

**COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA**

**FIRST ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION**

**PERIOD  
MAY 2010 TO MAY 2011**

**PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF  
THE WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION.**

**30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2011**

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## **OVERVIEW**

## **DECLARATION**

The First 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, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2009.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **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 and members were appointed under Resolution No. 86 which was passed in the National Assembly on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> 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, and Rights of the Child Commission.

## **2.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION**

**(15 Commissioners were sworn in on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2009 by H.E. President Bharrat Jagdeo)**

### **Regional Women's Affairs' Committee**

Ms. Nandrainie Coonjah

Ms. Ernestine Barker Logan

Ms. Bebbi Haliema Khan

**Culture/ Ethnic**

Ms. Nicole Cole

Mr. Peter Persaud

**Women**

Ms. Shalimar Ali-Hack

Ms. Magda Pollard

Ms. Vanda Radzik

**WPO**

Ms. Indranie Chandarpal

**NCW**

Ms. Cheryl Sampson

**Trades Union**

Ms. Gaitri Baron

Ms. Gillian Burton

Ms. Karen VanSluytman-Corbin

**Professional**

Ms. Debra Ann Henry

**Private Sector**

Ms. Renata Chuck-A-Sang

**Women's Affairs Bureau**

Ms. Hymawattie Lagan

**Representatives from other Commissions**

Bishop Juan Edghill – Ethnic Relations Committee

Ms. Sandra Hooper – Rights of the Child Commission

**W& G E C Representatives on other Commissions**

Mr. Peter Persaud – Ethnic Relations Committee

Ms. Nicole Cole – Rights of the Child Committee

**Senior Technical Staff**

Ms. Diana – Swan-Lawrence -Chief Executive Officer

**Clerical and Office Support**

Ms. Maria Rahubir – Administrative Assistant

**3.0 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON**

At the elections held on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2010 Ms. Indranie Chandarpal and Ms. Cheryl Sampson were elected Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson respectively.

**4.0 MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION**

The Commission agreed to convene statutory meetings on the last Wednesday of every month. During the period of reporting, the Commission convened fourteen (14) statutory meetings. The numbers and dates of the meetings are as follows.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> May 2010</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> July 2010</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> August 2010</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2010</b>
<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> Oct 2010</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010</b>
<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> Dec 2010</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2011</b>
<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2011</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> Mar 2011</b>
<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> Apr 2011</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> May 2011</b>
<b>14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> Jun 2011</b>
<b>15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> Jul 2011</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> Aug 2011</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> Sep 2011</b>
<b>18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> Oct 2011</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> Nov 2011</b>
<b>20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> Dec 2011</b>

## **5.0 MAIN OBJECTIVE**

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.

## **FUNCTIONS**

In addition to the MAIN OBJECTIVE, the functions of the Women and Gender Equality Commission are to –

- (a) promote the issues related to the enhancement of the status of women, girls and gender issues.
- (b) promote the integration of women's needs and interests and mainstreaming of gender issues;
- (c) promote the empowerment of women;
- (d) promote women's rights as human rights;
- (e) raise the awareness of the contribution of women and problems faced by women including the recognition and value of unwaged work;
- (f) 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 as being different from those of men;
- (g) educate and monitor employees and the public on desirable employment practices in relation to women and men;
- (h) monitor compliance and make recommendations for the compliance with international instruments to which the Government accedes from time to time, including those already acceded to and which relate to the purpose of the Commission;
- (i) evaluate any system of personal and 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 with regard thereto;
- (j) recommend and promote the implementation of legislation and the formulation of policies and measures so as to enhance and protect the status of women;
- (k) 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;



- (l) promote consultation and cooperation with women's organisations in relation to decision making that affects the lives of women;
- (m) recommend training and technical assistance to support initiatives by and for women and girls; and promote the participation of women in national decision-making

## **6.0. CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### **27<sup>th</sup> August, 2009**

15 Women and Gender Equality Commissioners were sworn in by President Bharrat Jagdeo.

### **21<sup>st</sup> April, 2010**

1<sup>st</sup> Women and Gender Equality Commission Meeting to select Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

**23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2010**

Media Watch Committee was formed. The members of the Committee are Mr. Peter Persaud - Leader, Ms. Nicole Cole, Ms. Ernestine Logan, Ms. Nandranie Coonjah and Ms. Haliema Khan.

**12<sup>th</sup> May, 2010**

Mainstreaming Gender in UNDP's Programme Cycle Workshop

**15<sup>th</sup> May, 2010**

Bishop Edghill named ERC's representative on W& G E C.

**17<sup>th</sup> May, 2010**

Deputy Chairperson Sampson, and Commissioners Lagan and Cole identified to be representatives on the Situation Assessment and Analysis of Women and Children Committee.

**17<sup>th</sup> May, 2010**

Commissioner Henry identified as representative on Guyana Country Coordinating Mechanism and Ernestine Barker Lagan as Alternative Representative

**23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2010**

2<sup>nd</sup> Statutory Meeting for 2010

**2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2010**

Meeting with USAID Kevin Mc Laughlin Chief of Party (Ag) and Mrs. I. Chandarpal, Chairperson to discuss how the Governance Enhancement Project (GEP) can assist the Commission in fulfilling its mandate

**8<sup>th</sup> July, 2010**

Positions for CEO and Administrative Assistant of W&GEC were advertised in the print media.

**28<sup>th</sup> July, 2010**

3<sup>rd</sup> Statutory Meeting for 2010 where Mr. Peter Persaud was nominated to be the W&G E C 's representative on the ERC's Commission.

**25<sup>th</sup> August, 2010**

4<sup>th</sup> Statutory Meeting for 2010

**8<sup>th</sup> September, 2010**

Subsidiary meeting of the Women and Gender Equality Commission

1. Specific recommendations for USAID request
2. Draft Programme of the Commission for 2011

**20<sup>th</sup> September, 2010**

Meeting with ERC to discuss participation at GUYEXPO

**22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2010**

5<sup>th</sup> Statutory Meeting for 2010

**24<sup>th</sup> September, 2010**

Letter sent to Ms. Aleema Nasir, Chairperson of the Rights of the Child Commission to nominate a member to the Women and Gender Equality Commission and named Commissioner Nicole Cole as the W & G E C representative on Rights of the Child Commission.

**13<sup>th</sup> October, 2010**

Letter sent to Mr. Kevin Mc Laughlin, Chief of Party (Ag), USAID to discuss areas of support to the Commission.

**15<sup>th</sup> October, 2010**

CEO assumed duty at W& G E C's Office

**1<sup>st</sup> November, 2010**

Administrative Assistant assumed duty at W& G E C's Office

**18<sup>th</sup> November, 2010**

The Chairperson and CEO of the Women and Gender Equality Commission met with Mr. Kevin Mc Laughlin, Chief of Party (Ag) of USAID on the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 to discuss the following areas:

- Capacity Building
- Technical Assistance
- Training
- Commodity Assistance
- Good Governance
- Strengthening of relationship with civil society
- Civil Rights
- Human Rights

**2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2010**

Meeting with Ethnic Relations, Women and Gender Equality, Human Rights and, Rights of the Child Commissions and the Office of the President to discuss administrative issues. A number of issues were discussed pertaining to the location and work of the Commissions.

**Recommendations**

It was recommended that additional Costs for Services to the Premises must be shared by Commissions.

It was proposed that the Finance Department of the Human Rights Commission be set up immediately.

Ms. Coleen Brandford, Administrative Officer of the Human Rights Commission was identified to be the point person for communication within the Commissions and the Office of the President.

**6<sup>th</sup> December, 2010**

**W&GEC sent letters to the Ministry of Education inviting them to meet with the Commissioners for a Capacity Building session. Letters were also sent to the Ministry of Public Works and Communication and the Ministry of Finance to highlight issues raised by the Commissioners.**

**8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010**

W&GEC held a Meeting with Ms. Beverly Alert and Ms Wanita Mangal, representatives of the British High Commission among the issues discussed were:

- Assistance to set up a Website for the W&GEC.
- Provision of computers and printers to the Women & Gender Equality Commission.

**9<sup>th</sup> December, 2010**

**The Chairperson and the CEO met with Mr. Kevin Mc. Laughlin, Chief of Party (Ag), USAID, among some of the issues discussed were:**

1. The USAID in collaboration with the W&GEC to host the International Women's Day Conference on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2011.
2. The USAID to revise the National Development Institute Training Manual to focus on Training Women in Leadership
3. The Training to target women in Political Parties, NDCs, Trade Unions, Private Sectors, Key Ministries (Amerindian Affairs, Home Affairs, Human Services, Health and Education)
4. Training to be tapered to 3 modules for 4 months
5. Topics to be on Leadership, Media and Negotiation
6. Training to start in Region 4 and spread to all the other regions.

**13<sup>th</sup> December, 2010**

**The Media Watch Team did interviews with NCN to discuss the findings of research done on issues in the Media that affect women (see appendix 3).**

**3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2011,**

**The Chairperson and the CEO of the W&GEC had a Meeting with Ms. Doris Roos, Head of the Child Protection Unit of UNICEF, Issues addressed were:**

- The working hours of female security guards affect children and the household.

- Collaboration to revisit the National Plan of Action for Women
- Support the Commission to have a brochure with logo, goals and objectives etc.

**10<sup>th</sup> January, 2011**

**Letters of invitation sent to Justice George and the Ministry of Education to do Capacity Building Sessions.**

**12<sup>th</sup> January, 2011**

**Sub-Committee Meeting to discuss meetings with political parties.**

**21st January, 2011**

**Meeting with Mr. Kevin Mc. Laughlin of USAID and Chairperson and CEO of the W&GEC to discuss the International Women's Day Conference**

**26<sup>th</sup> January, 2011**

**9<sup>th</sup> Statutory Meeting of the W&GEC**

**27<sup>th</sup> January, 2011**

**Meeting with Mr. Kevin Mc. Laughlin of USAID and Chairperson and CEO of the W&GEC to discuss the International Women's Day Conference**

**2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2011**

**CEO met with representatives of MoF.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2011**

**Meeting with Mr. Kevin Mc. Laughlin of USAID and Chairperson and CEO of the W&GEC to discuss the International Women's Day Conference**

**7<sup>th</sup> February, 2011**

**The Chairperson and the CEO of the Women and Gender Equality Commission met with Mr. Raymond Duroin, Head of CIDA and Ms. Ana Iles, Program Officer for the Gender Affairs Unit to discuss areas of collaboration between CIDA and the Women and Gender Equality Commission.**

**8<sup>th</sup> February, 2011**

**The British High Commissioner handed over 2 computers and 1 multipurpose printer to the Women and Gender Equality Commission.**

**11<sup>th</sup> February, 2011**

**Meeting with Mr. Kevin Mc. Laughlin of USAID and Chairperson and CEO of the W&GEC to discuss the International Women's Day Conference**

**15<sup>th</sup> February, 2011**

**The Chairperson and CEO of the Women and Gender Equality commission met with the British High Commissioner and Ms. Wanita Mangal to explore further collaboration with the BHC.**

**24<sup>th</sup> February, 2011**

**10<sup>th</sup> Statutory Meeting of W&GEC**

**Ms. Hamilton, Chief Planning Officer and Ms. King-Cameron, Health & Family Life Coordinator of the Ministry of Education met with the Commissioners of the W&GEC at its Statutory Meeting for a Capacity Building session (see appendix).**

**1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2011**

**Meeting with Mr. Kevin Mc. Laughlin of USAID and Chairperson and CEO of the W&GEC to discuss the International Women's Day Conference**

**8<sup>th</sup> March, 2011**

**The W&GEC in collaboration with USAID celebrated 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2011, International Women's Day with a Conference under the theme: Celebrating 100 years of Women Activism. Ms. Magda Pollard was honoured on this day (see appendix 3).**

**10<sup>th</sup> March, 2011**

**Meeting with Mr. Kevin Mc. Laughlin of USAID and Chairperson and CEO of the W&GEC to discuss the way forward after the International Women's Day Conference**

**15<sup>th</sup> March, 2011**

**Chairperson and CEO of the W& G E C had a Meeting with Ms. Roberta Clarke of UNIFEM and Mr. Abaas Mancey Coordinator of the Domestic Violence Policy Unit. Recommendations were:**

- The need for a coordinated response at the national level to combat domestic violence.
- The need for Training modules and stipends for trainers on Domestic Violence.

- Quick response from police to maintain law and order
- Policy makers need to use best practices from other countries.
- Arts and Culture should be used to change behaviours in schools.
- Community intervention is necessary therefore there should be the pilot for Community Counselling Centres.
- Efficient & Effective networking among the various agencies such as Legal Aid to help fight domestic violence.
- The need for more research on issues affecting women and families.

**18<sup>th</sup> March, 2011**

**Meeting with Mr. Kevin Mc. Laughlin of USAID and Chairperson and CEO of the W&GEC to discuss areas of Training for the W&GEC.**

**30<sup>th</sup> March, 2011**

**11<sup>th</sup> Statutory Meeting with representatives of AFC and GAP to emphasize the need to have no less than 30% women represented in parliament (see appendix 3)**

**31<sup>st</sup> March, 2011**

**Ms. Sandra Hooper nominated as RCC's representative to W&GEC.**

**1<sup>st</sup> April, 2011**

**The W&GEC's Website was established. Among some of the features are:**

**Gallery**

**Video**

**Discussion Forum**

**Awards Page**

**Meet the team**

**Registration of Events**

**Calendar of Upcoming Events**

**Email Access**

**5<sup>th</sup> April, 2011**

**Sub-Committee Meeting to plan for Public Symposim on Sexual Harassment.**

**8<sup>th</sup> April, 2011**

**Ms. Gail Texiera met with the Chairpersons and CEOs of the W&GEC and the RCC.**

**18<sup>th</sup> April, 2011**

**Letters of invitation sent of Minister Nadir, ILO and Dr. Gwendoline Williams of T&T to speak at the Public Symposium on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

**April 21<sup>st</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Advanced Participatory Methods (APM) Training (Module 1)**

**Date and time:** (three 3-day sessions), 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.,

**Brief Description** The APM training focused on three methods namely: Consensus Workshop Methods, Focused Group Discussions and Action Planning Methods. APM provided participants with a set of facilitation tools and techniques to be used in consensus building, in networking and in advocacy. APM training will increase the skill sets of GEP partners to strengthen public participation skills in development activities in order to build capability, enhance performance, engage stake holders and refine institutional accountability.

**28<sup>th</sup> April, 2011 –Commissioner travelled to Berbice to interview a person for the Magazine on outstanding women of African Descent.**

**29<sup>th</sup> April, 2011**

**12<sup>th</sup> Statutory Meeting where Justice Roxanne George-Wiltshire did a Capacity Building session on the Conventions on Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women and the Rights of the Child (see appendix).**

**3<sup>st</sup> May, 2011**

**Commission hosted a Public Awareness session to sensitise the public on Sexual Harassment in the work places at the Umana Yana (see Appendix 3).**

**13<sup>th</sup> May, 2011**

**Meeting with Chairperson, Mrs. I. Chandarpal, Commissioner Cole and Ras Saul to plan for cultural activities for 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2011.**

**25<sup>th</sup> May, 2011**

**13<sup>th</sup> Statutory Meeting of W&GEC.**

**May 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 30**



## **Leadership Negotiation Workshop (Module 2) (See Appendix 3)**

**Brief Description:** The ICONS Project delivered a three-day Leadership Negotiation Workshops for Guyanese constituents. In accordance with the aims of the GEP, the workshop will develop key competencies in communication, collaborative leadership, negotiation, decision-making, and strategic thinking through interactive presentations and a unique simulation designed specifically to address the challenges participants will face as they apply the skills and techniques taught in the workshop to their daily work.

**7th June, 2011**

**W&GEC hosted a Press Conference to report on the meetings with the four political parties represented in Parliament in relation to 12 questions that were sent to them pertinent to their commitment and platform for women in the upcoming regional and general elections.**

**13<sup>TH</sup> June, 2011**

**W&GEC met with the Media to discuss the formation of an Association of Women Journalists to focus on programmes relating to the status of women**

**June 13 – 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

## **Data Research & Issue Identification Training (Module 3)**

**Brief Description:** GEP delivered a three-day Data Research & Issue Identification Training that will address *data collection, analysis and issue identification*, key elements of policy creation in which an issue can be identified for action. This module will focus on the following specific themes: (see Appendix).

*Data collection* – How to develop fact-based (empirical) information which can lead to issue identification.

*Data analysis* - Preparing the issue i.e. use of data to develop policy. Participants will consider principles for critically evaluating data.

*Issue identification* – The deliberative process by which information is used to select, frame and communicate highest priority issues to be addressed.

## **7.0 FUTURE PLANS**

**21<sup>st</sup> to 23rd July, 2011**

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING & MESSAGE ARTICULATION TRAINING (Module 4)**

**Brief Description:** GEP will deliver a three day Strategic Planning & Message Articulation Training that will address how CSOs can use skills developed in previous sessions, especially regarding the dissemination and use of public policy data and analysis. This module will focus on the following specific themes: strategic planning for public policy dialogue, message development, and use of media and other forms of communication in promoting public policy dialogue.

**27<sup>th</sup> August, 2011**

**Launch of the Magazine on 50 Out-standing women of African Descent who made a great contribution to Guyana in the areas of Agriculture, Arts and Culture, Communication, Education, Health, Business, Politics, Religion and Spirituality, Judiciary and other areas.**

**31<sup>st</sup> August, 2011 – Statutory meeting and capacity building for Commissioners.**

**1<sup>st</sup> September, 2011 – Commission in collaboration with other NGOs to host a Candle Light Vigil in solidarity with countries in the throes of war and to highlight how wars put women’s issues on the back burner.**

**28<sup>th</sup> September, 2011 – Statutory meeting and capacity building for Commissioners**

**24<sup>th</sup> October, 2011 – Public Symposium on UN Day to highlight issues affecting women especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW).**

**26<sup>th</sup> October, 2011 – Statutory meeting and capacity building for Commissioners**

**25<sup>th</sup> November, 2011 – Public Symposium on International Day of Violence Against Women.**

**30<sup>th</sup> November, 2011 – Statutory meeting and capacity building for Commissioners.**

**28<sup>th</sup> December, 2011 – Statutory meeting and capacity building for Commissioners.**

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

- 1) The need to expand the modality of the NIS Benefits for
  - (a) Maternity

(b) Dentures

(c) Spectacles

2) Proper Services for Women who use Speed Boats as a means of Transportation.

3) Caricom Legislation on Sexual Harassment in the Work Place must be adapted to be used in nationally.

4) To consider the setting up of a few pilots of the Community Counselling Centers.