives the smallest share among all the departments of the ministry. Over the past few years, however, many of the Bureau's programmes have been funded by various donor agencies.

The original role of the Women's Bureau was envisaged as primarily co-ordinating and catalytic. Collaborative work has always been its prime mechanism for action, especially with limited financial and human resources. Its strategic objectives up to 2005 embrace four major programme areas: institutional strengthening, gender planning and analysis, entrepreneurial

development and advocacy. Work has begun in all areas but is far from complete and will have to be incorporated into the next five-year plan for the Bureau. More staff would strengthen the Bureau.

Despite its constraints, the Bureau has had some notable successes. In 2001, after much advocacy and lobbying, it influenced the enactment of the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act and has forged a closer relationship with the police on this issue. The Bureau also influenced the amendments to the Marriage Act (2001) which raised the weekly allowance per child from EC\$50 to EC\$75.

The Bureau offers counselling services to women, men and their families, has a fortnightly Talking Gender radio programme, and organises education campaigns and events such as the Day to Reject Violence against Women and International Women's Day.

A draft National Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming has been formulated, and forwarded to the ministry for submission to the Cabinet. Three national symposia have been held to illustrate the importance of gender mainstreaming. Senior appointments have been made in the ministry to assist in the introduction and management of a Gender Management System.

Through the multi-sectoral Advisory Committee, key departments make input on important issues and the Bureau's programme. The Bureau's Director also sits on several committees which plan or deliver services which impact on women and families. The Bureau hopes to improve collaboration with various agencies when the inter-sectoral national committee (part of the gender management system) is set up through the National Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming.

Partnerships

The Women's Bureau works closely on gender issues with regional and international organisations such as UNECLAC, UNIFEM, UNICEF, the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action and the Commonwealth Secretariat. It also works with local women's organisations, especially the umbrella organisation, the Dominica National Council of Women. The Bureau's Field Assistant works specifically with senior citizens and the Dominica Council on Ageing. Similar collaboration in the Rural Enterprise Project impacts on rural women and the Bureau's Director is a member of the board of directors of the National Development Fund which provides credit for small enterprise development.

The Bureau has used publications and other resource materials from the Commonwealth Secretariat in formulating the draft National Plan for Action for Gender Mainstreaming. The Bureau hopes to source expertise from the Commonwealth to take this plan forward.

Concerns for the Future

With single parents, especially teenage mothers, comprising the majority group among the 39% living below the poverty line, women and poverty will continue to be an area of focus. Rural women also need to be empowered if they are to lift themselves out of poverty. Gender mainstreaming will ensure that gender issues and concerns are incorporated into national and sectoral policies, plans and programmes.

Dominica also wishes to focus on violence against women and the girl-child, as well as women's economic empowerment and health (especially HIV/AIDS) issues.

Grenada

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile 1990 1995 2000

	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	91	94	98
Female population (% of total)	..	..	51.5
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	..	..	..
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	12.7	37.1	21.2
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	..	..	..
Male	..	..	..
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	..	..	80
Male	..	..	89
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	..	..	..
Male	..	..	..
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	..	..	..
Male	..	..	..
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	..	75	76
Male	..	69	69
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	30	26	21
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	..	..	..
Male	..	..	..

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2002 (2000)

.. Figures not available

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Grenada has identified the following, in order of priority, for national action:

1. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
 2. Women and Poverty
 3. Education and Training of Women
 4. Violence Against Women
 5. Women and Health
- Followed by: 6. Women and the Economy; 7. Women in Power and Decision-making; 8. Human Rights of Women; 9. Women in the Media; 10. Women and the Environment.

A Decade of Action

Grenada, the most southern of the Windward Islands in the Eastern Caribbean, signed CEDAW in 1980 and acceded to it in 1990. Its National Women's Machinery (NWM) is the Division of Gender and Family Affairs in the Ministry of Social Development.

Women in Poverty, the Economy, and Education and Training

In the agriculture sector, with the decline in global demand, and therefore prices, of bananas, cocoa and nutmeg, many women, especially single parents, have become underemployed or unemployed. This has left many women exposed to domestic violence, prostitution and migration.

Some women follow tradition and look after the house and children; more, however, are now becoming educated and able to hold well-paid jobs. Others have started managing their own businesses with the assistance of the Micro-Enterprise Unit, 75% of whose loans went to women. The National Development Foundation has also offered training to women in many skills areas. There are some reports that women are taking up non-traditional pursuits such as building, drafting, brick-laying, masonry and car mechanics.

Grenada's Beijing +5 report stated that 91% of girls attained primary school education in 1995. The percentage of girls

More women in Grenada are becoming educated and holding jobs

enrolled in secondary school was 58.6%, against 41.1% for boys. Opportunities are therefore given for access to non-formal education to raise literacy rates.

Women and Health

Specific programmes for women have been on reproductive health, family planning, cancer, health services, ante-, post- and intra-natal care, and immunisation services. There is also some concern over rising HIV/AIDS infection rates, especially in the 15–24 year age group. Campaigns to raise awareness of the disease and safe sexual practices are conducted.

Violence Against Women

The NWM has undertaken many activities in collaboration with NGOs to sensitise people to the problems and causes of violence against women and child abuse. In the past, due to societal norms and cultural influences, family members, neighbours and even the victims were constrained from speaking out and reporting domestic problems. Now, however, the issue is being discussed in public, victims have come forward to describe their experiences, and reports on all forms of abuse are increasing.

The NWM has also set up Domestic Violence and Special Victims Units.

Women in Power and Decision-making

Since December 2003, Grenada has attained the 30% target of female representation in the Lower House of Parliament. The proportion in the Upper House already stands at 42% (5 out of 13).



There are currently 6 women Cabinet Ministers out of a total of 13, holding key portfolios such as: Communications, Works and Labour; Youth and Development; Tourism, Civil Aviation, Culture and the Performing Arts.

National Women's Machinery

Before 1999, the NWM was known as the Division of Women's Affairs. The NWM is headed by the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for gender and family affairs and comprises 4 Co-ordinators, one of whom is Co-ordinator of the Domestic Violence Unit.

Among the NWM's notable successes are the development of a National Gender Policy Framework, and establishment of Domestic Violence and Special Victims Units.

The NWM works especially closely with the Department of Social Services.

Partnerships

Close collaboration with civil society and NGOs has resulted in public commemoration, since 1999, of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Grenada also works with regional and international organisations, such as CARICOM and the Commonwealth Secretariat, on development and gender

equality issues. It has used Secretariat publications and material as tools to understand and promote gender perspectives, and further benefited from information exchange at workshops and meetings.

Concerns for the Future

Grenada is working towards the development of a National Gender Policy which will provide a clear statement of a course of action. Reform of legislation is also important for gender equality.

Guyana

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile 1990 1995 2000

POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	798	835	761
Female population (% of total)	51.3	51.4	51.5
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	31	33	34
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	18.1	..	..
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	3.6	2.8	1.9
Male	2.0	1.4	1.1
Gross primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	93	87	97
Male	93	87	100
Gross secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	73	68	72
Male	68	64	68
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	5	9	..
Male	6	10	..
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	67	68	67
Male	60	60	59
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)			
	65	61	55
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	..	..	4
Male	..	..	3.3

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2002 (2000)

.. Figures not available.

Priority Concerns

The Government of Guyana's critical areas of concern under its National Plan of Action, which also link with components of the Beijing Platform for Action, are:

- Women and Poverty
- Education and Training
- Women and Health
- Violence Against Women
- Women in Power and Decision-making
- Women with Disabilities
- Situation of Indigenous Women
- The Girl Child.

A Decade of Action

Enshrined in the 1980 Constitution of Guyana is the recognition by the Government of Guyana of the principle of equality for women and men. This has been reinforced with the ratification of international instruments such as CEDAW (1980) and various constitutional and legislative reforms which were subsequently enacted.

The Women's Affairs Bureau in the Ministry of Human Services, Social Security and Labour is the *de facto* co-ordinating mechanism for all policy implementation relating to gender equality.

Guyana is ranked at 81 in the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) in the *UNDP Human Development Report 2004*.

Human Rights of Women

Guyana's legislative framework has, to a large extent, made provision for women to have equality, that is, under the law women are entitled to equal occupational opportunities, health and safety programmes and facilities, the same right to vote and the same wage structure as men. While gender equality has not yet been fully achieved, significant advances have been made, constrained only by traditional patriarchal, social and cultural attitudes, and poor economic growth.

Significant legislative reforms have enhanced the legal status of women – the decade of the 1990s stands out as being the most important for women's rights in Guyana. That period witnessed the passage of a number of Acts, many in conformity with CEDAW:

- Married Persons Amendment Act (1990);
- Family and Dependents Provision Act (1990);
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (1995);
- Equal Rights Act (1990);
- Domestic Violence Act (1996);
- Prevention of Discrimination Act (1997);
- Maintenance Amendment Act (1997).

The Prevention of Discrimination Act, which provides for the elimination of gender discrimination, particularly in the areas of employment, training, recruitment and membership of professional bodies, is especially significant. It has opened up opportunities for women entering traditional male-oriented or dominated fields. It also extends the provisions of the Equal Rights Acts by promoting 'equal remuneration to men and women in employment who perform work of equal value'. Under it, no discrimination shall be tolerated on the grounds of race, sex, religion, ethnic origin, family responsibilities, pregnancy, and marital or economic status.

The Act provides protection against unlawful discrimination, discrimination in employment; and discrimination in the provision of goods, services and facilities. It also promotes equality in remuneration. The legislation is extended to both public and private sector employees.

Despite Guyana's legislative reform programme, the goal of the eradication of all discriminatory customs and practices has yet to be attained. Unfortunately, it has been observed that both the Equal Rights Act and the Prevention of Discrimination Act have been minimally used by women to assert their rights.

Women in Power and Decision-making

Under the Constitutional Reform process in the late 1990s, provision was made to put in place mechanisms to ensure a substantial increase in women's representation in Parliament. Specific recommendations were made for a mandatory one-third representation of



women on the lists of all political parties contesting the General Election and Regional Elections in 2001.

While no provision was made to set aside a proportion of places for women on each list to represent parties in Parliament under the proportional representation system, there has been a significant increase in women's representation in Parliament. At the time of reporting, there are 20 women (30.7%) of 65 parliamentarians, an increase of 15.1% from 1997. One of these women is Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.

The number of women holding ministerial office has also increased from 2 (14.2%) to 4 or (21%) representing a 6.8% increase. For the first time in the history of Guyana a woman of Amerindian background holds ministerial office. She has been assigned the portfolio of Amerindian Affairs.

Though there was an improvement in women's representation at some senior levels in the Public Service between 1993 and 2003, their numbers are still relatively low. There are, however, indications that women are overtaking men at the middle level of management. In 2003, women accounted for 52% of all such positions compared to 42% in 1993. Women continue to dominate at the lower levels of the Public Service.

In 1997, the Government established a Women's Leadership Institute which works towards increasing the participation of women leaders in local government, community development, environmental activities, business and other fields. Under the UNDP-funded project, Building Capacity for Gender Equality in Good Governance, the institute works with the supporting resources of the National Resource and Documentation Centre (established 1998) under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Services, Social Security and Labour.

National Women's Machinery

Three bodies are key to the implementation of measures on gender equality:

- The Women's Affairs Bureau, within the Ministry of Human Services, Social Security and Labour, is the *de facto* co-ordinating mechanism for all policy implementation relating to gender equality;
- The Inter-Ministry Committee on Gender was formed under the aegis of the Women's Affairs Bureau and it is the responsibility of committee members to ensure that the programmes of their respective

Guyana has programmes to advance the progress of its Amerindians, especially women, seen here in the Iwokrama rainforest environmental project

ministries and agencies are gender-sensitive and conform to the policy of non-discrimination;

- The Women and Gender Equality Commission (formerly the National Commission of Women).

The Women's Affairs Bureau has organised various programmes to address the question of gender equality and discrimination, while also sensitising the general public to the issues involved.

Training programmes are organised for women to develop skills that will enable them to compete in the job market.

The issues of women with disabilities and the situation of indigenous women are of special concern to the Government and action has been initiated to determine the needs of women in these two critical areas.

Gender mainstreaming has also been introduced in the planning processes of major developmental sectors. A section on Women, Gender and Development forms part of the National Development Strategy which was presented to the Ministry of Finance and has since been put before Parliament. This initiative seeks to integrate women's needs, interests and concerns in the wider spectrum of the economic and social development of the country. Other gender mainstreaming initiatives, reiterate the need to address both



women's practical and strategic needs as different from those of men.

In 1996 a National Policy on Women in Guyana was approved by Parliament. In 1999, a National Plan of Action was drawn up reflecting a number of concerns (see *Priority Concerns, above*). This Plan is being revised and updated.

Concerns for the Future

Guyana is experiencing a number of difficulties in its attempts to attain the Millennium Development Goals, largely due to slow economic growth. However, the goal on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women remains important.

In general terms there has been steady progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. For example, gender disparities in school enrolment

and education have largely been eradicated, and action taken to remove gender stereotyping from schoolbooks. As already noted, there has been an increase in women's participation in Parliament and at some levels of the Public Service. Reforming legislation has also been put in place. However, there is very much more to be achieved in areas such as violence against women.

Jamaica

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile

	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	2,390	2,532	2,633
Female population (% of total)	51	50.8	50.8
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	46	46	46
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	23.1	22.5	22.5
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	13.9	11.3	9.3
Male	22	19.4	17.1
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	96	..	95
Male	96	..	95
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	65	..	76
Male	62	..	73
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	6	7	21
Male	8	9	11
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	75	76	77
Male	71	73	73
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)			
	17	17	17
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	..	..	0.6
Male	..	..	0.4

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2002 (2000)

.. Figures not available

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Jamaica has identified the following, in order of priority, for national action:

1. Violence Against Women
 2. Women in Poverty
 3. Women and Health
 4. Human Rights of Women
 5. Education and Training of Women
- Followed by: 6. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women; 7. Women in Power and Decision-making; 8. Women and the Economy; 9. The Girl-child.

A Decade of Action

Jamaica, the third largest island in the Caribbean, has a relatively large and diversified economy. The country became a signatory to CEDAW in 1980 and acceded to it in 1984. The Bureau of Women's Affairs in the Cabinet Office of the Office of the Prime Minister is the National Women's Machinery (NWM). Jamaica is ranked at 62 in the Gender-related Index (GDI) in the *UNDP Human Development Report 2004*.

Violence Against Women

Between 2001 and 2003, the incidence of crime and violence remained high. Over 120 women and children were murdered; violence, specifically against women, ranked high in crime statistics, with sexual abuse and domestic violence prevalent.

In that period, there were 15,440 cases of domestic violence, nearly three-quarters of them in rural areas, unlike other violent crime, including murder, which is more urban-centred. The spatial distribution of domestic violence indicates that it cuts across all social, economic and geographic boundaries.

Although the age of consent is 16, the number of reports of rape and sexual abuse of girls below that age is increasing. Another disturbing trend is the exploitation of women and girls through rape that occurs in some inner city communities; many families are threatened and terrorised if they do not hand over their teenage girls to community leaders, known as 'dons', who demand sex.

A worker in Jamaica... women are encouraged to be more self-reliant economically

National AIDS Committee statistics confirm that sexual abuse of young girls is on the increase, leading to a significant rise in HIV infections among young girls who are now three to six times more likely to be infected than their male counterparts.

Initiatives to combat this violence include an inter-agency campaign involving the NWM and NGOs which focused on work with the police, media, justice system and arranged chat sessions with children. Videos with strong messages on incest and domestic violence have been distributed; the media approached about appropriate portrayal on issues of violence and sex; and the police trained in domestic violence intervention.

Legislation is to be amended to stiffen penalties for offenders and a Sexual Harassment Act proposed. Child care and protection legislation is also proposed.

In 2000 and 2001, there was a 6.4% increase in female visits to hospitals for sexual assault, while visits by males declined by 30.6%. Reports of carnal abuse in 2001 were 41% fewer than in 1997. The number of cases of incest reported in 2001 was the highest since 1997.

Women and Poverty

The 1997 National Poverty Eradication Policy and Programme had as its priorities eliminating conditions leading to poverty in the most deprived communities, targeting interventions among specific vulnerable groups, and reforming the social safety net and income transfer programmes to emphasise a shift from 'welfare' to a developmental approach.

One of the main programmes in the reform process is the Programme for Advancement Through Health and Education, which targets 236,000 poor persons, including children (0–17 years), and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Assistance is also given, through a micro-enterprise financing scheme, to potential women entrepreneurs unable to otherwise get loans because they are at the bottom of the economic scale. The Rural Agriculture Development Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture provides



technical assistance to women for improving the quality of life in rural areas.

Over the past 5 years, programmes have targeted poor and rural women to be economically empowered through greater self-reliance. Women in agriculture are engaged in a wide range of activities including cultivation, casual labour, hawking and trading. The majority of female farmers work smallholdings for cash crops or subsistence production. On the technical and administrative side, women are employed as agricultural extension officers, food processors, agronomists, economists, technicians and administrators.

More women have been encouraged to train in non-traditional skills and in the professions. Notably, the Government and the Inter-American Development Bank trained 400 low-income women in masonry, tiling, bricklaying, welding, carpentry, joinery, plumbing, painting, electrical installation, and car and computer repairs, among other things to increase opportunities for income-generation.

Women and Health

HIV/AIDS is now a developmental issue. In 2001, 939 new HIV cases were reported, 511 male and 428 female. Of these, 66% were children. The National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS/STI 2002–2006 adopts a multi-sectoral approach and the NWM has reviewed it to ensure a gendered approach is taken.

The strategic plan seeks to reduce by 2005 the new infections rate for HIV, with a particular focus on the vulnerable 15–24 year age group, and other vulnerable groups such as girls aged 15–19, especially in transactional or coercive relationships, sex workers and their clients, males who do not practice safe sex and their partners, homosexual males, bisexuals and their partners, prisoners, persons infected with STIs and their partners, and young persons in inner cities. The aim of the plan is to empower women to be able to negotiate safe sex, thus reducing their vulnerability to infection.

Media programmes to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS, safe sex, treatments and delaying sexual debuts have been carried out. Greater access to anti-retroviral drugs has also been provided, especially to pregnant women in an effort to decrease mother-to-child transmission. More health care workers have been trained.

Over the past 10 years, Jamaica AIDS Support, a voluntary organisation, has continued its mandate to 'love, care, support' those for whom there has been a reluctance to care for and treat (i.e., persons who have been ostracised by virtue of their HIV status or overtly risky lifestyles). Its activities include helping those who are HIV-positive to make a living.

There is no legislation yet which specifically addresses HIV/AIDS. A number of issues are being discussed, however, including discrimination against persons with AIDS in schools and the workplace.

Chart 42.1: Organisational Structure of Jamaica's NWM



Women in Power and Decision-making

Women have led political parties in Jamaica, but as of October 2002, only 18% of the Cabinet, 19% of the Senate and 10% of Members of Parliament were female. They are also under-represented in local government, with 1998 figures showing females making up 28% of mayors, 15% of deputy mayors and 26% of councillors. A woman is President of the Senate but women are still given the 'softer' Cabinet portfolios which are traditionally considered more socially oriented or 'nurturing'.

Women, however, are increasing in numbers at senior levels in the public sector. In 2002, 10 of 16 Permanent Secretaries were female, as were both Directors-General. In the Central Bank, while 2 of the 3 top positions were held by males, the rest of the corporate hierarchy is dominated by females except at the clerical level.

Men continue to dominate the leadership positions in statutory organisations (72%), the police and at the top levels of the judiciary and prosecution service.

In the private sector, there are very few women at the corporate boardroom level, on planning committees and even on school boards. The trade union movement is also male-dominated.

National Women's Machinery

The NWM was originally located in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Sport in 1989, transferred to the Ministry of Tourism and Sport in 2000, and in 2002 moved to the Cabinet Office in the Office of the Prime Minister where it is located in the Development Division. It is headed by an Executive Director with 24 staff positions.

The primary focus of the NWM in 1995 centred around research and policy development, public education and training, and project planning and monitoring. Since then it has seen changes in its organisational structure and strategic responses. Following a 1996 evaluation, the Bureau shifted its

emphasis from a typical project-oriented approach to being more policy-focused.

A public sector management audit in 2002 led to recommendations that policy development functions should be enhanced and the Bureau's structure was further adjusted.

The budget allocations for the NWM over the past few years have been: J\$19.8 million (2001/02), J\$28.9 million (2002/03), J\$28.85 million (2003/04). There is no specific budget for gender mainstreaming from the Finance Ministry but the NWM allots funds from its general budget according to its programme objectives which include gender mainstreaming activities.

The NWM has close relations with the rest of the Cabinet Office with which it works on policy-related strategic issues, including the training of policy analysts on gender issues. It also works closely with the Legal Reform Department of the Ministry of Justice on the drafting and amending of laws.

Partnerships

The NWM works with a number of women's NGOs to advance gender equality. They include: the Jamaica Women's Political Caucus, Women's Media Watch, Women's Crisis Centre, Women's Outreach and Resource Centre, Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation and Centre for Gender and Development Studies. Together they organised workshops/seminars on issues such as violence against women and gender mainstreaming; training for women in public leadership and representative politics; and lobbying and advocacy for legislative reform and research initiatives.

Assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat has included training of health professionals and policy makers, Ministry of Finance and Planning officials and the NWM in Gender Management Systems (1998). The Secretariat has also provided training materials, reference guides and technical assistance.

Concerns for the Future

Women and poverty will be important challenge for Jamaica, especially in its current economic circumstances with its primary/low value-added products, such as sugar, bananas and garments, which employ many women. Jamaica is still not competitive in other economic areas. Constraints include a level of crime and violence that dictate high insurance rates and security costs for businesses.

HIV/AIDS is a growing concern. More public education is needed for girls aged 14–19 about the dangers of unprotected sex. Young men also need to be sensitised on these issues with a view to balancing male/female sexual power relations. There is growing evidence that the sex industry is being institutionalised with children of both sexes being involved in increasing numbers. This makes the anti-HIV/AIDS campaign more difficult.

Violence against women continues to be a major social and human rights problem, despite the initiatives at government, private and NGO levels.

St Kitts and Nevis

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile

	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	40	41	41
Female population (% of total)	--	--	--
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	--	--	--
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	--	--	--
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	--	--	--
Male	31.3	25.8	20.9
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	--	--	100
Male	--	--	91
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	--	--	100
Male	--	--	83
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	--	--	--
Male	--	--	--
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	69	72	73
Male	65	67	68
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)			
	30	25	21
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15-24)			
Female	--	--	--
Male	--	--	--

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2003 (2002)

-- Figures not available

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of St Kitts and Nevis places priority on the following:

1. Education and Training of Women
 2. Women in Power and Decision-making
 3. Violence Against Women
 4. Women in Poverty
 5. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
- Followed by: 6. Women and the Economy; 7. The Girl-child; 8. Human Rights of Women; 9. Women and Health; 10. Women in the Media; 11. Women and the Environment; 12. Women in Armed Conflict.

A Decade of Action

St Kitts and Nevis, in the northern part of the Leeward Islands group, acceded to CEDAW in 1985 and has submitted combined initial second, third and fourth periodic reports. The National Women's Machinery (NWM) is the Department of Gender Affairs located in the Ministry of Community, Social Development and Gender Affairs.

Some progress has been made in the advancement of gender equality since accession to CEDAW. Despite gains in the material dimension by women, however, there are fewer gains in the ideological dimension: the portrayal of women in the media, treatment of women in interpersonal relationships and perception of women's roles are areas still in need of significant change.

The NWM reports that its work is constrained by its limitations (see *National Women's Machinery, below*) and culturally entrenched values. Efforts to facilitate change have included a male-specific programme, since working with men is integral to the dismantling of patriarchy and the realisation of gender equality.

Education and Training of Women

At the primary level, the enrolment ratio of females to males is almost equal, and at the secondary and tertiary levels, females outnumber males. Yet women continue to earn significantly less than

Box 43.1: Skills Training and Personal Development

Among the initiatives introduced by the National Women's Machinery of St Kitts and Nevis are:

Workforce Development

Under the project A Healthy Workforce is a Productive Workforce, employees in the manufacturing sector (98% of whom are low income-earning women) receive skills training and participate in personal development sessions on topical issues such as family planning and HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

In collaboration with other partners, the NWM has expanded the programme to include eye screening and the training of two persons in each establishment in basic health screening (e.g., for blood pressure) to facilitate health checks on the job.

Women in this sector are also able to access the counselling and mediation services of the Ministry of Community, Social Development and Gender Affairs at its satellite office located close to the industrial estate.

The programme also challenges society's negative views of women who work in the manufacturing sector. This is done by naming streets after long-serving employees and organising Christmas concerts which give employees an opportunity to showcase other talents.

Project Viola

In 1997, the Government approved a policy that gave teenage mothers the right to complete their secondary school education. The NWM then introduced Project Viola, a programme to support teenage mothers by providing them with emotional and, to some extent, financial support.

Each summer, UNICEF funds a programme in which teenage mothers are taught life skills, trained in marketing and tutored in areas of need within the school curriculum. A number of teenage mothers have returned to high school, and several others are pursuing tertiary education or are working.

In 2004, the summer programme was expanded to include four weeks of training in cosmetology. With assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency, a small salon was established at the Women's Training Centre which will be used by teenage mothers wishing to learn this skill.

The private sector has supported Project Viola, responding well to requests to provide educational scholarships for teenage mothers. It has also welcomed participants of the programme as interns during school vacations.

their male counterparts; they are positioned in larger numbers at the lower end of the labour market and constitute 59.3% of the poor. Women are also under-represented at many decision-making levels.

The NWM's top priority has been to provide skills training to help women increase their income-earning capacity. Each training programme has self-development and management components. These programmes introduce participants to financial agencies such as the Small Enterprise Development Unit and the Foundation for National Development and show them how to manage small to medium-scale businesses.

Programmes conducted by the Adult and Continuing Education Division include a Hospitality Entrepreneurship Skills Project which was undertaken in mid-2004.

Women in Power and Decision-making

Few women hold political office. At the time of reporting, St Kitts and Nevis had only two female parliamentarians out of 15 at the federal level and one female in a local island assembly of seven members. There are no female ambassadors.

To attract more women to stand for political office, St Kitts and Nevis is participating in an Organisation of American States (OAS) project, Women's Political Participation and Training in Democracy and Governance. In this project, public awareness of the need for women's participation will be raised, and training and support provided to women wishing to pursue political careers or aim for other decision-making positions.

In the light of national elections expected in 2005, the project leaders prepared a Women's Issues Manifesto highlighting women's concerns and making recommendations in areas such as poverty alleviation, gender mainstreaming, domestic violence, health issues, especially HIV/AIDS, and women's leadership and decision-making roles.

This manifesto was presented to each political party on 25 August 2004 and an invitation extended to each for further

discussions with the project's steering committee and other interested women.

Since 1995, more women are represented at public sector decision-making levels – about 33% of public sector management posts at the level of Permanent Secretary are held by women (that is six of 15 posts). The percentage is significantly higher in middle management.

None of the private sector companies has a female chief executive and women are under-represented on boards of companies.

Violence Against Women

In 2000, the Domestic Violence Act criminalised domestic violence. Under this legislation, requests for various orders associated with the Act can be filed by

victims and other people acting of their behalf. This eliminates the need for victims to pay for lawyers' services, which often prevents poorer people from coming forward.

Counselling services and other support activities are also available to victims of abuse. At the time of reporting, the NWM had secured *pro bono* services from the Bar Association for some victims. By the end of 2004, it was hoped that a State Legal Aid Clinic would have been set up. Funding has been obtained from UNICEF to raise public awareness of the issues and explain the Domestic Violence Act.

St Kitts and Nevis has also ratified the regional Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women which was agreed at Belem Do Para, Brazil, in 1994.

The NWM now enjoys greater collaboration with law enforcement officers, many of whom have been sensitised to the problems of gender-based violence. The Police Statistical Unit now includes a category for domestic violence.

Media houses regularly run advertisements urging people to help victims in violent situations or potentially violent situations. It has become common for people to report cases of domestic violence they witness, indicating that they no longer perceive it as a private matter.

A support group for victims, set up by the NWM, has achieved limited success. Older victims of abuse, many of whom have graduated away from violent domestic environments, continue to attend group sessions regularly. Younger victims, however, tend to only attend when they are in crisis. This affects the continuity of the sessions.

Women and Poverty

A poverty assessment report of 2000 has revealed a 30.5% and 32% poverty rate on the islands of St Kitts and Nevis respectively. Women account for 59.3% of all poor people.

A National Poverty Reduction Action Plan is being drawn up. Following its bottom-up participatory approach, both male and female community leaders have been identified and trained in the consultative approach. These leaders have already played a part in community mobilisation and the collection of data. Women have also been represented at community consultations.

The NWM continues to provide skills and entrepreneurship training for rural women in poor communities. Training is in traditional and non-traditional skills, marketing and life-skills.

Law Reform

As part of an exercise on family law reform by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), women's views on issues pertaining to marriage, divorce, maintenance, matrimonial property, unions other than marriage, juvenile justice and domestic violence were sought.



Trained mediators have already begun offering their services at the Magistrates' Court in cases on a range of issues including child maintenance. This service is an alternative to costly and time-consuming court proceedings.

Drafting has begun to amend divorce laws to recognise that marriages sometimes irretrievably break down through no fault of any one person and that people should be able to file for divorce on these grounds. Alternative dispute resolution is also being used to facilitate persons who would prefer to settle matters other than through a court.

Attachment of earnings is one of the pieces of legislation that will be part of OECS family law. This legislation would bring relief to women who are single heads of households and spend significant amounts of time in the courts on maintenance matters.

Three pieces of legislation – on sexual harassment, equality in employment and equal pay for work of equal value – were tabled in 2003 and are still going through Parliament.

National Women's Machinery

In 1995, the NWM was relocated from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Social Development so that it could work more closely with other service departments, such as that for Community Affairs, the Counselling Unit and the Department of

Child Protection and Probation Services. Since then, the NWM has utilised officers from these departments as resource persons and integrated gender concerns into their programmes.

The NWM reports it has had little growth since 1995 with human resource capacity only increased through the assistance of volunteers.

The NWM sits on a number of government committees, including the Minimum Wage Task Force, Promotion of Management and Labour Co-operation Task Force, HIV/AIDS National Task Force and National Emergency Management Agency – Food and Shelter Committee.

Close relations are also maintained with government departments, such as Justice and Legal Affairs, Planning, Youth, Health, Education and Labour. Co-operation with the Manufacturing Division enables the NWM to reach out to low-income women employed in this sector. A programme, A Healthy Workforce is a Productive Workforce, has been developed (see Box 43.1, page 162).

Partnerships

St Kitts and Nevis has benefited from its membership with regional organisations, such as CARICOM and the OAS. Encouragement from CARICOM for member states to establish teen mother programmes assisted in the setting up of Project Viola by the NWM. The OAS, through a regional project, has equipped many women in St Kitts and Nevis with

Women have traditionally helped out in the fields in St Kitts and Nevis

the skills to turn local agricultural produce into attractive and tasty processed food.

In 1999, the Commonwealth Secretariat assisted St Kitts and Nevis as the pilot country for testing the Gender Management System. It has had limited success because key recommendations on sustainability have yet to be realised. One of the recommendations was the need to upgrade the NWM; another was to give gender focal points in government departments more authority to implement decisions, policies and change.

The Canadian International Development Agency funded and the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action co-ordinated domestic violence sensitivity training for police and other frontline workers.

The NWM works closely with the private sector and provides support for non-governmental, community and faith-based organisations.

Concerns for the Future

In the next three years, attention should focus on:

- Women in Power and Decision-making – an increase in women's representation at these levels may lead to greater gender sensitivity in the development and implementation of policies;
- Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women – The effectiveness of policies and legislation that address gender equality is undermined by the lack of proper structural and institutional mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and
- Education and Training of Women – Poverty has a female face in the region. Women earn less than men yet are expected to provide support for the infirm, the elderly and the very young. Through education and training, women will increase their income-earning potential.



St Lucia

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile

	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION			
Total population (000)	150	158	156
Female population (% of total)	51.6	51.3	51.3
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	..	..	..
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	..	20.9	20.3
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	..	..	..
Male	..	..	..
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group) (% of females to males)**	..	..	1.01
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of females to males)**	..	..	1.28
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio			
Female	..	..	24
Male	..	..	27
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	73	74	74
Male	69	69	70
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	20	18	17
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15-24)			
Female	..	..	..
Male	..	..	..

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2003 (2002)

** 2002-2001 figures in the Human Development Report 2003

Figures not available

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of St Lucia places priority on the following:

1. Violence Against Women
 2. Women and Health
 3. Education and Training of Women
 4. Women and Poverty
 5. Women and the Economy
- Followed by: 6. The Girl-child; 7. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women; 8. Women in Power and Decision-making; 9. Women and the Environment; 10. Human Rights of Women; 11. Women in the Media; 12. Women and Armed Conflict.

A Decade of Action

St Lucia, part of the Windward Islands group in the Eastern Caribbean, acceded to CEDAW in 1982. It has yet to submit a CEDAW report. The National Women's Machinery (NWM) is the Division of Gender Relations in the Ministry of Health.

Violence Against Women

The NWM has reported a marked increase in the incidence and reporting of gender-based violence. Legislation in this area has been strengthened through the enactment of the Domestic Violence Summary Proceedings Act and the Criminal Code, as well as through the Sexual Offences Act which deals with offences such as rape, indecent assault and battery.

In 2001, the Women's Support Centre was opened to offer refuge to women and their children fleeing from domestic violence. It also offers counselling and other extramural programmes. Community Response Teams have been established to make initial interventions which can alleviate incidents or prevent them from escalating into more violent situations.

Women and Health

The health of the population is generally good and life expectancy fairly long. However, the incidence of HIV/AIDS is

Chart 44.1: Organisational Structure of St Lucia NWM



growing, especially among young women, with a recent study showing that 95% of infected people in the 15–19 year age group were female. Anti-retroviral drugs are available to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus.

Education and Training of Women

Universal primary education has been in place for many years with every child between the ages of 5–15 guaranteed a place in school. School attendance, however, is variable with poverty keeping some children away in order that they may contribute to the family income.

The problem of teenage girls dropping out because of pregnancy is being addressed. At the time of reporting, there is an informal arrangement that girls may return to school after birth. Without care systems in place for infants, however, this will be difficult to implement successfully.

The NWM reports that St Lucia is well on its way to achieving universal secondary education by the year 2007.

National Women’s Machinery

The NWM was established in 1986 as a Women’s Desk before it was elevated as a department in the Ministry of Legal Affairs in 1994. In 1997, the department was assigned to the Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations. In 2001 it moved to the Ministry of Home Affairs and in 2004 reassigned to the Ministry of Health where it now resides as the Division of Gender Relations.

At the time of reporting, the NWM was understaffed, with two of the Technical Officer posts vacant. Budget allocations have not increased.

The NWM has closest relations with the Department of Human Services (Ministry of Health), Family Court (Ministry of Justice) and the Government Information Service (Prime Minister’s Office). The Family Court works with the Women’s Support Centre which assists victims of domestic violence. Staff members at the Centre occasionally attend the Family Court as observers.

The NWM’s best achievements have been:

- Establishing a shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children;
- Organising a national consultation (Round Table) on gender-based violence. Its objective was to bring together key players in the public and private sectors who were in a position to influence policy on gender-based violence;
- Running a comprehensive programme for the police to sensitise them and build their capacity to deal with domestic, gender-based violence.

Partnerships

The NWM works with a number of CSOs, including the St Lucia Crisis Centre, National Council for Voluntary Women’s Organisation and the National Council for Women. The Crisis Centre receives some financial assistance from the NWM.

Concerns for the Future

A misconception that the condition of women has improved has taken root in some sections of society and even officialdom. Some people believe, therefore, that women do not need special attention anymore and that it is men who are now in a state of crisis. There have been some calls for gender programmes that will improve the condition of men. The result, unfortunately, is a cutback in resources given to the advancement of women.

The St Lucia NWM believes that in the next few years, institutionalising gender mainstreaming must be a priority, and education and capacity building efforts stepped up to ensure implementation.

Box 44.1: Eco-Souvenirs in the Fight against Poverty

The alleviation of poverty through the creation of income-generating opportunities and promotion of micro-entrepreneurship is one of the primary concerns of the Government of St Lucia. The handicraft industry has been identified as ideal for both.

Craft production in St Lucia is largely at ‘cottage’ level, providing employment to women and unemployed youth. But while the Government encouraged the poor and disadvantaged to get involved in craft-making, producers had little access to markets and thus missed the opportunity that tourists, especially from Europe and the United States, presented.

Following a study on the handicraft industry in Choiseul district, where a higher proportion of women are engaged in handicraft production, the Government requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to work with the Ministry of Commerce, Investment and Consumer Affairs to expose craft makers on the island to design, manufacturing and marketing concepts for the development of eco-souvenirs.

Following a diagnostic and assessment phase, a workshop was held in early December 2003 for 20 participants to produce eco-souvenirs for the busy Christmas tourist season. The participants used tools and equipment customised for the products. The workshop was targeted at groups identified as most needing assistance – the disabled, women and youth – as well as exporters and trainers at skill centres.

Hundreds of products were manufactured at the workshop, giving birth to what is hoped will be a multi-million dollar eco-souvenir industry. Following the project, the St Lucia Ministry of Finance said: ‘This project will assist the large community of artisans and craft persons in St Lucia, especially the disadvantaged women, disabled and handicapped persons and other vulnerable groups.’

St Vincent and the Grenadines

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile

	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population (000)	11,700	13,400	15,100
Female population (% of total)	50.4	50.3	50
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	37	38	38
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	..	..	..
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	52.5	44.1	36.3
Male	31.3	25.8	20.9
Gross primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	93	82	99
Male	109	91	114
Gross secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	23	21	29
Male	33	30	36
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	1	1	4
Male	5	6	6
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	56	55	51
Male	53	52	49
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)			
	85	92	95
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	..	..	7.8
Male	..	..	3.8

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

.. Figures not available

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of St Vincent and The Grenadines has identified the following, in order of priority, for national action:

1. Violence Against Women
 2. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
 3. Women in Power and Decision-making
 4. Women and Health
 5. Education and Training of Women
- Followed by: 6. Human Rights of Women; 7. Women and Poverty; 8. Women and the Economy; 9. The Girl-child; 10. Women in the Media; 11. Women and the Environment; 12. Women and Armed Conflict.

A Decade of Action

St Vincent and the Grenadines, one of the Windward Islands in the Eastern Caribbean, has a relatively undeveloped economy but nevertheless a relatively high quality of life. The country acceded to CEDAW in 1981. The National Women's Machinery (NWM) is the Gender Affairs Division which is located in the Ministry of Social Development.

Violence Against Women

Legislation on domestic violence has existed since 1984. The continued prevalence of gender-based violence, however, led to the introduction of further legislation in 1995 to provide protection by means of summary proceedings in cases involving domestic violence and related matters.

Other initiatives include the training of police and social workers in domestic violence intervention; a plan to open a crisis centre for victims of domestic violence in 2004; sensitising the public on the undesirability of such violence; and the annual observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

From being a domestic matter not to be taken outside the family, domestic violence is now openly discussed. In 2002, a panel of medical, social worker, police and Family Court representatives

The environment is a priority area for development, gender equality, food security and sustainable livelihoods. It can also provide opportunities for employment in the tourism sector (Photo credit A. Simmons)

discussed the issues as a national panel. A parallel exhibition showing how women are abused was mounted.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

The Gender Affairs Division, taking over from the Women's Affairs Division in 2001, embarked on training staff members in gender and development. An inter-sectoral committee, comprising representatives from government and the private sector, was also established that year, and a system of Gender Focal Points set up. Training has also been given to focal points in media, trades unions and teaching.

One of the Government's major institutional initiatives was the setting up of the Family Court to which women can apply for family maintenance and other matters. Maintenance Orders for the support of children can now be enforced through this court. Protection Orders and Occupation Orders (for the offender to leave the home) can also be issued and enforced through the Family Court.

Women in Power and Decision-making

Women are beginning to enter the higher levels of power and decision-making. In 2001, two women were elected to Parliament and the first female Attorney-General appointed. For the first time, a female Deputy Governor-General has been appointed, as well as 2 female Senators representing women and youth. There are more female than male heads in administration in the public sector.

Women and Health

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among females fluctuated between 1984 and 1991, but between 1992 and 1998 increased steadily. The case fatality rate has been high (98.9% in 2000) and more than 80% of deaths are people in the 20-49 age group.

A strategic plan involving information, education, prevention, treatment and support has been put in place. Better treatment, including anti-retroviral



PHOTO: A. SIMMONS

treatment, is available. Condoms are distributed to promote safe sex; other programmes provide financial support and other services for patients and their families.

In order to eliminate mother-to-child transmission, mothers are encouraged to undergo testing for HIV during pregnancy.

Women in Poverty, the Economy and Education and Training

The Government's strategy to fight poverty includes budgetary assistance to the poorest; a multi-sectoral programme including government, NGOs, the private sector, international agencies, and individuals; financial measures to assist the rural poor to utilise their land and raise production levels; pursuit of economic policies which favour strong economic growth; and making education and the empowerment of the family vital tools in the struggle against poverty.

The National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), set up in 2002, is an advisory body to the Government and has the mandate to co-ordinate the poverty reduction programme. It comprises representatives from the public and private sectors, and from civil society.

NESDC has a number of working groups, including the Poverty Reduction Task Force on which the NWM is represented on. So far, this task force has put in place an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which will be the Government's guide to poverty reduction. This document includes strategies and recommendations for gender equity.

Other initiatives focus on education and training. Teenage mothers are now allowed to return to some secondary schools after giving birth, and there has been an increase in the number of places in secondary schools, where girls are a majority. Training females in non-traditional skills, such as plumbing, electrical engineering and woodwork has also been carried out.

National Women's Machinery

The NWM was initially established as the Women's Affairs Department in 1985 within the Ministry of Tourism, Aviation, Culture and Women's Affairs. It had a staff of one – the Co-ordinator. In 2001, it was renamed the Gender Affairs Division and now has a staff of four, including the Co-ordinator, Assistant Co-ordinator and 2 Project Field Officers. One of the Project Field Officers is male.

The NWM's budget has gradually increased from EC\$92,767 in 1995 to EC\$158,250 in 2003.

Among the NWM's notable successes are the establishment of new structures, such as an inter-ministerial committee on gender issues, training and gender-sensitisation sessions, and media and public awareness campaigns.

The NWM enjoys close relations with the inter-sectoral committee on gender; the Family Services Division which conducts training on handling domestic violence, assists displaced women and children and gives assistance to indigent women and their families; and the Ministry of Education.

Partnerships

The NWM enjoys close relations with the National Council of Women and other civil society and NGOs. It has received information materials and publications from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Concerns for the Future

Preoccupations for the future will be on overcoming continued misunderstanding about the concept of gender; enhancement of the NWM; and the establishment of a national policy on gender equity.

Trinidad and Tobago

COUNTRY REPORT (Summary)

Gender Profile

	1990	1995	2000
POPULATION*			
Total population ('000)	1,283	1,287	1,301
Female population (% of total)	50	50.1	50.1
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION			
Female labour force (% of total)	31	33	34
Female unemployment (% of female labour force)	24.2	20.2	16.8
EDUCATION			
Adult illiteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)			
Female	4.4	3.2	2.3
Male	1.9	1.4	1.1
Net primary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	91	89	92
Male	91	90	93
Net secondary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	66	..	75
Male	64	...	70
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (% of age group)			
Female	6	7	8
Male	7	9	5
HEALTH			
Life expectancy at birth (years)			
Female	74	75	75
Male	69	70	70
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)			
	21	16	27
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15–24)			
Female	..	..	0.6
Male	..	..	0.8

Source: World Bank database of Gender Statistics

* World Bank Atlas 1991 (for 1990 figures), 1997 (1995) and 2002 (2000)

Priority Concerns

Among the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Trinidad & Tobago has identified the following, in order of priority, for national action:

1. Women and Poverty
2. Education and Training of Women
3. Violence Against Women.

A Decade of Action

Trinidad and Tobago, the most southerly of the Caribbean island states, acceded to CEDAW in 1990. Its National Women's Machinery (NWM) is the Gender Affairs Division located in the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs. The country is ranked at 47 in the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) in the *UNDP Human Development Report 2004*.

Women and Poverty

The Government has adopted a multi-pronged approach, increasing welfare benefits and employment programmes specifically targeting women and addressing policy issues such as legislation aimed at creating equal opportunities for women and men.

The NWM serves on several inter-ministerial committees which address the issue of poverty. Some programmes specifically address women with low or no incomes, as well as those with no or very few skills, who are unemployed and may be heads of households.

Education and Training of Women

School enrolment is relatively high, as is literacy. The Government and NGOs continue to focus efforts on improving opportunities especially for females. Over half of the intake in all university faculties (except engineering) are females. More females are also taking up non-traditional skills in vocational training, including plumbing, tiling, woodwork and upholstery.

Other females are in programmes which provide training in areas such as agriculture, landscaping and care of the elderly. Over 5,000 women have

benefited from these programmes.

Violence Against Women

Violence remains a high priority area. Legislation introduced to combat it includes the Domestic Violence Act (1999) and amendments to the Sexual Offences Legislation (2000) which increases penalties for offenders and makes it a crime to refuse to act on a report made by a minor. A 24-hour National Domestic Violence hotline has been established, as have community-based resource centres and drop-in centres for domestic violence and other related problems.

Police and other social services providers have been trained in programmes run by the Government in partnership with local and international agencies.

National Gender Policy

The Government is in the process of developing a National Gender Policy and Action Plan based on the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender Management System. Various interest groups have been consulted, and specialists have been reviewing policies and programmes in different sectors to identify gender gaps and work with those agencies to develop the action plan.

Consultants for the exercise are the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, at the St Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies, with the UNDP, the Canadian International Development Agency and UN/ECLAC as international partners.

Training for women in non-traditional skills



Gender-responsive Budgeting

In 2003, with support from the Government, the Network of Non-governmental Organisations undertook an exercise to introduce the issue of gender-responsive budgeting. This exercise will be repeated, this time targeting the senior financial managers and ministries, so that the impact can be seen in budgetary allocations for future programmes and projects.

National Women's Machinery

There have been major changes to the staffing and budgets of the NWM since 1995 when it was known as the Women's Affairs Division. Staff numbers stood at 8 in 1995, but increased to 25 as of October 2003. During the same period, the budget allocation rose from TT\$500,000 to approximately TT\$7 million.

The increase in staffing has risen from the expanded functions of the division, whose mandate has changed from women in development to gender and development, and whose mission statement is to promote gender mainstreaming in all government programmes, projects and policies.

Several units in the division deliver direct services, such as the Domestic Violence Unit, the Women in Harmony Programme and the Gender Equality Institute. The division's other unit focuses specifically on policy issues and is engaged in research and analytical work.

Notable successes for the NWM are the development of a draft National Gender

Policy; the launching of the Gender Equality Institute which addresses many of the short- and medium-term needs of women in society; and the establishment of community-based support centres for victims of domestic violence which are located in their own local communities.

The NWM works especially closely with the Attorney-General as legal reform underpins gender equality efforts. Close relations are also maintained with the Ministries of Health, Education, National Security and Finance.

Partnerships

The Network of Non-governmental Organisations, Midwives Association of Trinidad and Tobago, Federation of Women's Institutes and the Rape Crisis Centre are among some of the NWM's key partners. Together they have implemented several programmes. International Women's Day activities, the hosting of the Young Women of the Year Award, use of shelters and halfway houses, resource personnel for training programmes, and the hosting of international and regional conferences are among some of the areas for continued collaboration.

Concerns for the Future

Women's health is increasingly becoming a major concern in the region, especially in Trinidad and Tobago. HIV/AIDS is showing a higher rate of infection among females as against males in the 15–24 age group, with the possibility of increasing rapidly. At the time of reporting, an action plan has been developed by the Government with other agencies.

How women are portrayed in the media is also of concern. The media is a powerful institution that is reinforcing many stereotypes and biases, especially those concerning women. Efforts to sensitise the media in this regard have begun, but has been difficult because many of the media companies are owned and are heavily staffed by individuals who wish to maintain patriarchal structures and portray women either as submissive in their private lives or as sex objects.