

**EIGHT & NINTH ANNUAL
REPORTS
OF
WOMEN & GENDER
EQUALITY COMMISSION**



Presented to the Speaker of the National Assembly

2019 – 2021

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ACRONYMS

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CISOCA	Centre for Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPAP	Country Planning Action Plan
DV	Domestic Violence
GO	Governmental Organisations
GTUC	Guyana Trade Union Congress
GPF	Guyana Police Force
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
IWD	International Women’s Day
IPC	Indigenous People’s Commission
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoLHSSS	Ministry of Labour, Human Services & Social Security
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIS	National Insurance Scheme
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
PSC	Private Sector Commission
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
HRC	Human Rights Commission
RCC	Rights’ of the Child Commission
SASOD	Society against Sexual and Other Discrimination
UNAIDS	United Nations AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nation Population Fund United Nations Children’s Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
W&GEC	Women & Gender Equality Commission

DECLARATION

This is the Eight Periodic Report to the National Assembly on the status of the work of the Women and Gender Equality Commission, pursuant to the requirements of Resolution No. 86 which was passed in the National Assembly on Thursday, 21st May, 2009.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

Members of the Commission consist of sixteen (16) persons who were sworn in on 27th August, 2009 by H.E. President Bharrat Jagdeo.

BACKGROUND, MANDATE, AND STRUCTURE OF THE WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION

The Women and Gender Equality Commission is one of the Four Commissions for the Promotion and Enhancement of Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law that was established under section 212G of the Constitution. Members were appointed under Resolution No. 86 which was passed in the National Assembly on Thursday, 21st May 2009.

The Women and Gender Equality Commission shall promote national recognition and acceptance that women's rights are human rights, respect for gender equality and the protection, development, and attainment of gender equality.

The Women and Gender Equality Commission shall consist of persons from each of the categories referred to in subparagraph (a), (b), and (c), appointed by the President as follows—not less than five nor more than fifteen members, with expertise in women and gender equality issues, nominated by entities, by a consensual mechanism determined by the National Assembly, after the entities which shall include the Women's Advisory Committee of the Trade Union Congress, are determined by the votes of not less than two-thirds of all the elected Members of the National Assembly; The Administrator of the Women's Affairs Bureau, by whatever name that office is designated; and a member who shall be a nominee, without the right to vote from the Human Rights Commission, Ethnic Relations Commission, Indigenous Peoples' Commission.

The Chief Executive Officer and Administrative Assistant assumed duty on 15th October and 1st November, 2010, respectively. The Investigative/ Research Officer assumed duty on the 1st October 2019.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION



Chairperson
Indranie Chandarpal
Women's Progressive Organisation



Deputy Chairperson
Cheryl Sampson
National Congress of Women



Magda Pollard
(Deceased)



Vanda Radzik
Women in Voluntary Work



Shalimar Ali-Hack
Women in Voluntary Work



Karen Vansluytman Corbin
TUC - Women Advisory Council



Gillian Burton
Labour Union



Gaietrie Baron
Guyana Agriculture & Workers' Union



Ernestine Barker Logan
Regional Women's Affairs Committees
Reg. 3, 4 & 10



Nandranie Coonjah
Regional Women's Affairs Committees
Reg. 2, 5 & 6



Bebbi Khan
Regional Women's Affairs Committees
Reg. 1, 7 8 & 9

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION



Debra Ann Henry
Professional



Nicole Cole
Culture/Ethnic



Peter Persaud
Culture/Ethnic



Hymawattie Iagan
Women's Affairs Bureau



Renata Chuck-A-Sang
Private Sector



Sandra Hooper
Rights of the Child Commission



Patricia Singh
Indigenous Peoples Commission

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES



Diana Swan-Lawrence
Chief Executive Officer



Wemyss De. Florimonte
Former Research/Investigative
Officer



Maria Raghubir
Administrative Assistant

VISION

An environment where the rights of women are recognized as human rights and gender equality is upheld.

MISSION

1. Promote gender mainstreaming in all policies and programs.
2. Educate women and men on the benefits of gender equality and ending gender-based violence.
3. Recommend, with the use of evidence-based data, timely policy, and legislative initiatives to uphold women's rights and gender equality.
4. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming within the society

MANDATES

Constitutionally, the Women and Gender Equality Commission has the following functions:

1. Promote the issues related to the enhancement of the status of women, girls and gender issues.
2. Promote the integration of women's needs and interests and mainstreaming of gender issues;
3. Promote the empowerment of women;
4. Promote women's rights as human rights;
5. Raise the awareness of the contribution of women and problems faced by women including the recognition and value of unwaged work;
6. Promote women's needs, interests, and concerns in the wider spectrum of economic and social development and address both the practical and strategic needs of women.
7. Educate and monitor employees and the public on desirable employment
8. Monitor compliance and make recommendations for the compliance with international instruments to which the Government
9. Evaluate any system of personal family law, customs and practices or any law likely to affect gender equality or the status of women and make recommendations to the National Assembly;
10. Recommend and promote the implementation of legislation and the formulation of policies and measures so as to enhance and protect the status of women;
11. Promote, initiate or cause to be carried out research and the creation of databases on women and gender related issues including those health, especially reproductive health, violence against women and the family, and their socio-economic and political status, as the Commission may deem relevant or as may be referred to it by the National Assembly;
12. Promote consultation and cooperation with women's organisations in relation to decision making that affects the lives of women;
13. Recommend training and technical assistance to support initiatives by and for women and girls; and
14. Promote the participation of women in national decision-making.

FOREWORD

Ten years ago the Women & Gender Equality Commission formally started to carry out its mandate with the election of the Chair and Deputy Chair.

In reflecting on the achievements made by the Commission over the past decade, we are happy to note that some significant achievements were made. The setting up of the three Rights Commissions provided a unique opportunity for stakeholders, including civil society representatives, to have their voices heard and for them to be a part of the change in the status quo.

We are pleased to announce that stakeholders' involvement through consultation and dialogue was a key component of our engagement. We collaborated with both local and international partners as we sought to enhance our mandate through this medium.

We have listened to the voices of women and men from all regions of Guyana, and have noted their concerns and recommendations and believe that we have a better understanding of the various challenges encountered by them. We sought to ensure that diversity is reflected in what we do so that we could better understand the needs and concerns of various groups.

While we have accomplished key actions that help us to achieve mandate, we are mindful that a lot more can be done to enhance the work of the Commission. Various challenges impede the work of the Commission, and should be addressed effectively.

The prolonged impasse in the setting up of the Human Rights Commission has made it difficult to expedite the mandate of the Commission as set out by the Constitutions in a timely way.

As a Constitutional Body, we have over the years, submitted our annual reports to parliament with key recommendations on the way forward. Unfortunately, many of these recommendations have not been addressed to date. At this juncture, we believe that the reports submitted by the Rights Commissions should not only be laid in Parliament, but should be discussed and wherever applicable recommendations should be addressed.

Although financial support has been provided through the national budget to facilitate our Programme of Activities, it is equally important for the National Assembly to establish a mechanism through the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee for Social Services, where the Commission's reports can be discussed and recommendations can be implemented. It is also important to emphasize that while the aforementioned Committee has a role to play in proposing the emoluments and allowances payable to members of the W&GEC, no proposal has been made within the last ten years.

We wish to thank the various stakeholders who have contributed immensely to the work of the Commission and look forward to our continued collaboration in the future. We would also like to thank the Government of Guyana for their continued support to the work of Commission.

Indra Chandrapal

Chairperson

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The W&GEC coordinated workshops, round-tables and gender and development training aimed at increasing female leadership within the ten (10) Administrative Regions of Guyana. Our main objective was to produce a cadre of gender sensitive leaders in the government, private sector, local government and civil society who would augment gender equality in Guyana's sustainable development. We are cognizant that at the social level, violence and attitudes toward gender are created based on the country's history, and how other social factors are constructed in society, including how religion and culture shape morals, practices and attitudes. Women in Guyana are marginalized in many areas and even though they make up almost 51% of the population; female-headed households are often the poorest.

The Commission targeted the Parliamentarians, Permanent Secretaries, Toshaos, Local Government Leaders and members of Civil Society for specific training on Gender and Legislation and Gender Sensitive Budgeting among other topics. We were pleased that at the end of the Training participants had increased knowledge in the framework of gender and development; could explain the various approaches to gender and culture, could demonstrate knowledge of key concepts in gender; confirmed knowledge of challenges to women's participation in development and appreciated the use gender sensitive budgeting.

Here is an excerpt of some of the actions that the participants promised to take after the trainings:

1. Ensure that sex disaggregated data is readily available.
2. The implementation and re-establishment of Gender Focal Points within each Ministry.
3. Gender Sensitive Budgeting is understood and implemented at the Ministry of Finance and all other Ministries.
4. The infusion of Gender and Development policies in all programmes across Ministries
5. The inclusion of Gender and Development from the nursery level in the Ministry of Education.
6. Form a Women's Caucus in Parliament.
7. Ensure that there is Gender and Development Awareness and Training in All 10 Administrative Regions Guyana.
8. Evaluate and Assess Legislation to ensure Gender Equality and Equity.

The W&GEC's is mindful that Gender Equity can never emerge through women's efforts alone, there has to be a coordinated approach at all levels. In this regard the W&GEC is committed to assist in Gender Mainstreaming in all sectors. We look forward to the continued support of all decision makers as we strive to improve and enhance the work of the Commission.

Diana Swan-Lawrence
Chief Executive Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS

LAWS, RIGHTS & PROTOCOLS

1. Compile all laws in relation to women's rights into a single book so it can be easily accessible to all women. The language used in the book should be simple so that all women can understand what they are reading, know their rights and enjoy them. The laws should be harmonised with international law obligations to ensure that there are no gaps in the protection and the rights afforded to all women and girls.
2. Guyana should ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) allowing individual petitions
3. Repeal Article 154 (6) which allows Guyana to divest itself or limit its obligations under the international covenants incorporated in the Constitution.

CEDAW & SGDS

4. The Government should ensure that its report to the CEDAW Committee is submitted regularly and on time. Before submitting its CEDAW report, the government should consult the Women & Gender Equality Commission and relevant civil society organisations.
5. The Government of Guyana is a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Women & Gender Equality Commission is calling on government to give effect to SDG Goal 5 which is Gender Equality and Empowering all Women and Girls. Goal 5 is cross-cutting and intersects with all other SDGs.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY & VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

6. A Sexual Harassment Policy should be instituted at all places of work and institutions as recommended by WGEC. Guyana should introduce and enforce legislation to identify and punish those who engage in sexual harassment.
7. Guyana now has the highest level of Violence Against Women in the Caribbean according to the recently released survey by UN Women where it was found that one out of every two women (55.5%) of all women in Guyana suffer some form of domestic violence/gender-based violence. We call on Government and all related State Agencies to effectively implement laws and policies governing Gender Based Violence. And to update these as needed. We urge that the necessary services and facilities be put in place to ensure access to justice/gender justice; this will include Mobile Courts to service remote hinterland areas, Legal Aid, Court Support, Counselling, relevant Health Services and appropriate Police Action.
8. Put a ban on all music in the public areas which violates the dignity of women.

OUR OIL BELONGS TO US - WOMEN MUST BE EQUAL BENEFICIARIES

9. Our oil belongs to all Guyanese. It is our Patrimony. Every Guyanese is entitled to benefit from it for our individual and collective well-being. Substantial investments from our oil dividends must be designated to improve our inadequate social services, access to gender justice, and a gender equal society where 50:50 equality for women is mainstreamed at all levels. Our oil must be channeled so that sustainable human development is guaranteed for all in Guyana.

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All Guyanese citizens are to receive a yearly sum from oil resources.

10. WGEC is to be included in any body that is set up to monitor and safeguard our oil money for present and future generations.

QUALITY HEALTH CARE - SRHR - MATERNITY & PATERNITY LEAVE

11. WGEC calls for quality Health Care for all Guyanese in accordance with SDG Goal 3. WGEC recommends that Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) be upheld in accordance with our Constitution and Laws, specifically - the Termination of Pregnancy Act (1996) which needs to be fully implemented, including counselling services before and after any termination.
12. We also call for increased resources for better implementation of family planning services and facilities to be made accessible to all women and men.
13. Maternity leave is to be legally extended to six months. We recommend paternity leave to be further developed, discussed and legislated.

COMMUNITY COUNSELLING, PWD ACCESS, CLEAN, GREEN SPACES

14. Establish Community Counselling Services for social problems including violence, suicide, depression HIV and gender based violence in all NDCs, CDCs and Village Councils.
15. Violent Forms of Disciplining Children must be banned and Teachers and Parents must be educated in Alternative Forms of Disciplining Children. This will help to break the cycle of violence that is so prevalent in our society.
16. Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (PWD) should be given a monthly subsidy. Assisted-Living communities should also be made available for the elderly and PWD.

17. WGEC calls for all public spaces to be made wheelchair accessible to Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and call on Parliament to lead by example on implementing this measure.

18. All Public Officers must make their income and assets public before and after assuming public office.

RIGHTS & SERVICES FOR ALL, DAY CARE, COMMUNITY ZONING

19. Discriminatory and outdated laws must be brought into line with Human Rights Conventions to which Guyana has signed. This includes the right to sexual orientation and sexual identity which must be legislated in Guyana by the new Parliament under our Constitution's fundamental rights section.
20. Government and the Private Sector are to establish Day Care Centres for working women in urban, rural and hinterland areas.
21. Encourage setting up of home owners associations to support citizens' safety & security.
22. Zoning of communities should be strengthened and enforced: Separate areas to be established for residential purposes only, other areas for commercial and industrial activities, and others for cattle rearing and animal husbandry etc. Not lumped together as they now are.
23. Access to services through costed plans by NDCs, CDCs and Village Councils etc. are recommended in order to better guarantee safer, greener and cleaner communities.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY & OPPORTUNITY

24. WGEC supports the call of Indigenous Peoples for lands rights to be settled in a timely and accurate way and in keeping with Indigenous Peoples own territories and mapping.
25. The WGEC supports and urges greater equality in

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electing Indigenous women to village councils and other bodies in keeping with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Gender Equality Policy Statement of the National Toshias Council (NTC) and the equality provisions under the Guyana Constitution.

26. Equality of services and opportunities must be made available and accessible and better implemented in the hinterland for the benefit of Indigenous Women. Quality health care and education are lacking in Indigenous communities and must be improved as a key priority.

CLIMATE CHANGE, WOMEN & FORESTS & GENDER ACTION PLAN

27. Climate change represents the greatest global threat we face together: Women's participation in climate action has been identified as a priority in SDG Goal

13 calling for urgent Climate Action, and it focuses on the need to elevate the voices of women, youth, and local and marginalized communities. Our Forests are our greatest asset in combating climate change and the role of Guyanese women - including Indigenous Women - must be recognised, affirmed and rewarded for sustainably managing them. The role of traditional ecological knowledge held and transferred inter-generationally by Indigenous Women is of key importance in climate action.

28. The first ever Gender Action Plan has been adopted by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in order to not only recognize but also strengthen and empower the role of women throughout climate policy and action. It emphasizes gender-responsive access to finance as well as gender-responsive budgeting by governments in the implementation of climate action under SDG 13.

THE MAGDA POLLARD AWARD - WOMEN IN SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP



Kadesha Lewis

won the Magda Pollard-Women in Science scholarship because of her outstanding grades in the field of Electrical Engineering at the University of Guyana. This scholarship was jointly sponsored by the University of Guyana/ Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) and the Women and Gender Equality Commission through an MOU that was signed into effect in 2017.

Kadesha Shauntell Lewis is a young, talented and vibrant twenty (20) year old that is aspiring to become an Electrical Engineer and make a difference in this world. She noted that Engineering is currently a predominantly male environment but women are slowly making their way into this tested industry. Currently, she is doing a three (3) month internship at Power Producers Inc. to gain knowledge and experience in her area of study and to break the “glass ceiling” effect that may be present in most industries dominated by male employees and employers. In her free time, she does extra-curricular activities such as volunteering. Recently she volunteered her services to a non-profit organization called The Vocal Identity Series. This organization is for young individuals (between 16 to 25) to be able to express themselves through various art forms such as music, public speaking, spoken word and ventriloquism. She said that she supported this group because she strongly believes that youths are the ones to pave the way towards a brighter future and need to be vocal about sensitive situations in the social, political and economic spheres.



Obena Avril Vanlewin

Was also awarded the Magda Pollard-Women in Science Scholarship. Her scholarship was sponsored by Advanzer Foundation and Women and Gender Equality Commission.

As a young woman in the modern world, Obena Vanlewin strived for excellence through hard work and dedication. She found a passion in health science, women's advocacy and volunteering. As a result, she have spun many webs of interests in health care and as a student mentor of children with special needs.

Currently, an aspiring Medical Imaging Technologist. It is becoming increasingly relevant to modern medicine, which is driven by

innovation, therefore she looks forward to being part of the effort that will allow Guyanese to reap its benefits.

Additionally, as a student mentor in an e-learning program for STEM and Robotics for special needs children, she aims to equalize opportunities for disabled children. This has shown her that resilience is not just an innate quality; instead, it is nurtured by the support systems available to us. Therefore, she believes that we can all do more than we know and she would encourage others to not just seek change but to be a part of it.



Nicole Cole

Chair-Media Monitoring Committee

MEDIA MONITORING COMMITTEE'S REPORT

9TH NOVEMBER, 2019

Why is the COMMONWEALTH still falling short in the fight for Gender Equality? @ Commonwealth Secretary General Baroness Patricia Scotland

“Violence against Women and Girls is still prevalent around the World, and many Countries still have no laws against Child Marriage. But there is genuine and sustained progress being made”

“The past century has witnessed the greatest advances for gender equality in human history. From New Zealand becoming the first self-governing country in 1893 to allow women to vote in parliamentary elections to Sri Lanka electing the world’s first female prime minister in 1960, the gender gap has never narrowed so quickly. But there is still much ground to be gained. In order to assess and accelerate progress, multilateral organisations across the world are now working hard to measure their collective progress.

We know, for instance, that in the Commonwealth, a girl is as likely to attend primary school as a boy, and in some countries more so. In the parliaments of 13 Commonwealth countries, 30 per cent or more of members are women. Women everywhere can now expect to outlive men.

Yet against this progress, systemic inequality remains persistent and widespread across all domains. Only one in five Commonwealth parliamentarians is a woman. Of every 10 girls, only seven attend secondary school. Thirty-two countries do not mandate equal pay for work of equal value, and 19 do not have laws prohibiting early marriage.

Firstly, politics. These states have collectively declared a goal of ensuring at least 30 per cent of elected political offices are held by women. Rwanda is one of only three countries in the world to have achieved gender parity, with more than 55 per cent of seats occupied by women in both its houses of parliament, but there are also some signs of progress elsewhere. The parliaments of the Caribbean and Americas region are on average almost 25 per cent female, relatively high compared to other Commonwealth regions.

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Twenty of our member countries do not have legislation on sexual harassment in employment, while 23 do not have criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace.

As for violence against women and girls, legal protections are still far from universal. Of our 53 Commonwealth member countries, 47 have laws against domestic violence; 20 have legislation that explicitly criminalizes marital rape; 40 have legislation against sexual harassment; and only 9 have legislation that offers broad protections for LGBT+ people.” (17th September, 2019 INDEPENDENT UK)

A Quantum Leap For Gender Equality 1919-2019 An ILO Report posits “in 1919, the ILO adopted the first Conventions on women and work. A century later, women are a force in the labour market, breaking boundaries that at one time would have been considered impossible. While significant advances have taken place for women at work over the past century, there is no room for complacency.

It can no longer credibly be claimed, in any region or for any income group, that the employment gap between women and men is due to the fact that women do not want to work outside their home. Based on a representative global sample, about 70 per cent of the women interviewed said that they would prefer to be in paid work, and 66.5 per cent of men agreed that they should be. However, in 2018 only 45.3 per cent of women had a job, which equates to a gap of almost 25 percentage points between the desired and the actual employment rate for women.

Over the past 27 years, the gender employment gap has shrunk by less than 2 percentage points. Both women’s and men’s employment rates have declined globally, but men’s have declined at a faster rate. In 2018, 1.3 billion women were in employment compared to 2.0 billion men, which means that there were still over 700 million fewer women in employment than men. In other words, women were still 26.0 percentage points less likely to be employed than men. Not surprisingly, gross enrolment ratios for secondary and tertiary education have increased for both women and men and gender gaps in enrolment rates had almost closed in 2017. However, 21.2 per cent of youth are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET), and a high proportion of those (69.1 per cent) are women.

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In 2018, women were more likely to be employed in occupations that are considered to be low-skilled and to face worse working conditions than men. In fact, women are more exposed than men to informal employment in over 90 per cent of sub-Saharan African countries, 89 per cent of countries in Southern Asia and almost 75 per cent of Latin American countries. In addition, women are also often found in occupations that are the most vulnerable to decent work deficits, such as in domestic, homebased or contributing family work. Migration status, ethnicity, disability and HIV status are some of the characteristics which, when intersecting with gender, further exacerbate the likelihood of women experiencing unfavorable working conditions and might increase informality rates.

Women are also under-represented in managerial and leadership positions. Globally, only 27.1 per cent of managers and leaders are women, a figure that has changed very little over the past 27 years. However, while few women make it to the top, those who do, get there faster than men. Across the world, women managers and leaders are almost one year younger than men. This difference in age shrinks as the national income increases. Women managers are also more likely to have a higher level of education than men managers. Globally, 44.3 per cent of women managers have an advanced university degree compared with 38.3 per cent of men managers.” (7th March, 2019)

Agreed Outcomes of CSW 63

The outcome of the Commission’s consideration of the priority theme during its 63rd Session takes the form of agreed conclusions negotiated by all member states. The Commission on the Status of Women-CSW 63rd Session 2019 adopted agreed conclusions on “Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for ‘Gender Equality’ and the empowerment of Women and Girls”.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1
WORKSHOP FOR PERMANENT SECRETARIES



ACTIONS THE PERMANENT SECRETARIES’ PLEDGED TO TAKE IN THE MINISTRIES

- *Ensure that sex disaggregated data is readily available.*
- *The implementation of Gender Focal Points within each Ministry.*
- *Gender Sensitive Budgeting is implemented and understood at the Ministry of Finance and all other Ministries.*
- *The infusion of Gender and Development policies of all programs across Ministries.*

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MRS. DIANA SWAN - LAWRENCE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE WGEC

Mrs. Lawrence, Chairperson of the Workshop stated that the beneficiaries of the workshop were the Permanent Secretaries of all the Public Service Ministries because a Permanent Secretary is the most senior public servant of a government ministry, charged with running the department on a day-to-day basis. They are the non-political civil service heads (and "accounting officers") or chief executives of government departments. Consequently we know that these public servants are well positioned to infuse gender and diversity in learning and development programmes.”

She expected that at the end of the training the beneficiaries would have improved knowledge of Goal 5 of the SDGs so that Guyana can fulfill national targets, especially in terms of leadership and decision-making at national and local levels.

She pleaded with the participants to take the necessary action in their Ministries to develop Advocacy Committees to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment across political and party lines.

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MS. PATRICE LAFLEUR, SECRETARY GENERAL OF UNESCO

Ms. LaFleur reminded the participants that UNESCO is one of several UN agencies to contribute to peace in the ways of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in defending human rights, including gender equality and to eliminate gender discrimination, in order to reach standard equality between men and women.

She stated that many years ago it was required of the public service to focus exclusively on the aspects of gender equality. However, there is need for more aggressiveness on the matter. It is her view that the approach taken on HIV/AIDS in the workplaces, should also be taken on gender equality.

She hoped that this engagement would aid managers to take a time out to discuss this amongst their workplace; promoting gender equality and positive behaviors at work.

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HON. DR. NICOLETTE HENRY, M.P.; MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Dr. Henry said that promoting gender equality remains a national priority in Guyana. She explained that as women of the 21st century, we must resist gender discrimination, a good place to start is in the education system. With the right skills, training, and knowledge, the country can succeed. She continued by saying that education sets the foundation for sustaining economic growth. She appreciated those women that were resilient and were able to defend Women's rights.

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HON. TABITHA SARABO – HALLEY, M.P.; MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Honorable Minister Sarabo Halley stated that she was honoured to be discussing gender issues. She explained that this affected about 50% of the population of women and girls and that mainstreaming gender issues were important for our society. Women’s inequality is impacted in a large way by the patriarchal way of life.

She insisted that society must pay women equally as men, as well as to place them in equal positions as men. To this end, the WGEC has her government’s full support. She claimed the nation has made some progress and a best place to start was in the National Assembly. She however cautioned that there was no guarantee that gender equality would be established in the parliament.

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H.E. SANDRA GRANGER, FIRST LADY OF THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

The First Lady stated that Permanent Secretaries are the Chief Executive Officers of their respective Ministries. They comprise a group whose contribution to the development and implementation of policies impact the health, well-being, and, yes, the progress of women and girls.

This workshop, whose theme is “**The Importance of Promoting Women’s Rights as Human Rights,**” is an activity conceptualised under a project entitled “Increasing female leadership in decision-making through community outreach, workshops, round tables, and gender training.”

The term “human rights” indicates that every human being is entitled to basic rights and freedoms from birth until death, regardless of race, class, creed, or geographic location. These rights are based on shared values like dignity, fairness, equality, respect, and independence, and are defined and protected by law.

She informed the audience that the Workshop correlated with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #5, which speaks to Gender Equality. In effect, however, adherence to the SDGs through women and girls is critical to the achievement of **all** of the Goals.

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- SDG #1 - Zero poverty
- SDG#2- Zero Hunger
- SDG #3- Good Health and Well-Being
- SDG #4 - Quality Education
- SDG #5- Gender Equality
- SDC#6 Clean Water and Sanitation
- SDG #7 - Affordable and Clean Energy
- SDG #8- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG #9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- SDG #10- Reduced Inequalities
- SDG #11- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG #12- Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG #13- Climate Action
- SDG #15- Life on Land
- SDG #16- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and
- SDG #17- Partnerships for the Goals.

She stated that everyone was aware of the multiple challenges which women confront on a daily basis, at home, on our streets, in our communities and in our workplaces. She asked the participants to consider the ratio of female to male permanent secretaries. Consider the Ministries in which they are located. How many women serve in the 'traditional' ministries, that is, the 'social' service type ministries such as Communities, Education (which includes Culture, Youth and Sport), Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, Public Health and Social Protection? How many women are employed in the so-called 'non-traditional' ministries, for example, Agriculture, Business, Finance, Natural Resources, the Presidency, Public Infrastructure, Public Security, and Public Telecommunications?

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She asked “What are the male: female ratios in each Ministry? And what are their functions?”

She stated that the most recent Labour Data on Guyana indicated that while there is almost an equal number of men and women employed as managers, women outnumber men as professionals, technicians and associate professionals, as clerical support workers and service and sales workers.

She added that there were almost four males for every female employed as skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, and as plant and machine operators and assemblers. The ratio rises to 7:1 for armed forces occupations and craft and related trades occupations, and a whopping 41:1 for plant and machine operators and assemblers.

She mentioned these figures out of concern that our women and girls seemed to be stuck in the traditional areas of employment while the technology-driven world around us is rapidly changing. She intoned that there was need for recalibration. She added that one also has to consider the environment in which women live. Even though women comprise about half of the population of Guyana, many women are un- or under-employed. They confront gender-based violence and are still the ones most impacted by poverty and marginalization. They require an education and the nurturing which will equip them for work in the twenty-first century.

She added that first, women have to instill in them the notion of self-worth. Because if they do not have that confidence in themselves and what they can accomplish, they will not aspire to the top levels of management and decision-making in any group of which they are a part. We must be conscious as well that our women will need support as they adapt to new positions in their fields of endeavor.

Second, women need to consider whether the work environment caters to the many and diverse needs of its employees. Is there accommodation for women with very young and/or school age children, elderly parents, or partners and children with disabilities? She applauded the Ministry of Public Health for raising the issue of extended maternity leave for women who are breastfeeding their babies (the mothers have more time to bond with their babies; the babies benefit from the additional protection afforded by breastfeeding.) She asked “How can we support these women as they try to earn a living?”

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Can consideration be given to flex time or to working from home with specific tasks to be completed within a given time frame? Think of the positive impact flex time may have on productivity, not to mention easing the stress of rush hour bottlenecks on the East and West Bank, and on the East Coast Demerara.

She added that workers needed to be invested in their jobs. She said “ I mean that employees should be happy going to work and have a positive image of their workplace and their supervisors”.

Third, there must also be a focus on increasing and upgrading the education and skills of women and vulnerable groups in the workplace. They should believe that their contribution is valuable and valued. In today’s world where technology and modern communications have changed the way we do business, we need to factor in constant training and upgrading of skills at all levels so that the organisation stays abreast of developments in its field; its data are easily accessible and disaggregated for decision-making; it remains relevant; and it serves the needs of its clients who are, after all, the taxpayers of Guyana.

Career paths for women and girls therefore have to be redefined.

She added that she was not diminishing the very valuable contributions or the capabilities of our women labouring in the traditional fields, but the projections are that ninety per cent of the jobs women do will become obsolete. Technological advances have led to more and more jobs being performed by robots in aviation and agriculture, manufacturing, medicine and meteorology, for example. Hence, women need to encourage and support our girls to focus on careers which will be in demand. These will be in science and technology, including information and communication technologies which impact other areas of growth.

These are also the fields which pay more money, which would be a boon for women and help transform their lives and that of their families, since girls and women spend 90 per cent of their earned income on their families.

Fourth, the workplace must be safe. Policies relating to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace must be clearly defined and publicised, and any infraction dealt with fairly and expeditiously, regardless of the rank or status of the perpetrator.

Fifth, women must receive equal pay for work of equal value.

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Women must also consciously avoid stereotyping the roles of women when we are in meetings. Just think of the times when women in management positions have their contributions to the discussion ignored, or are called upon to take the meeting's notes or to serve coffee and snacks.

And finally, women must be visible.

Research indicates that women in leadership positions contribute to an organisation which has a more communal outlook and leadership style; is fairer, more socially responsible; is more diverse in its outlook; and has more favorable human resource policies. These women also serve as role models for younger women in the organisation and in their communities. Their spin off would be greater and more active participation in community, regional and national decision-making. Further, female leaders will lessen the pay gap between men and women.

Additionally, studies conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership indicate that having a higher percentage of skilled females in an organisation could lead to:

- More job satisfaction;
- More organisational dedication;
- More meaningful work; and
- Less burnout.
- She concluded her presentation by stating that it stands to reason, therefore, that a gender and development focus will not only improve production and productivity, it will also help in the retention of staff.

“Given the objective of today's workshop, She was certain that the participants would leave the Work Shop convinced of your key role in training, supporting and promoting women so that we can achieve Gender Equality and more productive workplaces in our blessed little corner of the world.

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MS. CHERYL SAMPSON, DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE WOMEN & GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION

The Deputy Chairperson of the W&GEC recalled that many years ago Permanent Secretaries (PSs) were mainly men. She reminisced that women in the public service could not have had children when they're not married, they had to resign. She said that the WGEC was proud to have the PSs represented by so many women. She added that women's equality was no longer just talk.

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WORKSHOP FOR FEMALE PARLIAMENTARIANS



ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE FEMALE PARLIAMENTARIANS

In keeping with a call from the Chief Executive Officer of the Women and Gender Equality Commission for ACTION from the Female Parliamentarians. The Female Parliamentarians pledged to:

- 1. Form a Women's Caucus in Parliament.**
- 2. Ensure that there is Gender and Development Awareness and Training in All 10 Administrative Regions Guyana especially in their constituencies,**
- 3. Evaluate and Access Legislation to ensure Gender Equality and Equity.**

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HON. AMNA ALLY, M.P.; MINISTER OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

Ms. Ally explained that Parliamentarians must examine how development decisions and practices affect both men and women. She added that it was time that both men and women move on from words to actions, gender equality must be made part of all aspects of policymaking, as is ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to making that a reality.

With gender equality being the engine that it is to the driving of social development, she said that there's no question that it is a prerequisite of sustainable economic development and the enhancement of the labour market. Gender equality is a matter of human rights of democracy, which is just what a Workshop of this nature offers participants; an opportunity to become more informed on the issue of gender and development. It will provide a forum where we can exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences that will inspire us to take new steps towards gender equality

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MS. INDRA CHANDRAPAL, CHAIRPERSON OF THE WGEC

She explained that The Women & Gender Equality Commission (WGEC) is one of the four Commissions for the Promotion and Enhancement of Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law established under section 212G of the Constitution of Guyana, has partnered with the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to convene a workshop for Female Leaders in the Local Government of Guyana. She added that she hoped that the MPs and other participants will gain additional knowledge on the subject of gender and development from the workshop, the agenda of which is geared to zoom in on the issue of gender.

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Facilitator - Barbara G Reynolds Deputy Vice-Chancellor Planning and International Engagement engaged the participants as follows:



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COMMENTS FROM THE FEMALE PARLIAMENTARIANS

“With regards to women’s roles in society, I think the time has come for us to engage men, while we go forward with this empowerment we need to educate men on how to understand this empowerment. We have to find some solutions. We have to improve men’s attitude.”

“Because of where women are we may have ignored the men to some extent. International Women’s Day for example, many men would not come. I remember for International Men’s Day, we as women helped them and had them speak on different topics. Publicly they said they would do it but by next year they even forgotten the day. They had nothing since then. They said point blank that without Women we can’t take off. We planned a breakfast and we said we’ll help with the snacks. They asked me to leave, and they ended up in a “gyaff.” (conversations in Guyanese Parlance)



“I grew up in a different religion which says you fight for what you want. It is said many times in the Bhagavad Gita. We have a lot to commend ourselves for coming such a long way for women. Guyana had a very strong Women’s Movement and I think that it has dwindled in the last few years. It resulted in the WGEC, etc. We have a lot to be grateful for.” We are educating ourselves and we

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need to educate the men because they are not educating themselves, otherwise they would continue to kill us.”

“I grew up next to a predominantly Indian village and I saw that the husband is always slightly in front of the wife while walking. I was reading a book about African culture, it seems to me that the men always feel and it is accepted by society that men is superior. Let’s say Mr. Granger walks into a brothel, he would be considered to be macho but if Mrs. Granger does that it’s an entirely different story. Because we tell men to be macho they tend to act macho but they also have a silent cry for help.”



“We had to develop programs to assist families. We have been empowering women and leaving the men behind, unfortunately this leads to gender based violence.. Most times when we have these workshops, women are the ones carrying them out and many men and boys have issues that they do not want to discuss with women. We need to have workshops where men talk to men, they need that support.”

“We have different cultural and religious sensitivity, so that’s an important thing. Maybe it is time we have Gender Studies because our family values and structures are changing, gender values are changing. There is a shift in conversation happening. This education should begin in Primary and continued to Tertiary.”

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“I think women are their own enemies, sometimes it is their own sisterhood bringing them down.”



GENDER BUDGETING FACILITATED BY MS. ANN-MARIE WILLIAMS, MA, GENDER SPECIALIST, THE CARICOM SECRETARIAT

- Gender budgeting aims to ensure that government budgets support policy commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- Also contributes to other policy objectives such as, economic growth, more effective spending, improved accountability... Gender budgeting is good budgeting/good for business.
- A variety of approaches, shaped by type of budgeting system in use...the economic, political and social context must be considered.
- Australia (8 years on), South African parliamentarians and NGOs introduced Women’s Budget Initiative in 1995, producing an annual report on selected areas of expenditure and taxation.
- Commonwealth Secretariat gender budget project 1995-2000, piloted in Barbados, Fiji, South Africa, Sri Lanka, St Kitts and Nevis, using a range of tools developed by Debbie Budlender (South Africa), Rhonda Sharp (Australia) and Diane Elson (UK).

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Tools included expenditure and tax incidence analysis, gender-aware policy appraisal, impact of budget on unpaid domestic work, and indicators for gender budget statements.

- IMF Working Papers 2016, on Gender Budgeting project provide several examples...:
- Expansion of expenditures important for gender equality and women's empowerment and improvement of outcomes; reform of taxes biased against women; improved systems of accountability and greater budget transparency in relation to gender equality policy commitments; explicit inclusion of gender equality targets and indicators in budget processes; and greater voice for women in determining budget priorities.
- Actions need to be taken by governments and international organizations, including IMF, to strengthen and extend gender budgeting: as a component of the reform of Public Financial Management; as a component of orientation of fiscal policy to support agreed policy goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals; not only at micro level of specific expenditures and taxes; but also at the macro level, in terms of assessment of fiscal space and design of fiscal consolidation.

IMF committed to continue work on gender budgeting by Managing Director in comments on UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment.

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WORKSHOP FOR FEMALE INDIGENOUS LEADERS (TOSHAOS)



HON. VALERIE LOWE, M.P.; MINISTER WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ AFFAIRS

Hon. Minister stated that it is very important to understand Gender Equality, Gender Development and Gender Budgeting and that many do not understand what women really want for themselves. They ask the question; were they not happy long ago? Women the world over couldn’t make decisions for themselves and many women were seen as property. She continued by saying that gender inequality affect families but in the hinterland things are hidden; for example, if a man commits incest with his child it would be hidden by the mother because the father told her to ‘shut up and mind her own business.’ She added that while many things are not reported in the hinterland communities. She stated that women need to be brave about educating men on their rights. She added that men must play a necessary part in this road to empowerment.

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INTERACTION WITH THE TOSHAOS

In the Arawak and Warrau culture, when the mangoes to the back-dam, the man will fetch the light tools, the woman would fetch the warshi, bow and arrow, the heavier things.”

“The thing about indigenous people with the men carrying lighter tools, dates back to long ago. I have seen many changes in that, nowadays people use bicycles, motorcycles, some richer ones use cruisers.”

“Men are still stigmatized when they are perceived as doing “feminine things”.

It is changing, when I’m in the interior I am delighted to see more men holding the baby, plaiting their daughters’ hair.”

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“It is definitely changing because a few years ago we had four female Toshaos, now we currently have fourteen.”

“In the Caribbean there are laws against trans-gender but it is about time we got over this.”

“A lot of religious leaders think that we can pray the gay away but in reality that is not the case. There should be a partnership between men and women, roles should be shared.”

“All of this has to start at the home and continue in the education system.”



COMMENTS FROM THE TOSHAOS

“Equality does not talk about sameness, but about fairness. To remove barriers would cost some things, but it is needed. Gender Equality requires strong leaders, both men and women. When a woman sits and makes decisions it is always about her family. As men we are not socialized for processes, men are more socialized for outcomes.”

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“This whole issue of gender, some part of the Amerindian act should reflect some of these issues.”

“Coming back to fairness, as indigenous people we don’t have the same access to finance, how can we bridge these gaps for the women in the socio-economic way of life?”

CULTURES CHANGE TO SURVIVE

THE DYNAMIC OF GENDER

- Our families, our communities and dynamics within our cultures determine what men and women do.
- Men and women are expected to have certain characteristics, attitudes and behaviors.
- We are born into environments in which these gender roles exist. We learn them.

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CULTURE & GENDER INTERSECT



CULTURE & GENDER ARE IMPACTED BY:

- Globalization
- ICT and other new technology
- Change in the labor market or economy
- Environmental change
- Armed and political conflict
- Development projects

COMMENTS FROM THE TOSHAOS

“I remember years ago a young guy impregnated a young girl and the community did not react. But now it is illegal to have sex with a girl under sixteen years. The people in your individual communities are shaped by the cultures, as Toshaos in the community we would have to tell you about certain laws to implement in the community. In the past we never had female Toshaos, only one Toshao by the name of Mary Williams. So you have a good chance in turning things around in terms of gender, and we know as women we are the first teachers.”

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“I’m from region 9 and we were trained in gender equality and the men did not like it, they said like we want to take over the world. When they start drinking their alcohol they get violent. I am completely against the D’Aguiar (Rum Distillers) and the other women won’t support me. The men need counseling because they are not trying to stop.”

“We as leaders would have to learn the law. Sometimes we would be on the wrong track in counseling.”

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WORKSHOP FOR FEMALE LEADERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF REGION #4



On 26th April, 2019 the Women and Gender Equality Commission (W&GEC) and UNESCO convened a Gender and Development Workshop for Female Leaders in the Local Government of Guyana, at the National Racquet Center from 9.00 hours to 17.00 hours.

The Workshop aimed at increasing female leadership in the Regional Democratic Councils, (RDCs), Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NCDs) and Community Development Councils (CDCs) by targeting the Chairpersons, Deputy Chairpersons and Councilors of the Councils.

There were thirty (30) Participants in attendance with representatives from the Regional Democratic, Neighborhood Democratic and Community Development Councils of Buxton/ Foulis, Enmore/Hope, Cane Grove, Nabaclis, Hazlington, Belfield Village, Grove Diamond, Regional Democratic Council #4, Haurauuni/ Yarrokabra, NDC and Timehri North (CDC).

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INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS

The following were some of the important concepts used in discussing gender:

- Sex role stereotypes
- Gender relations
- Gender analysis
- Gender (or sexual) division of labour
- Aspects of gender differentiation in relation to work
- Aspects of gender differentiation in relation to human rights
- Gender inequality in relation to culture and religion
- Gender in development, Socializing agents
- Socializing forces such as the Media
- Gender analysis and advantages of Gender Analysis



QUESTIONS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS WERE:

1. Even though there were more women graduating from the University of Guyana and other educational facilities and yet there were fewer Female representatives in Parliament and State Boards?
2. Why is work that women and girls do in many instances unpaid work?
3. Women and girls mainly victims of gender based violence. Why?
4. Why were men more in control of owning resources and wealth?
5. Why are women's productive work often less visible and less valued than men's?

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6. Why is the care and maintenance of the household and its members including bearing and caring for children, food preparation, water collection, shopping, house-keeping and family health care assigned to women and girls?
7. Why are women more likely to be poor, especially rural women?



STRATEGIC NEEDS MAY INCLUDE:-

- Abolition of sexual division of labour.
- Alleviation of the burden of domestic labour and child care.
- Removal of discrimination.
- Access to credit and resources.
- Freedom of choice over child bearing.
- Measures against male violence and control over women.

THE FACILITATORS EXPLAINED THE INFLUENCING FACTORS AS FOLLOWS:

Influencing factors are those factors which shape gender relations and different opportunities and constraints for men and women. These factors include:

- Community conditions such as poverty, income distribution, inflation etc.
- Legal framework
- Demography factors
- Training and education
- Community attitude to development
- External and internal political development
- Generation and dissemination of knowledge on technology and skilled

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At the end of the Workshop the participants were placed in geographical groups and asked to identify **Actions** that they will take back to the Neighborhood Democratic and Community Democratic Councils. Below are the groups and actions to be taken.

- Haslington- Grove/ Enmore-Hope/Buxton Fourlis NDC
- Group Members
- Actions to be taken:
 - Empowerment Workshops for Youths mainly School Dropouts
 - Raise Awareness of Gender and Development in the NDC
 - Eliminate Teenage Pregnancy
 - Reduce the high rate of Alcohol Abuse
 - Raise awareness on Gender based violence
- Cane Grove NDC and CDC
- Actions to be taken:
 1. Form a Gender and Diversity Committee to address Gender Inequality in the NDCs
 2. Empowerment Workshops for youths and women in the NDC and neighbouring NDCs
 3. Raise awareness on Gender Based Violence
 4. Timehri North/ Hauraruni/ Yarrowkabra

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

1. Workshops for Gender and Diversity
2. Education and Training for Teenage Pregnancy and Drug Abuse
3. Awareness raising on Gender based violence

Please note that the Chairperson of the Regional Democratic Council would follow-up with the Neighbourhood Democratic and Community Development Councils to offer support for the actions stated.

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WORKSHOP FOR FEMALE LEADERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGION #7, BARTICA AND ITS ENVIRONS



MS. OLINDA GRIFFITH, VICE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN

Ms. Griffith explained that in Region Seven (7), there were a lot of rape cases that were ‘being swept under the carpet’ because of the poor work of police and stigmatization of sex workers. She opined that there was a high rate of incest in the Upper Mazaruni. She stated that women and girls needed to be properly educated because a lot of them do not know their rights.



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COMMENTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

1. *"Traditionally, when we tell a boy to act like a man, it's almost like telling them to show no emotions, to be macho and arrogance. Also for girls to be calm and quiet, close their legs."*
2. *"I think that the probability of being sexually harassed when women wear revealing clothes is increased."*
3. *"Sexual harassment and rape has nothing to do with clothing, it is caused by men having a dark, warped mind."*
4. *"What is sex and what is gender?"*
5. *"Sex is from birth and gender is what you want to become."*
6. *"Sex is biological, determined from birth, based on reproductive organs. Gender are socially constructed roles we put on persons determined by their sex."*
7. *"Three major paradigms: sex, gender and sexual orientation. Sexuality depends on who you are attracted to."*
8. *"Gender stereotypes are statement and beliefs that limits a person's ability. e.g women should stay at home and look after the children, while men do house repairs and work."*
9. *"Men cannot make decisions for women, since they are not women, e.g those in high positions in Parliament."*
10. *"To have gender equality we need gender mainstreaming."*
11. *"I noticed there are a lot of female security guards, they told me they cannot move from their work site, one woman told me she can't even change her stay-free. They have to walk a whole block to sign in and sign out."*
12. *"That is gender inequality and gender discrimination."*
13. *"47% of boys still believe that women are their properties."*
14. *"I'm not always excited about certain statistics, most hinterland communities will not reveal their information. I went to an Amerindian community and asked some young girls a question: "Do you think that a man has the right to hit a woman?" All 18 of them had raised their hands. A lot of them feel that they are worth very little."*
15. *"If we educate the adults on their self-worth, they will be able to instill that on their children. Educate them that it is not okay to be abused."*

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16. *"Some of them indirectly demonstrate their attitude towards women. We as women should be acknowledged, we are the first teachers, we are nature."*
17. *"Most abuse starts in the home, witnessed by the child. Sometimes children may be at a disadvantage, e.g no food or income, people may want to take advantage of this."*
18. *"Yes, children would see these things and it changes their perception."*
19. *"We as women can also be blamed, we have always told our boys that it is wrong to cry, wrong to express themselves. This in turn can cause a buildup of negative emotions which can cause some men to lash out."*

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20. *"I used to teach some contract teachers, we ended up talking about things that happened in school. Certain topics would come up and when they did, some young girls cried. When they were asked why they were crying they said that they were abused. When the teacher asked the head teacher what to do, they said to do nothing. 1: It will make the parents angry, and 2: the parents will bribe the police. We need to have courage, without courage there will be no change."*
21. *"We as women we need to stop covering for the men in our lives, sometimes we would choose between a man and a child."*
22. *"A woman came to make a report on domestic violence. Her daughter had a fractured jaw, but didn't want to lock him up because he's going to marry her in December."*
23. *"Can't they lock up these women too? If a woman fails to arrive on the court date, can't she be charged?"*

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GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP WITH FEMALE LEADERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR REGION #7, KAMARANG AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES



SOCIAL PROBLEMS:

When a child is abused there is no safe place. Sometimes children are abused right in their homes by males and the female cannot report for fear for their own safety. Mothers, grandmothers and other females have to try to create safe spaces for their children because there are smuggling to illegal substances within the communities.

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1. **What can be done to help improve the knowledge of Gender and Development in Kamarang and Waramadong –**
 - Carry out surveys
 - More training for persons in Gender and Development
 - Public Awareness for Amerindian youths
 - Community mobilization
 - Establishment of Gender and Development Committee.

2. **What can you do to help improve your community to be more Gender Aware? Residents of Kamarang and Waramadong –**
 - Full participation in community activities
 - Mobilize or motivate other community members through Gender Lens
 - Be a role model for others and form relevant Gender groups
 - Carrying out group activities with both genders
 - Motivate young people to be more Gender aware

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COMMENTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS



1. *"I became a women's rights activist because I was the only girl that grew up with brothers and was always being taken advantage of."*
2. *"Women are the first teachers."*
3. *"Many years ago it would've been natural for men to be the breadwinners, however in this day and age the role can be shared."*
4. *"Man should be the breadwinner no matter how woman is working he should be there to provide."*
5. *"The most important role of the man is to be the head of the household."*
6. *"The role should be 50/50. At this generation women no longer look to men for money."*
7. *"Women only think about the present."*
8. *"This is from your point of view."*
9. *"Women need to build up our self-esteem to become good managers. Women do 67% of the work and only get 10% of the income."*
10. *"Most men are in the backdam working and are not able to help with housework."*

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11. *"Women are physically weaker than men." "Maybe weaker in strength but we're emotionally strong."*
12. *"If a male boy is put as a babysitter maybe he may grow up as feminine."*
13. *"In my family we don't have girls, we don't have any females and we have to eat and clean."*
14. *"Most men say only women can cook and clean."*
15. *"My mother told me that if you cook you gon turn woman next week."*
16. *"We have to stop saying this is boy work or this is girl work, we need to teach our children everything."*
17. *"Long ago, there were boys schools and girls schools, which may have caused this segregation."*
18. *"We have been trying with single parent mothers, not all mothers are educated and the parents do not care."*
19. *"We're talking about rape, they happen right here. How would a woman express herself to a male officer. When they need a court order it takes donkey years."*
20. *"As a mother and woman to improve myself as a mother I had to stop drinking, smoking. My husband and I had to stop this lifestyle. So we have to stop these habits as women and we have to change."*

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COMMENTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

1. *“Amerindian women are very fertile and tend to be more prone to cervical cancer.”*
2. *“It’s natural to menstruate. I would say it’s the mother’s role. It’s not a clean time for the girl, they keep them away for 3 days, they must not touch fruits or eat salt. It’s very traditional and we usually let the mother’s handle it.”*
3. *“Mostly women do the household activities. Both parties make the decisions. Both help in the farms but men tend to do the most tedious work.”*
4. *“In Joalla the men own the businesses and the women assist.” “Women are the cash holders.”*

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5. *Our women still cope the abuse and the hardship. But our women also stand firm.*
6. *In Jawalla, we would like to set up a women's group. This group will be a place where women come together to heal, to share stories, and to gain new skills. We want our women to take their rightful place as leaders in our community – and not just in the Indigenous community – in the community in general. Our women hold the key to our homes and our community's healing, and getting our people back on track.*
7. *We also need jobs. We need jobs for our young people in particular. We need a better life for our kids that includes opportunities and self-respect. We want to walk forward with our heads held high as Indigenous people – without having to sacrifice anything of ourselves or our cultural pride.*
8. *Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people can share what we all do best. We need a spirit of cooperation, openness, encouragement and respect. But our people must be given the space to do our healing first. And we must be given opportunities to move forward and to take control of our own destiny. Otherwise, all the stats that follow our communities so stubbornly will never really improve.*
9. *Indigenous women are in charge of the majority of households and are key food producers, and they represent a large part of the agricultural labour force, in addition to playing a major role in managing poultry, dairy animals, fisheries, aquaculture, and the marketing of handcrafts and food products.*
10. *Violence prevents women and girls from benefiting fully from health, education and other services; increases the risk of maternal death and vulnerability to HIV; and makes them more vulnerable to exploitation.*

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WORKSHOP FOR FEMALE LEADERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGION #10, KWAKWANI AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES



COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

RESIDENTS OF KURU

1. *“We find that we have children dropping out of school early, some schools are very crowded. There is child abuse, it is very rampant and also women are abused, some men take advantage of their wives.*
2. *There is a lack of jobs as well. In our community we have a lot of false allegations. Some people in my community they would want me to deal with certain issues, but when it regards them they tell me it is not my problem.*
3. *Drugs are a problem along the Berbice river.*
4. *There is alcohol abuse in the community.*
5. *Health is also an issue along the Berbice river. I almost died recently due to poor medical attention. It took me 14 hours to get medication.”*

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RESIDENTS OF KWANKWANI WATERFRONT

1. *“Some causes of teenage pregnancy and drug abuse are due to peer pressure and a lack of sex education. There is no tertiary education, after CSEC there is nothing to do, nowhere to learn a trade.*
2. *Child abuse is rampant due to bad parenting.*
3. *We have insufficient supply of medical equipment and drugs.*
4. *Under education we have a lot of trained teacher but the problem is that they need better accommodation. Child abuse, to curve this problem we need more sensitization via workshops.”*

RESIDENTS OF ITUNI

1. *“Ituni has natural resources, we would like for the government to explore and make use of what we have.*
2. *There is drug abuse in our community, I would like to encourage drug rehabilitation programs and have the young people involved.*
3. *Lands are restrained due to logging so we need available lands to work.”*

RESIDENTS OF BAMBOO

1. *“It is under populated due to lack of water and electricity.*
2. *The government can help us financially for this.*
3. *There is also a lack of transportation.*
4. *We need better leaders to manage these problems.”*

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5. *“We need more serious police. Sometimes you’re calling them and no answer, other times they are out drinking.”*
6. *“Right here in Kwakwani children are being abused but parents are covering it up. Some parents encourage persons to live home with their child.”*
7. *“There is an issue of trust and confidentiality with the police. This is why no one talks.”*
8. *“We all need to be snitches to protect our children. Parents are first in line to defend their children.”*
9. *“Generally residents are not aware about child rights so for me such as educating residents as well as children about this.”*
10. *“In the Berbice river areas, the government has provided some form of education, what is lacking is adult education. Kwakwani, has a nursery school, primary and secondary but they need adult education, tertiary education. Kwakwani has a hospital and health centre, they need an upgrade of the labs, we need x rays, ultrasound, etc. We also need an operating room.”*
11. *“Ituni has primary school but not a big population of secondary education.”*

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12. *“Kuru, has a government primary school and nursery, a secondary school but its private, 8k for residents and 15k for outsiders. The proposal is to see what the government can do about this. There was an IT hut but it is no longer operational. We need some form of skills training centre.”*
13. *“Kimbria, has a primary school with nursery department and other forms of adult education.”*
14. *“Kuru needs basic blood testing. Ituni has no ambulance currently.”*
15. *“Kimbria has a health centre with one midwife. With all areas, an adequate supply of drugs is necessary.”*
16. *“Some people dash away their children and allowing the man to rape the child. Because they like the man so much, it isn't right to know that you gon take you child and give way. I have survived entirely without a man, and I would advise no mother to give away their child.”*



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WORKSHOP FOR FEMALE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS OF REGION #9 ANNAI, LETHEM AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES



COMMENTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS OF ANNAI

1. *“Are arranged marriages still a norm in this community?”*
2. *“Not really, what they would do is meet up a party, get drunk and wake up next to each other, they get married.”*
3. *“In some churches you would find that women can’t be pastors when it should be balanced.”*
4. *“A female Toshao may not get the same respect as a male Toshao.”*
5. *“We need to put people who are capable and compassionate to be leaders of the community*
6. *“If you’re dating a man, check up his family background, it has a lot to do with his upbringing. If a man has been brought up in a house filled with violence, most cases he will have no space for love.”*
7. *“A lot of inequality is institutional and structural.”*

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FACTS AND FIGURES BY COMMISSIONER VANDA RADZIK

- The Sustainable Development Goal #5 is for Gender Equality by the year 2020. Goal 5 is the cross-cutting goal for all the other 17 SDGs.



COUNTING WOMEN'S WORK

- 67% of the world's work is done by Women. We only get 10% of the world's income.
- Women do double duty/double workload.

GENDER BUDGETING

- Guyana is the #1 country in the Caribbean (maybe in the world) for violence against women.
- 55 ½% of women in Guyana have experienced some form of abuse by an intimate partner. This is from a survey published in 2019 conducted by independent statistics experts and social/gender specialists.
- It is a very serious situation and calls for radical action, as well as long term investment in human development.

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LEGAL RIGHTS

- Over 20 laws that protect women, men and children; but do we know them? Do we use the laws to gain gender justice?
- To have a life free of violence, it is our right!

COMMENTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

1. *“One man said that Guyana has rape culture, it is very sad and very true.”*
2. *“We have all these races, but there is one race, the human race, divided into two, male and female. I’m not Bahai but I love the Bahai symbol, the human race is like one big bird flying as high as possible, they have two wings, if one of those wings is not completely good it cannot fly, so we have to keep equality going to reach the goal of humanity.”*



3. *“It is a fact that 67% of the world’s work is done by women with 10% of the income. This is because of the double duty of women.”*
4. *“We should recognize the housework that women do, compensate them and call it gender budget. Some countries already have this.”*
5. *“25th November is the day against violence against women.”*
6. *“We need to stop objectifying women.”*
7. *“How does carnival come in?”*
8. *“If you look at the official tour guide, they are advertising these women.”*
9. *“There was an incident at Mae’s where a boy was not allowed to enter school because of his Amerindian wear.”*

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LETHEM



MR. BRYAN ALLCOCK, CHAIRMAN OF THE REGIONAL DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL

He hoped that the participants will take this information back to their villages and/or institutions. He did a presentation on today's aspect on Gender Equality and Human Rights. Within the community, this concerns both male and female. Gender equality is equal rights of both men and women. We can find that millions of women around the world are victims of discrimination. In terms of equality, women have a problem applying for land. If you look at the news you will also hear about trafficking in women. Women are denied their sexual and reproductive health rights. Women human rights defendants are ostracized by their community and seen as a threat to religious institutions. Certain groups of women are vulnerable due to their age, ethnicity and social status. Harmful gender stereotypes must be dismantled. We must not look at what they should be doing, but as who they are. Women are unique individuals with their own unique desires.

In Cambodia, gender inequality is in all aspects of life. In education, 26% of women are illiterate, only a few are allowed to vote. 52% were not allowed to choose their spouse. In 2015, 1 out of 5 women may have experienced some form of inequality.

Women are forbidden to drive in Saudi Arabia, there is also discrimination of divorced wives. In aspects of citizenship, a man can immediately gain citizenship while women would have to go through a process for this. Gender inequality concerns both women and men and strongly impacts their lives. Gender equality is when women and men can enjoy the same rights and when they are equally valued and favoured. In reality men too experience inequality, high mortality, bad health, poor education. We need to make men understand that gender equality will benefit them as well. The European Union for gender equality recognizes men as a specific target group. Gender equality is not just a women thing but a men's thing.

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COMMENTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

1. *Decision making should be done as a couple.*
2. *“A man and woman must complement each other in the home.”*
3. *“Why is it that fathers give land to their sons?”*
4. *“It’s cultural practice.”*
5. *“Because of my job I cannot hire women that plan to have children.”*
6. *“The newspaper has a lot of news blatantly discriminating women.”*
7. *Is gender equality being taught in prisons?”*
8. *“Currently no.”*
9. *“Are there any plans to train police officers in terms of how to react in cases of domestic violence?”*
10. *“Not really but this is where social workers come into play.”*
11. *“It is a fact that 67% of the world’s work is done by women with 10% of the income. This is because of the double duty of women.”*
12. *“We should recognize the housework that women do, compensate them and call it gender budget. Belize has recently introduced this budget and currently has been a success.”*
13. *“Where can men in Lethem go if they want/need counseling?”*

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14. *“Years ago, men used to go to a pastor, pandit, imam, basically religious leaders for counseling; now we have put religion on the back burner.”*
15. *“I’ve been working in child protection. So far the reports we have received have been reported to the police station. I’m really happy to see the perpetrator being sentenced. Also I believe in counseling mothers who abuse their children. Another things is that when even something comes to you, report, it is an offense.”*

DISCUSSION ON SOCIAL ISSUES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY BY COMMISSIONER HAIMWATTIE LAGAN

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SOCIAL ISSUES OF YOUR COMMUNITY?

1. Child Abuse
2. Drug Abuse & Crime
3. Prostitution
4. Teenage Pregnancy

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GROUP 1: SOLUTIONS TO CHILD ABUSE

- i. Sensitize the public of the laws and recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse
- ii. Report promptly to the police
- iii. To have more welfare officers and more training
- iv. Rigid enforcement of existing laws
- v. Set up a regional task force for dealing with specific issues
- vi. Build shelters for abused children
- vii. Dealing with the community. The community has to work on a culture of non-acceptance
- viii. Support groups
- ix. We need more media coverage and more involvement with media sites

GROUP 2: SOLUTIONS TO PROSTITUTION

- i. Create job opportunities
- ii. Education and awareness
- iii. Enforcing laws e.g curfews
- iv. More security for our borders

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GROUP 3: SOLUTIONS TO DRUG ABUSE

- i. Awareness on the effects of drug abuse
- ii. Formation of clubs at schools
- iii. Engagement of enforcement
- iv. Counseling for abusers

GROUP 4 SOLUTIONS TO CRIME

- i. Having available jobs
- ii. Counseling
- iii. Increase of police patrols
- iv. Integrate them into skill training institutes or extra-curricular activities

GROUP 5: TEENAGE PREGNANCY

- i. Educate in schools and awareness on social media
- ii. Educate at homes
- iii. As a community advise these girls
- iv. Create groups to talk about this problems

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WORKSHOP FOR FEMALE LEADERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF REGION #2, ESSEQUIBO ISLANDS - ANNA REGINA



COMMENTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

1. *“Some parents are okay with their 16 year old boys having sex, but not thinking about how they’re having sex with somebody’s 16 year old daughter.”*
2. *“Some 16 year old boys can also be having sex with big women.”*
3. *“The law says there must be insertion, but doesn’t mean penetration, it can be deemed as rape.”*
4. *“Boys are inclined in tasks that get them physically involved, schools don’t necessarily give them this.”*
5. *“Gender equity is determined by equal outcomes and results. It says some people have to get a bit more.”*
6. *“Gender equality is sameness but gender equity is fairness.”*
7. *“An example, you can’t build a street and not take into consideration of others.”*
8. *“That is why what we normally do, we invite persons in the community, then persons tell you what they need. When they can come to an agreement and realize that this is what everyone needs, we then go about building it.”*

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COLLABORATION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS (DPP)

The Director of Public Prosecutions plays a vital role in the administration of justice in criminal causes or matters. It is the authority vested with the power and responsibility of exercising control over the prosecution of all criminal matters except the institution of court-martial.

Our Functions

The functions of the Director of Public Prosecutions are set out in article 187 of the constitution of Guyana. These are:

1. To institute and undertake criminal proceedings against any person before any court, other than a court-martial, in respect of any offence against the laws of Guyana.
2. To take over and continue any such criminal proceedings that may have been instituted by any other person or authority.
3. To discontinue at any stage before any judgment is delivered any such criminal proceedings instituted or undertaken by him/her or any other person or authority.

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ROLE OF THE DPP

- In carrying out its three main functions, the major activities of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions would include:
- Prefers indictments in the high court criminal sessions in Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo. During these criminal sessions, one or more state counsel are assigned to prosecute the cases listed to be heard by the Trial Judges
- Appear in the appellate court and the full court in appeals in summary matters and from all indictable charges in the high court
- Appear in the magistrate's court for a technical high profile matter and in extreme instances, where police prosecutors request assistance
Appear in the high court in applications for bail, habeas corpus, or application to leave the jurisdiction and for extension of time to keep persons in custody pending police investigations
- To provide the Guyana Police Force and law enforcement agencies with legal advice in the prosecution of criminal cases
- To ensure no citizen is charged unjustly
- To ensure that persons who break the law are charged and prosecuted according with the laws of Guyana.

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DISCUSSION ON SOCIAL ISSUES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY BY COMMISSIONER HAIMWATTIE LAGAN



GROUP 1: MENTAL HEALTH AND DISCRIMINATION OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY

- i. Effective Counseling
- ii. Medical Outreach
- iii. Education
- iv. Seminars
- v. Embrace laws protecting LGBT persons

GROUP 2: DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- i. Targeting youths
- ii. Targeting adults, leaders, etc
- iii. Getting youths involved in recreational activities
- iv. Rehab Centers

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GROUP 3: SUICIDE

- i. Monitoring
- ii. Financial Issues
- iii. Knowledge about suicide

GROUP 4: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- i. The influx of Venezuelan migrants
- ii. The use of alcohol
- iii. Infidelity
- iv. Unemployment
- v. Women spend more time on social media
- vi. Insecurity

GROUP 5: TEENAGE PREGNANCY

- i. Use of Contraceptives
- ii. Counseling
- iii. Showing love to family members
- iv. Parents should always take time to interact with their children

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WORKSHOP FOR FEMALE LEADERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF REGION #6, NEW AMSTERDAM



Mr. Permaul , Regional Chairperson in Berbice said that Regio 6 had the highest rate of domestic violence in the country. There are many factors that lead to inequality and gender violence. The first that comes to mind is alcohol and drug abuse. Also unemployment, when you find a man cannot cater for his manhood he may take it out on his family.

He further stated that there were other form of violence prevalent in Berbice, where women do not have food to eat, when children don't have any money, when the system is not helping women, this can cause emotional problems which can cause physical illness called psychosomatic illness. There was a rape case in India by four men, they found out that she was going to report them and they burned her to death. The fact that we in Guyana see it necessary to set up a gender equality commission, it is proof that there is work being done.

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CHAIRPERSON OF THE WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION, INDRA CHANDARPAL stated that the WGEC was in the process of developing a new strategic plan. She elaborated that the commission identified social justice as a new area of focus. She stated that since they were elected by stakeholders, it was necessary to elicit the views of diverse stake holders. Additionally the issue of violence and the response by police is really upsetting, this is why the Commission had the director of the Director of Public Prosecution Office's to educate the participants on the justice system.

She recalled that it was in 1960 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, The Mirabel Sisters who was murdered for defending social justice. It was a consequence of that, that November 25th, is the day remembered as a day of elimination of violence against women.



GROUP 1:

1. In most cases, the urban areas are more modernized, most times they have the most transportation. They have most access to telecommunications. The rural areas have almost

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non-existent healthcare and no access to public roads. Recreational facilities are non-existent. In both areas you can find physical and drug abuse. The positives are lands are good for farming and lack of crime.

2. You can educate yourself. Help to generate income and create employment. You can be responsible by attending meetings. Volunteering community projects. Engage in peer programs as well as counseling groups. You can choose to lead the communities.

GROUP 2:

1. Form organizations within the community, counseling, dialogue with people on different issues. Proper road and lighting. Go to religious leaders for counseling. Better hospital service, common courtesy is lacking. Keep the surrounding clean. Transportation is needed, hospital facilities are lacking.
2. What can be done to...Make schedules, start the day with God. Be an example as parents. Education on Teenage Pregnancy and Drug Abuse. Improve recreational facility and create employment. Help with skills, sewing, etc. Voluntary work. Appreciate and support each other.

GROUP 3:

1. There are no kitchens to prepare hot, sufficient meals in schools. There's a need in counseling. Better internet access. STEM equipment is not supplied in some rural areas. The teaching styles adopted in the urban areas are not the same in rural areas. In terms of health there is insufficient equipment and medication, also doctors not being specialized. Roads such as in Black Bush Polder need upgrading, they don't have phone lines. The quality of roads in the rural areas are not on par compared to urban areas. The drainage systems need to be remodeled. Street lights need to be regularly maintained. Better quality of water is needed. GTT has no technicians in this area and would have to wait until persons in Georgetown come here. Employment, depending on the area it can either be easy or difficult. Garbage or waste disposal need to be maintained. Access for single parents to buying land.

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2. Community service. Less littering. More garbage collectors, stricter rules. More positively extra-curricular activities. More sports grounds. Build heavy duty roads. Better parenting.

GROUP 4:

1. Urban communities have the upper hand. Rural communities experience social injustice. These communities are subjected to lack of education and lack of job opportunities We should set goals. Train our children. Educate ourselves. Budgeting. Shared responsibilities with spouses. Empower ourselves and enhance our quality of life.
2. What can you do to help improve our community? We should go back to family values, encourage people to take leadership, establish job training outlets, elect leaders in our community, re-educate our children.

ANNUAL W&GEC'S RETREAT 2019



The Women and Gender Equality Commission hosted its Annual Retreat the Baganara Island Resort on 11, 12 and 13th December, 2019. The main Objectives of the Retreat were to review the

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current Strategic Plan with an aim to assess and evaluate the actions taken and the impact on the beneficiaries. To examine the Lessons learnt and the way forward for the Commission. The Commission took a decision to take out Institutional Strenghtening for the W&GEC pillar and replace that with Strenghtening of Social Justice. “Achieving gender justice is not only a matter of basic rights. It’s also a key means of achieving fairer societies and overcoming poverty. And we all have an equal part to play in making it happen.”



The Commission also felt that it is a useful opportunity to look at the lessons we’ve learnt, and what we have achieved in ten years of working together. We looked at the role of our Commissioners and staff over the years under the guidance of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to reevaluate the committees that have been established, as well as to collaborate with other agencies.

The Commission thought that after ten years this would be the best time to reevaluate the Recommendations made to Parliament and so assess where these Recommendations were effectively acted upon.

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The Commission also undertook to examine whether the recommendations sent to parliament were acted upon.



DISCOURSE ON WGEC RECOMMENDATIONS BY MS. VANDA RADZIK AND MRS. SHALIMAR ALI – HACK

The Commissioners of the Women and Gender Equality Commission recommend the following to the National Assembly:

No.	Recommendations	Action(s) taken
1.	CARICOM Legislation on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace must be adapted to be used internationally.	Prevention of discrimination legislation was examined by Josephine Whitehead and edits made. DPP suggested a stand-alone legislation.
2.	Women & Gender Equality Commission to be a part of government's delegation to meetings of CEDAW. WGEC to follow-up with Min. of Foreign Affairs.	Met with officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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	<p>Ensure what is happening with CEDAW.</p> <p>WGEC should be part of the delegation to CEDAW.</p> <p>WGEC to be part of the prep. of the shadow report with NGOs.</p>	
3.	<p>Review the selection process of jurors with a view to widening the pool of eligible persons.</p> <p>DPP as a commissioner to do sensitization on TIP.</p> <p>WGEC to lobby chancellor for interior court sitting more often. (DPP to raise questions based on issues with the chancellor.)</p>	<p>Met with Officials from the Judiciary.</p>
4.	<p>More sensitization programmes to be implemented for TIP and Sexual Offences.</p> <p>WGEC posters.</p> <p>Partner with NGOS to support #6.</p> <p>Guidance and counseling should be time tabled in schools.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education launched two psychosocial counseling units.</p> <p>Gap of services between urban and rural areas.</p>	<p>Protocol to deal with victims of TIP established. The WGEC needs to take action on the increased rate in TIP and sexual offenses. We need to sensitize others and sensitize ourselves.</p>
5.	<p>The creation of a policy on Sexual Harassment at the Place of Work. There is need for a national policy on SH in the workplace. Investigative Officer to be supported by Commissioners with cases.</p>	<p>Department of Youth, Sport & Culture, Cheddi Jagan International Airport and the University of Guyana has established a SH policy thus far.</p>
6.	<p>Guidance and Counseling should be available in schools. WGEC to partner with NGOs. Mobile counseling units are also needed. Counseling in schools will be done throughout the country.</p>	<p>There are currently Social Workers assigned to most public schools.</p>

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<p>7.</p>	<p>All cases of TIP should be dealt with by relevantly/specially trained Magistrates.</p> <p>Meeting with chancellor to lobby for specially assigned Domestic violence court to deal with courts expeditiously.</p> <p>Resuscitate the Domestic violence units in stations.</p>	<p>Protocol for TIP victims established.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>All cases of Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences be dealt with by relevantly/specially trained Magistrates. They were established in Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara. They are currently being looked at by the magistrate inclusive of sexual domestic cases.</p>	<p>Sexual Offences court established in Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Need provision for written protocols for TIP.</p>	<p>Done</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Noise nuisance offence should be determined by decibel level instead of affected private citizens.</p>	<p>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has some established protocols</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Domestic Violence victims who do not wish to pursue prosecution against the perpetrator should be both placed on a one-year bond and undergo mandatory counseling from a certified provider. Time off from work is needed for victims of domestic abuse. Courts should have schedules for dealing with domestic abuse cases.</p>	<p>There has been some form of redress...enquire...</p>
<p>12.(a)</p>	<p>Resuscitate the Gender Desk at CARICOM ensure that all member states access the technical assistance needed to fully implement CEDAW and the other treaties our Governments have sign on to. WGEC to meet with Ms. Annmarie Williams and Dr. Hilary Brown and find out what we can do to support them.</p>	<p>Done</p>

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12.(b)	Gender Sensitivity Training should be mandatory for all judicial, protective services, health and social services personnel especially those who interact with the public as part of their job.	WGES has started training with some of the agencies (Ministry of Health, University of Guyana, Permanent Secretaries, Members of Parliament, Toshaos...)
13.(a)	Ensure there are active Gender Focal Points in each Government Ministry and organization. Their purpose is to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into Government programmes and policies and that a gender lens is used when any programmes or policy is initiated and carried out. A structured reporting mechanism should be in place to monitor progress and this should involve the WGEC.	Established and functioning in CARICOM and Ministry of Social Protection
13.(b)	Gender budgeting seminars held in parliament needs to be done with Ministry of Finance.	Follow-up needed
14.	Speedy Enactment of the Juvenile Justice Bill. ILO to provide guidance on paternity leave. WGEC to lobby parliament and political parties. WGEC to lobby for 24hr childcare facilities. WGEC continue the lobby for the mobile court. (Meeting with chancellor.)	Done
15.	To consider the setting up of a few pilots of Community Counseling Centres.	
16.	The building code to be reviewed to include provision of access to persons with disabilities.	
17.	Gender Training to be included in the Health and Family Life Education Curriculum.	

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18.	Government to consider the Establishment of a national Gender Advisory Committee.
19.	Government to consider the provision of Paternity leave to assist women where there has been an addition to the family by birth or adoption.
20.	There is a need for a Workplace Policy on 'Flexible Working Hours' for women who are the caregivers.
21.	The delivery of Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive age appropriate Health and Rights Education in schools.
22.	Promote Parenting Skills Training in Pre and Post Natal Clinics in all Health Centres.
23.	Encourage more 'Male Friendly Health Centres' such as the Pilot Project in Region 5.
24.	All programmes and policies should reflect 'Gender Mainstreaming' for all Government Employees.
25.	Gender Parity in Parliament and Local Government bodies in keeping with Guyana's commitment to Sustainability Development Goal 5.
26.	All documents should be clearly comprehensible to persons with disabilities, e.g. Braille.
27.	Equal NIS provisions for widowers and widows.
28.	Provision of adequate public sanitary facilities accompanied by public awareness campaigns for proper use and maintenance.
29.	Implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting.

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30.	Encourage Government to sign-on to the Optional Protocol of Women.
31.	
32.	Produce a harmonized code of law on Women's rights: this should be one book that contains all laws protecting all women but set out as a code, not separate laws. The code should be harmonized with international law obligations and with other national laws to ensure that there are no gaps in the protection afforded to women. The code should be written in simple accessible language as far as possible. The Maputo Protocol could provide guidance on enhancing Women's rights.
33.	Repeal Article 149 (6) which allows discrimination against women (and others) in the exercise of their fundamental rights and freedoms.
34.	Repeal Article 152 (savings clause) which protects colonial legislation from challenge under the fundamental rights provisions of the constitution.
35.	Repeal Article 154 (6) which allows Guyana to divest itself or limits its obligation under the international covenants incorporated into the constitution.
36.	A sexual harassment police should be instituted at all places of work and educational institutions as recommended by WGEC in 2017.
37.	An immediate action would be write to all employers asking them to publish the following statement "Sexual harassment at the workplace is strictly forbidden. Employees who engage in

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	sexual harassment are liable to disciplinary action, including dismissal.
38.	Guyana should introduce and enforce legislation to identify and punish those who engage in sexual harassment.
39.	Guyana should improve access to justice for rural women by having mobile courts.
40.	Guyana should provide on-going specialized training on the Sexual Offences Act and the Domestic Violence Act for judges, Magistrates, police officers and others involved in the criminal justice system.
41.	Guyana should investigate and report on the condition for women prisoners and evaluate conditions against the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (The Bangkok Rules)
42.	Review the penalties for criminal offences; raise the level of fines; add a wider range of penalties including compensation to victims, apologies/admission of wrongdoing and other possibilities for non-coercive restorative justice.
43.	Carry out an analysis of the employment sector. -What jobs are women in? -What are women paid compared to men?
44.	Introduce paternity leave in law.
45.	Include paternity leave in contracts of employment.

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46.	Provide facilities for child-care at places of employment.
47.	Provide legal aid services throughout Guyana with priority being given to matters that affect that affect women such as gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination.
48.	Conduct training workshops and provide women with information on their legal remedies including redress for criminal offences and remedies against discrimination.
49.	Hold a judicial colloquium on women rights.
50.	Provide information to Parliament on the rights of women. There should be a compulsory training course on women's rights for all MPs before they take up their seats.
51.	Put a ban on all music in the public arena which violates the dignity of women.
52.	Develop a code of conduct for advertisers to ensure respect for the dignity of women.
53.	Develop a code of conduct for media and provide training to journalists to ensure respect for the dignity of women.
54.	Ensure all public officials are given training on Women's rights.
55.	Conduct research into the factors that lead or contribute to violence against women and develop and implement a strategy to reduce that violence to zero.

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DISCOURSE ON STRATEGIC PLAN BY MRS. INDRA CHANDARPAL & COMM. CHUCK – A – SANG

- ***Access to Social Justice***
 - Gender equality a matter of Social Justice
 - Shared household chores
 - Child care
 - Looking for signs of Domestic Violence
 - Support
- ***Access to Laws***
 1. Collaboration at a national level;
 2. How and why not; who are the players.
- ***Access to Information***
 - a. Legal Aid
 - b. Court system (time laps)
 - c. W&GEC – billboards, posters, workshops
- ***If no access:***
 - a. What is needed and what can be done
- ***Hindrances:***
 - b. Lack of fuel, vehicles
 - c. Reluctance to provide services

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- ***Lack of Trust***
 - a. Policy for placements of rape kits
 - b. Training for police officers
- ***Equal rights, services and access***
 - a. How to monitor SDGs with respect to Social Justices
 - b. How do we benefit from collaboration with other agencies, with resources, with management
- ***Social Services***
 - a. Absence in rural areas
 - b. WGEC measurements
 - c. Things that are doable
- ***Recommendations***
 - a. Advertise ourselves stating what we have done, what we would like to do.
 - b. Follow-ups are needed for future workshops.
 - c. Reports from previous workshops should be analyzed to inform the way forward for future workshops.
 - d. Work on a pilot project that is doable to the grass root groups. (supportive collaboration)



DISCOURSE ON 2020 WORK PLAN BY COMMISSIONER KAREN VANSLUYTMAN-CORBIN AND COMMISSIONER DEBRA HENRY

- Every other month a roundtable meeting
- Stakeholders engagement

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- Identify questions to ask political parties
- Produce harmonized code on Women's Rights
- Write to all political parties to invite their thoughts on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.
- International Women's Day
- Women in Science prize in honour of Magda Pollard in collaboration with IGS
- Women's History Month Exhibition
- Giftland – Jubilee Republic Anniversary
- April – World Health Day – Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) roundtable
- 4th Wednesday in April – Discussion on Women's Health/SRH; Press Statement on Rape and Sexual Harassment
- 12th May, 2020; 15th May, 2020 International Day of the Family
- Press Statement; 26th May, 2020
- Look at Sexual Offences Court Conviction (Have the courts been useful?)
- June ILO Decent Work; World Day Against Child Labour 12th June, 2020;
- 15th June, 2020 Elderly Abuse (Partnership with Comm. Hooper on the Elderly to issue Press Statement)
- UN Public Service Day Posters; 23rd June 2020
- Explore UG & WWF for collaboration 24th June, 2020 Roundtable;
- 24th June, 2020 – Roundtable in collaboration with the IOM; DPP to address TIP.

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THE WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN INSTALLING BILLBOARD IN STRATEGIC AREAS IN GUYANA TO SUPPORT THE ELIMINATING OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN NOVEMBER 2020 TO COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN BILL BOARD DEMERARA HARBOUR BRIDGE



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN BILL BOARD DEMERARA PARIKA



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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN BILL BOARD PARLIAMENT



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN BILL BOARD LINDEN



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