

OVERVIEW OF TRENDS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

Since the Government of St. Lucia approved a national policy on women and a five-year Plan of Action in 1991, the government machinery for the advancement of women has been working towards securing sectoral commitment to the implementation of the policy. There is still much work to be done in supporting and strengthening the national machinery to be more proactive in coordinating and strengthening sectoral involvement in policy implementation.

With respect to the Platform of Action there is no national action plan per se for its implementation. However, four areas of priority were selected for action by the national machinery viz.:

- ◆ Women and Poverty
- ◆ Women and Health
- ◆ Violence against Women
- ◆ Women in power and decision-making

There has been no major breakthrough in any of the areas identified. However, there has been heightened awareness in these areas, and that has served to place certain gender issues on the public agenda.

Efforts have been concentrated on :

- ◆ The establishment of community focal points to represent the needs, concerns and interest of women in their respective communities.
- ◆ Eradicating violence against women and girls through -
 - _ Mass media campaign (community discussions, radio/TV talks, production of pamphlets and bumper stickers).
 - _ Training programmes in counseling for community leaders
 - _ Formation of support groups for victims and perpetrators
 - _ Allocation of funds in the national budget, for the establishment of a shelter for abused women and children.

Between 1995-1998, some noticeable changes have occurred in the situation of women and girls that have not been included in the priority areas selected. In education there has been a marked increase in enrollment at all levels. This follows a regional trend where more females participate in the education system but there has been no scientific explanation for this phenomenon. At the tertiary level the majority of persons enrolled in continuing education classes include working women seeking to advance themselves professionally and economically. There are also more females enrolled in adult literacy classes.

Employment figures show an increase in the number of males employed. There was a decrease in female employment particularly in the areas of agriculture, manufacturing, unskilled work and professionals. However, in 1997 there was a narrowing of the male/female gap at the middle management level.

The decrease in female employment could be attributed to the closure of some garment and electronic factories on the island. Also the banana situation as this relates to the WTO ruling on Windward Island bananas has had a significant impact on rural women and the economy in general.

In the media, more women have entered the profession, and there has also been an increase of female managers.

In terms of institutional mechanisms set up for the advancement of women, no formal inter-ministerial collaboration presently exists to integrate gender perspectives in general policies relating to all spheres of society.

In the context of Human Rights, educational materials (pamphlets) have been produced and disseminated, and sensitization programmes organized on radio and television to heighten awareness on issues pertaining to human rights.

Women have benefited from projects such as the Rural Enterprise Development Programme and the St. Lucia Rural Enterprise Project. Women and youth have been identified as target groups for focus in a poverty alleviation drive. The NWM has conducted training in marketable skills for women and young girls. These women have not been able to fully use these skills for generating an income because of the difficulty in accessing start up capital and the conditions attached.

Following the Beijing conference, (1995 to 1997), there was much media focus, enthusiasm and discussion on gender equality. In 1998 the Division

was renamed "Gender Relations" to reflect the focus on gender and development.

A significant development is the inclusion of a course entitled "Gender Management" for students pursuing the associate degree in Management at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College – the island's lone tertiary institution. It is hoped that upon review, the course can be made available to other departments at the college. Staff of the department of Gender Relations served as resource persons for the course.

PART 2

Financial and Institutional Measures

2. Budgetary allocations are based on the submission by the Division of Gender Relations as well as the availability of funds. There was a national budgetary cut of 2% for the period 1999/2000 which resulted in a decrease in the Division's Budget from \$357,684 in 1998/1999 to \$356,670 in 1999/2000.

International / bilateral technical assistance received is not usually reflected in budgetary allocations. In most cases actual cost is not revealed by donor agencies..

3 (a) Four areas of priority have been identified from the Platform of Action namely: Women and Poverty, Women and Health, Violence against Women, Women in power and Decision-making. No specific structures have been put in place to institutionalise follow-up to an implementation of the Platform for Action.

(b) No special arrangements exist to coordinate the various follow-up efforts to global conferences. Generally these efforts are incorporated in the work programmes of individual Ministries/ Departments where they coincide with national priorities.

(c) Generally NGOs involvement and participation are driven by initiatives from the NWM. However, some NGOs for example, the Women's Arm of the St. Lucia Teachers Union have developed programmes based on the goals of the Platform.

PART 3

4 (a) Programme activities under the four selected areas included :

- Women and violence

The establishment of mechanisms for redress and protection e.g. the Domestic Violence Act (1995) and the establishment of a Family Court (April 1997).

A simple guideline of the Domestic Violence act was produced by the NWM to ensure a better understanding of the provisions and how they can be used to provide protection. Also brochures and leaflets have been developed on issues related to the different forms of domestic violence and its impact on victims, the family and the society at large. These documents have been

widely disseminated to women's groups/organizations and the public at large.

Regular mass media campaigns against violence have been organized.

Funding has been secured for Training programmes targeted at the Police, Community leaders, Community Health Aides, etc. to respond to the needs of victims. The project also entails the facilitation of community support groups for victims and perpetrators.

Funding has already been secured to establish a shelter for abused women and children.

- Women and poverty

National consultations were held in several communities to identify the needs of women in poverty stricken areas. Training programmes in marketable skills were conducted for young unemployed mothers in these areas.

Government has established a Poverty Reduction Fund that will significantly benefit women.

- Women and Health

Workshops on Health/Sexuality were conducted in targeted areas identified by community groups to address the problem of teenage pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Participant included women of all age groups, and some men also who benefited from the sessions.

Education materials have also been developed on STDs , including a booklet on "Sexual Offences and the Law" to familiarize women on issues which impact directly on their health and measures which can be taken for their protection.

- Women in decision-making

For the first time in the island's history three female candidates contested the general elections, two of whom were successful.

5(b)

- there is an absence of proper mechanisms to collect data on gender violence. There is also a problem of under-reporting of incidents and the withdrawal of cases that have been brought to Court. The general perception that domestic violence is a private issue results in it being tacitly condoned by society. Consequently the Police and judiciary seem to adopt an apathetic attitude towards cases of domestic violence.
- Cultural norms and practices tend to discourage women's entry into politics.
- The perception that leadership and managerial positions are the domain of men and that women should be concerned with their reproductive role hinders their participation at decision-making levels.
- In the area of women's health there has been a lack of appreciation even among women themselves of the other dimensions of their health, other than issues related to maternal health.

Lessons learnt is that efforts need to be intensified in areas geared towards changing attitudes of both men and women.

There is urgent need for the institutionalization of a gender planning framework in the various sectors.

7 & 8. (See Annex)

9. **The Vision for the advancement of women and gender equality for the new millennium.**

The institutionalization of a gender and development framework for policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the public and private sectors.

This could be facilitated through the establishment of the Gender Management System and a national machinery comprising both government and NGO representatives for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Achievement of gender equity and equality with men and women enjoying equal benefits of development. Institutional mechanisms/support structures established to facilitate the advancement of women towards attaining their full potential.

1. WOMEN AND POVERTY

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further action/new initiatives
1. Skills training for job enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Training in Marketable Skills for young unemployed women. ◆ Establishment of Poverty Reduction Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Access to start up capital/credit depends on the availability of collateral. ◆ Non involvement of NIFM in implementation of fund. No deliberate gender focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establishment of an innovative credit window for women. ◆ Adoption of a gender dimension to the implementation of the fund.

2. Education and Training

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further action/initiatives
2.1	2.1.1 Data Not Available (N/A).		
	2.1.1 N/A		
	2.2.2 N/A		
2.2.3	♦ Last Literacy Survey was 1990. Recent data not available		

2. Education and Training of Women (Con't)

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (Indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further action/any initiatives
2.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 190 Females per 100 Males 		
2.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Females: 91 Scholarships per 1000 F ◆ Males: 137 Scholarships per 1000 M 		
2.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ School Curricular is under review to reflect 2.4 		
2.5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Presently at primary level ◆ Process of being implemented from kindergarten 		

3. WOMEN AND HEALTH

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further action/new initiatives
Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sensitisation workshops on Teenage Pregnancy and S.T.D.'s ◆ Production of Booklets on S.T.D. for women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow-up to determine impact. ◆ Cultural beliefs about male/female sexual behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Development of follow-up programmes at the Community level to assist in determining the impact.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reproduced in Braille for visually impaired women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High illiteracy rate limits use of printed material. ◆ Formation of National Committee to Coordinate all activities relating to women's reproductive health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use of popular literature and Crotle for wider dissemination
3.1.2 (1996) 57 per 1000 (1997) 58 per 1000		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Not gender specific. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Appointment of Gender Planner.
3.2.1 a. (1998) 83.3% b. 55.6%			

4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further action/new initiatives
1. Data Collection	1. Development and dissemination of standard forms for data collection.	Forms are not used as prescribed. Commitment from officers and supervisors required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Conduct individual sensitisation and discussion with persons involved in data collection in relevant agencies.
2. Unprofessional and insensitive handling of victims of abuse by the Police.	2. Preparation for training of Police.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Delay in accessing financial and technical assistance. ◆ Cultural norms. ◆ Attitude related to socialization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Formation of community support groups for victims and perpetrators. ◆ Training for police, judges and lawyers. ◆ Intensity public education. ◆ Use of popular theatre to help change attitude.
3. Legislation	3. Enactment of Domestic Violence Legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Delay/reluctance of police to execute warrants/orders. ◆ Victims cannot always afford \$10,00 stamp duty required to process claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Training and sensitisation of Police. ◆ Recommendation to waive or reduce stamp duty.
	4. Establishment of Family Court.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Withdrawal of charges by victims. ◆ Production of "guides to legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establishment of a safe house for abused women/girls. ◆ Establishment of Legal Aid System. ◆ Budgetary allocation for the establishment of a safe house for abused women.

6. Women and the Economy

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further activities/indicators
	6.1.1 Bill on equal opportunity and non discrimination in employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Insufficient Consultation by Stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ensure wider participation.
	6.1.2 Minimum Wage Bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Non Involvement of key persons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assess provisions of proposed Act
	6.1.3 6.2.1 NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Data not available 	
	6.2.2 6.2.3 6.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Data not available ◆ Data not available ◆ N.I.S. 	

6. Women and the Economy (Con't)

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further action/new initiatives
6.2.5 6.3 6.3.1 SEDU, NRDF, NCB Data NA			
	6.1.2 Data not available 5.4.1 - 34%	♦ Cultural Norms and practices	♦ Intensity education efforts to change attitudes/perception. ♦ Research to be conducted.
	6.6.1 N/A 6.6.2 N/A		
	6.7.1 N/A 6.7.2 N/A 6.7.3 N/A		

7. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

	<p>Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)</p>	<p>Examples of obstacles encountered/obstacles learned</p>	<p>Commitment to further action/new initiatives</p>
<p>Training 7.1 Males: 66% Females: 34% Total: 52%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Leadership Training for community leaders ◆ Elected parliament 15 males, (88%) 2 females (12%) ◆ Consultation on women in politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of financial resources to facilitate ongoing activities; ◆ Need to assess impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Training of female councillors and women's groups. ◆ Education of women in their role in political parties and negotiation skills.
<p>7.2 Economic base for entering into Politics</p>		<p>Limited financial resources</p>	
<p>7.3 Enhancement of women's full development potentials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Parenting Programme by Minister of Health and Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Cultural norms prohibit sharing of parental responsibilities. ◆ Lack of legal and institutional support not conducive to shared responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Institutionalisation of support mechanisms. ◆ Intensity Public Education for attitudinal change

8. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further action/initiatives
8.1 Inter-ministerial coordination.	<p>♦ No established interministerial coordination.</p>		
8.2 Responsibility vested in Cabinet Minister	<p>8.2.1 US\$7.36 (1996/1997) per woman US\$1.64 (1997/1998)</p>		
8.2.2 NWAM Director QADC			

9. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further action/new initiatives
9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ No legal literacy programmes. 		
9.2 Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Production of material on Legal and Human Rights of Women. ♦ Awareness/Sensitization activity to mark 50th Anniversary of Human Rights. 		Provision of training for specific target groups.

10. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/difficulties learned	Commitment to further action/new initiatives
10.1 Training	10.1.1 54% (Females) 3 Managers	10.1.1	
5	5.1.1 NA		

12. The Girl Child

Critical Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements)	Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned	Commitment to further actions/new initiatives
12.1	1.2.4 N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Enrollment in Primary 6-13 ◆ Secondary 14-17 ◆ Fertility 	
12.2	3.4.1		
12.3	4.1.1 N/A 4.1.3 N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Production of educational Materials, Radio/T.V. Programme 	
12.4	6.6.1 N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Constraints ◆ Lack of Support Systems ◆ Establishment of Support Structures 	