

Concept Note: UNIFEM Project on Strengthening State Accountability and Community Action for Ending Gender-based Violence in the Caribbean



## **Strengthening State Accountability and Community Action for Ending Gender-Based Violence in the Caribbean**

**UNIFEM Caribbean Office  
Barbados**

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## **I. Project Summary**

**Project Title:** Strengthening State Accountability for Ending Gender-Based Violence in the Caribbean

**Project Country:** Regional and national components in Belize, Jamaica and Antigua and Barbuda

**Project Duration:** 2 years

**Expected Starting Date:** September 2008

**Executing Agency:** United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

### **Implementing/collaborating**

**Partners:** National women's machineries, ministries of justice and security, civil society organisations, women's organisations, Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police

### **Budget:**

#### **Strengthening State Accountability for Ending Gender-Based Violence**

### **Background**

Women in the Caribbean have made incremental gains towards the achievement of gender equity, particularly since the first UN Decade for Women. This has taken place in the areas of legislation, social policy, labour market participation and increased access to public resources such as secondary and tertiary education and health care. At the same time, however, there are continuing challenges to the full attainment of the goal of gender equity as well as areas in which progress has been reversed due to socio-economic instability and the changing role of the state occasioned by policies of adjustment and trade liberalisation. In addition, there are new threats to the wellbeing of Caribbean men and women and children, chief among these the rising incidence of crime and violence, the unrelenting spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the impact of natural disasters.

Notwithstanding the vulnerabilities of these small island developing states (SIDS), concerted state action across the Caribbean in the areas of education and health care in particular has resulted in significant advances for women in the region. The constitutions, with the striking exceptions of Jamaica, Barbados and The Bahamas,

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all guarantee equality of treatment and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. All countries have signed and ratified the Women's Convention and the Inter-American Convention on the Eradication, Punishment and Prevention of Violence against Women.

However along with the signs of progress, there are also clear signs of the durability and persistence of inequality and it is in the areas of culture and ideology that the main challenges for gender equity continue to be felt in the Caribbean.

Chief among these indications of inequality is violence against women. As the UNIFEM/ECLAC<sup>1</sup> reports notes, while much work has been done in the Caribbean on violence against women (using that language explicitly), this work has always been defined and led by the passion of a handful of committed women's organisations offering services for women and their children in crisis. The activism of women too led to law reform to the extent that all Caribbean countries enacted domestic violence legislation which extends important protections to abused women and children.

Police response to domestic violence has no doubt become more sensitive and in the period between 1999-2004, thousands of police around the region participated in sensitisation programmes through CIDA and CAFRA initiatives.

The major gains however seem confined to the arena of domestic violence and these gains too appear to have most endured in the presence and in a few cases continued reform of domestic violence legislation. These are accomplishments, and significant ones. Yet there can be no doubt that the visibility of this issue has waned, that domestic and sexual violence dominates and constrains the lives of too many, that state efforts remain fragmented and insufficient and that women's service organisations feel the pressure of providing services with uncertain state support.

Gender-based vulnerability to sexual offences has received little sustained attention. The sexual violation and exploitation of women and children (now better understood to include boy children) is very inadequately addressed. While statistics are notoriously unreliable, what does exist points to disturbing trends not only in incidence but also to deficient state responses.

In relation to incidence, the World Bank report on Crime and Violence in the Caribbean states that according to the latest available data from the UNODC's Crime Trends Survey (CTS), three of the top ten recorded rape rates in the world occur in the Caribbean<sup>2</sup>. In addition, all countries in the Caribbean for which comparable data are available (Bahamas, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago) experienced a rate of rape above the unweighted average of the 102 countries in the CTS.

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<sup>1</sup> UNIFEM/ECLAC: Eliminating Gender-based Violence, Ensuring Equality. Regional assessment of Actions to end Violence against Women in the Caribbean. December 2004

<sup>2</sup> The Bahamas, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica.

Additionally, another regional victimization survey revealed that 48 percent of adolescent girls' sexual initiation was "forced" or "somewhat forced" in nine Caribbean countries.<sup>3</sup>

The Rape Crisis Centre for Trinidad shows the incidence not only of rape but also of gang rapes of young women as increasing in that country. So in 2006, some 18% of all cases where counselling was provided, were instances of gang rapes, most against young women. In Antigua and Barbuda, the concern for rape assaults and for the limited police action to detect and address this crime led to a 'Take back the Night' event at which over 600 people participated in January 2008.

In the case of Jamaica, Amnesty International reports that violence against women in Jamaica persists because the state is failing to tackle discrimination against women, allowing social and cultural attitudes which encourage discrimination and violence. The report points to prosecution and conviction rates as one indicator of inadequate state protection of victims of sexual violence. The report cites the Jamaica Constabulary Force statistics for 2004 where there were 208 individuals arrested for rape, of a total of 1787 reports of sexual offences. Of these, 45 per cent were cleared up (117) and 50 cases, or 3 per cent, were disposed of in court (118).

The low levels of charges laid or convictions secured (a regional trend picked up by CAFRA as early as 1989) is caused in part, the Amnesty International report suggests, by police indifference to sexual abuse against women and girls. That report detailed a police response which was dilatory, inefficient, improperly forensically trained and judgemental against women:

Respondents in a survey on the subject stated that the police would not be sympathetic, and would only visit them as a last resort. In the succinct words of one interviewee: "Police nah come.. Police nah come".<sup>4</sup>..... In another case reported to Amnesty International, a woman was raped in her own home. She reported the rape to the police. The police were uninterested in her story, saying that she was partially to blame as she was wearing a skimpy top and shorts."<sup>5</sup>

Apart from police action shortcomings, the legal framework for addressing sexual offences is uneven across the region and generally inadequate to meet the imperative of increasing state accountability and addressing impunity. Provisions related to in camera hearings, anonymity, legal principles around sexual history and the need for recent complaints as evidence of credibility of allegation are all areas which need to be reviewed and reformed. In the area of incest, the laws do not all address the reality of Caribbean family forms in casting the widest possible net of protection for children.

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<sup>3</sup> Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean March 2007. A Joint Report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank

<sup>5</sup> P.27

In a conclusion of the Jamaica situation, (applicable throughout the region) Amnesty International notes that impunity for sexual violence is centrally linked to sexual discrimination, and in particular the devaluing of the worth of women and girls. The report also speaks to high levels of community violence and the proliferation of small arms which exacerbate the climate in which women are even more vulnerable to sexual assault. This is a reality shared in several other Caribbean countries.

In relation to sexual harassment, law reform has been fledgling and limited with only a few countries taking steps in that direction- Belize, Guyana and St. Lucia.

Even with police training, there are very clear signs of ambivalence in police action related to domestic violence. Such ambivalence, notwithstanding increased sensitivity, is reflected in the low to non-existent levels of police led responses to perpetrators of abuse. There are very few prosecutions initiated by police and as the ECLAC study showed clearly, police across the region use the availability of protection orders as a proxy for the criminal process<sup>6</sup>. This lacuna no doubt adds to impunity which attaches to this form of violent behaviour.

Very few countries have developed strategic frameworks for addressing gender-based violence. And at the regional level, the CARICOM Committee with the mandate for security has yet to focus in on these specific harms which dominate the lived realities of all women in the Caribbean. The need for strategic plans has been widely acknowledged, including by Task Force on Gender and Poverty in the recommendations made to the regionalisation of the MDGs. Specifically, the Task Force report (requested by and submitted to Council on Human and Social Development, CARICOM) recommended the inclusion of a new target under MDG goal on gender equality of the *development of integrated national action plans to eliminate gender based violence by 2010*.<sup>7</sup>

Such strategic plans would provide the opportunity for identifying the service delivery gaps needed for the protection of victims as it would highlight the necessary reforms in the justice and security sectors. Already however there are indications of the kinds of reforms needed to the criminal justice system. The World Bank and UNODC for example recommend the development of information systems and performance measurement indicators to promote institutional efficiency and accountability as well as modernizing policing through the use of problem-oriented

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<sup>6</sup> ECLAC: An Evaluative Study of the Implementation of Domestic Violence Legislation: Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts/Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and The Grenadines. LC/CAR 659

<sup>7</sup> UNIFEM: Gender and the Millennium Development Goals: More Specific Targets and Indicators For the Caribbean. Report of the Task Force on Gender and Poverty. Submitted to CARICOM Secretariat 22 June 2005

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policing. It is clear, still, that accountability has to be systemic as well as sectoral and that ultimately policy makers must pay greater attention and oversight to programmes aimed at ending gender-based violence.

## **Objectives of the Proposal**

This proposal focuses specifically on reducing violence against women, through the strategies of increasing state actor competencies, strengthening accountability and the promotion of social and cultural change through youth-led, gender responsive social communications. This thematic focus builds on the past work of the UNIFEM Caribbean Office in which responsive partnerships with governments, NGOs and the UN system is the primary guide of programming.

The proposal is also premised on a number of considerations:

- The need to build political will to address the significant gaps in policy frameworks for sexual and gender-based violence, particularly in the justice and security sectors
- The need for coordination of regional and national multi-sectoral strategies with an emphasis on the justice and security sectors as a lever for ending impunity
- The need for heightened public and community commitment to securing women's and children's rights to security
- The need for men to be engaged as partners in advocacy and action on ending sexual and gender-based violence

## **Development Objective:**

**To end gender-based violence through strengthened and responsive state and civil society actions**

## **Specific Objectives:**

The project has the following specific objectives:

- Development of multi-sectoral strategic plans to address the protection, prevention and punishment of sexual and gender-based violence
- Building of technical competencies of the justice and security sectors and the non-governmental sector to respond effectively to gender-based violence

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- Development of a monitoring framework to ensure state accountability through civil society-state partnerships
- Promotion of a gender-sensitive, youth-focused social communications strategy on gender-based violence

## **Activities**

### **Objective 1: Development of multi-sectoral strategic plans to address the protection, prevention and punishment of sexual and gender-based violence**

Better coordinated and cross-sectoral integrated responses are needed to successfully tackle the strong cultural, social and economic obstacles to the attainment by women of a life free from violence. This would mean an end to fragmentation and the start of a fully comprehensive strategy, which addresses justice and security sectors, social services, health, education, housing and community advocacy. Within such a focus, there must be a combination of responses such as protection policies, service provision, justice and prevention to combat all forms of violence. These must draw on a range of governmental and non-governmental agencies, beyond the confines of women's ministries, in order to improve the quality of services provided on the ground. At the same time, there must be recognition of the gendered face of violence and how its elimination is directly linked to the promotion of women's rights and gender equality.

#### **Activities:**

- National reviews and consultations of multi-sectoral responses
- Preparation of national strategic plans to address sexual and gender-based violence in five countries

### **Objective 2: Build competencies of the justice and security sectors and the non-governmental sector to respond effectively to gender-based violence**

This component of the project aims to strengthen the technical competencies of the justice and security sectors based on an understanding of the causes and consequences of the current deficits. Specifically, the reforms advanced will address the three components of the administration of justice:

- 1) substantive- through reform of legislation;
- 2) administration - police will be exposed to intensive training in forensic investigative skills related to sexual assaults(including through exchange visits) and police and prosecutors in methods and legal techniques for prosecuting sexual assault cases; and

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3) cultural- gender sensitive training will be an aspect of the capacity building for justice and security sector personnel.

### **Activities:**

- Preparation of baseline reports on the justice sector (police and courts) law, policies and responses to violence against women (regional component to be undertaken by ACCP)
- Review and/or development of training approaches of police and prosecutors in cases of sexual assaults
- Training implemented for police and prosecutors
- International and regional internships and exchanges for police prosecutors in prosecution methods and approaches

### **Objective 3: Monitoring for accountability and ending impunity: Build a monitoring framework to ensure state accountability through civil society-state partnerships**

When the State actors fail to hold perpetrators accountable or to act swiftly in the protection of victims and punishment of offenders, this contributes to a culture of impunity in which justice is denied and gender inequality reinforced. Civil society organisations working with monitoring institutions such as the Ombudsman can address impunity, by providing a credible conduit through which complaints of inaction are channelled and addressed.

Working with national and regional networks of organisations focused on women's leadership (such as the Caribbean Institute of Women in leadership), the project also aims to promote the preparation of annual country reports on the status of responses to gender-based violence. These reports can be presented to parliamentarians for use on bringing visibility to response deficits and therefore greater state accountability.

### **Activities**

- Skills building for human rights based monitoring of state action on gender-based violence (Ombudsmen Offices, women's organisations, civil society)
- Development of complaints and response protocols between Ombudsman Offices, Police Units and human rights and women's organisations



#### **Objective 4: Promotion of a gender-sensitive, youth-focused social communications strategy on gender-based violence**

Approaches to protection will focus on enabling a culture of peace through a sustained communications campaign on women's rights to peace and security and gender based violence. UNIFEM will facilitate the building of a youth advocacy skills and media partnerships to support several aspects of the programme. Activities using mass media would focus on critical issues such as gender justice, men's role in ending violence against women; the relationship between stereotypical gender relations and roles and violence.

It is increasingly apparent that ending gender-based violence will require an integrated approach which focuses not only on ensuring due diligence by the state but equally importantly building a culture of respect for women's human rights. One of the novel approaches which UNIFEM will pursue in Haiti is that of **working with male-dominated organisations** (trade unions, political parties, civic societies, the private sector, the cultural industries) to build a cadre of men who can advocate against gender-based violence. This work will involve media campaigns which target men as well as training programmes on the connections between articulations of masculinity, gender power relations and violence against women.

#### **Activities**

- Training and networking of men as advocates or 'Champions of Change' in keeping communities safe for women.
- Production and dissemination of advocacy materials targeting out of school youth, community spaces, schools and faith-institutions

#### **Country Implementation:**

This project will be implemented regionally in so far as the products have applicability across the Caribbean jurisdiction. Such components include the study on the status of policing and prosecution of sexual offences and the development of a training programme for police and prosecutors.

In addition, there are specific country components:

- Implementation of training of police and prosecutors
- Exchange visits for prosecutors to other jurisdictions
- Capacity building for civil society oversight and support at community level to victims
- Networking and building advocacy capacity for men advocates

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## **Beneficiaries of the programme**

Overall, the reduction of violence against women will be in the immediate interests of all women, men, girls and boys.

The programme will benefit, through its emphasis on technical support to the security and justice sectors, the state institutions and actors such as those involved in the administration of justice and governance. The programme also targets as direct beneficiaries women's and human rights organisations and community-based organisations whose work focuses on violence against women and gender justice.

## **Programme Structure and Operation**

UNIFEM is the executing agency of the project and will be responsible for ensuring the timely execution of the programme the integrity of project implementation. The project will be monitored both conceptually and administratively by an Advisory Team both at regional as well as at the country levels.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The common framework for monitoring and evaluation will be developed jointly by UNIFEM and country-based implementing partners. This will follow rights-base principles for project monitoring, as well as the UN's "Norms for Evaluation in the UN System". Some of the principles that will guide it include:

- *Monitoring and evaluation will be results oriented*
- *Independence of the final evaluation will be ensured.* UNIFEM will ensure the application of a common framework on monitoring and evaluation, but will not conduct the final evaluation.

An initial set of indicators (quantitative and qualitative) to be considered (baseline data production for each country will be necessary) and can include:

- *National legislative and policy frameworks for addressing sexual and gender-based violence:* Is there a national action plan to address SGBV and is it adequately financed and implemented?
- *Security sector and judicial proceedings to address SGBV:* existence and use of facilities to increase reporting rates (hot lines etc), percentage of total cases brought to court that address SGBV; percentage of acquittals or successful prosecutions, existence of measures for witness protection or in-camera hearings, number of police, prosecutors and judicial officers trained in gender and SGBV awareness.
- *Social communications:* existence of gender responsive programmes aimed at promoting equitable gender relations

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Strengthening State Accountability for Ending Gender-Based Violence  
2008-2011**

**LOGICAL FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS:**

<b>Development Objective</b>	<b>Impact/Long-Term Results</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>To end gender-based violence through strengthened and responsive state and civil society actions</b>	Wider societal commitment to securing women's rights to development, peace and security	Widespread understanding of and commitment to ensuring women's rights to peace and security	National women's machineries, ministries of justice and security, civil society organisations, women's organisations	<b>Per country</b>
	Improved levels of state accountability for ending violence against women			
<b>Specific objective # 1</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
<b>Develop multi-sectoral strategic plans to address the protection, prevention and punishment of sexual and gender-based violence</b>	National strategic plans formulated and budgeted to address SGBV in at least 4 countries	Plans adopted and implemented in justice and security sectors	National gender machineries, sector ministries, women's organisations CARICOM Gender Programme	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Partners</b>	
National reviews and consultations of multi-sectoral responses	National reviews and consultations in 5 countries	Senior level multi-sectoral commitment to the development of strategic plans		<b>5000.00</b>
Preparation of national strategic plans	National strategic plans prepared in at least 5 countries	Plans budgeted, adopted in key sectoral ministries	National gender machineries, sectoral ministries (justice, security, social services e.g.)	<b>5000.00</b>
<b>Specific Objective # 2</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
<b>Build competencies of the justice and security sectors and the non-</b>	Enhanced capacity of justice and security sector to respond to sexual and gender-based	Gender equality issues addressed in national and sectoral development plans		

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<b>governmental sector to respond effectively to gender-based violence</b>	violence			
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Short-term Results / Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
Preparation of baseline reports on the justice sector (police and courts) law, policies and responses to violence against women	Baseline analytical report on the justice and security sectors responses to sexual and gender-based violence in five countries	Report shaping the development of training content and approaches	Ministries of Justice and Security; the court system, police service.	To be undertaken by ACCP
Review and/or development of training approaches of police and prosecutors in cases of sexual assaults	Training modules developed for enhancing gender sensitivity and core technical competencies of police and prosecutors in relation to sexual and gender-based violence		Police training units, Bar associations, Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police, CAFRA	To be undertaken by ACCP
Training implemented for police and prosecutors	Strengthened institutional capacity of government and civil society to combat violence against women	Percentage change (increase) in the number of cases of gender-based violence investigated and prosecuted	Police training units, Bar associations, judges and magistrates, ACCP	15,000.00
International and regional Internships and exchanges for police prosecutors in prosecution methods and approaches	Strengthened technical competences	Increased number of prosecutions of sexual and gender-based violence	Police and police training institutions, legal training agencies	10,000.00
<b>Objective # 3</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
<b>Build a monitoring framework to ensure state accountability through civil society-state partnerships</b>	Communities and security and justice actors work in closer collaboration on issues of violence and security	Extent to which key leaders and decision makers (including judicial personnel) condemn violence against women	National women's machineries, women's organisations, Caribbean Institute of Women in Leadership,	

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<b>Activities</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
Skills building for human rights based monitoring of state action on gender-based violence (Ombudsmen Offices, women's organisations, civil society)	Networks of community and human rights organisations trained in justice monitoring in 5 countries	Increased reporting of sexual and gender-based violence	Women's organisations, Ombudsmen, Police, national gender machineries	5000.00
		Increased levels of police investigations and charges of sexual offences		
Development of complaints and response protocols between Ombudsman Offices, Police Units and human rights and women's organisations	Complaints and Response Protocols developed	Increased police investigation of sexual and gender-based violence	Women's organisations, Ombudsmen, Police, national gender machineries	10,000.00
<b>Outcome # 4</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
<b>Promotion of a gender-sensitive, youth-focused social communications strategy on gender-based violence</b>	Decreased public and private tolerance of violence against women	Extent to which key leaders and decision makers (including judicial personnel) condemn violence against women	Formal and informal youth organisations, media,	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
Gender sensitisation training workshops with youth and representatives of youth groups focusing relationship between violence and gender	Trained community-based young women and men in advocacy and peer interventions	Young people more involved in community actions addressing sexual and gender-based violence	Youth organisations	5000.00

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Production and dissemination of advocacy materials targeting out of school youth, community spaces, schools and faith-institutions	Culturally and age-appropriate materials produced and disseminated	Increased public discourse (newspapers, radio shows etc) on gender-based violence	Media, youth organisations	20,000.00
Training and networking of men as advocates or 'Champions of Change' in keeping communities safe for women.	Network of men advocates trained in 5 countries	Increased advocacy of men as leaders in the movement for ending gender-based violence	Men's organisations (Rotary e.g., scouts, military), parliamentarians, national gender machineries	15,000.00
Sub-Total Programme				90,000.00
Administrative Costs (7%)				6300.00
<b>Total</b>				<b>96,300.00</b>

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