

Report on the Implementation  
of the Beijing Plan for Action in Dominica

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**Department:** *Women's Bureau, Ministry of Community Development & Women's Affairs*

**Coordinator Research and Program Development:** *Carla Harris Pascal*

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## ACRONYMS

BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CD&WA	Community Development and Women's Affairs
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
DAIC	Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce
DNCW	Dominica National Council of Women
DREP	Dominica Rural Enterprise Project
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women
GAD	Gender and Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MCA	Movement for Cultural Awareness
NAP	National Action Priorities
NDFD	National Development Foundation
NDFD	National Development Foundation
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
SPAT	Small Projects Assistance Team
SWAP	SPAT Women Association for Progress
UN	United Nations
UNFEM	United Nations Development Fund
WB	Women's Bureau
WID	Women in Development

## INTRODUCTION

**This report on the Implementation of the Beijing Plan for Action, is prepared by the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs.**

### Usefulness of the Report

The report attempts to assess the status of post-Beijing interventions in Dominica, particularly with respect to the two (2) critical criteria included in the National Action Priorities recommendations [NAP], viz. *'Women and Poverty'* and *'Violence Against Women'*. The objective is not to provide an exhaustive compilation of indicators and statistics, rather it is a brief overview of the follow-up activity stimulated by the 1995 Conference and the Beijing Platform for Action [BPA]. Developed in response to a UN Questionnaire to governments, the report may also serve as an useful tool for Dominican policymakers and practitioners, to further advance gender equity and the advancement of women, as well as to provide direction for gender-related research (itself a fundamental component in the formation of appropriate policy, programs and projects).

### Structure & Limitations

The report is structured along the guidelines presented in the UN Questionnaire and consists of three sections including:-

1. An overview of general trends and experiences in implementation.
2. Resource allocation and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the National Action Priorities [NAP].
3. Implementation of those critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action most pertinent to Dominica.

Given the time limitations, the paucity of documentation in the island generally, and the question of relevance, there are naturally areas which are not be dealt with as fully as might be desirable in this report. For example, the issue of women and the media has not been addressed; the same can be said of women and armed conflict which is not a pressing matter in the Dominican context. Similarly, the researcher has not included an answer to Part III, Question (c), Number (9). The question required a personal vision for women's advancement and equality in the new millenium, which seemed inappropriate to an official government document.

## Information Sources

Three main methods of inquiry were used.

1. Mini -questionnaires. These were submitted to various government departments and NGO's asking for a summary of post-Beijing interventions. Formal replies were obtained from two sources only.
2. Direct interviews with resource persons within organizations involved in developmental work with women. (This method proved the most effective in accessing information locally and probably reflects the wealth of knowledge available from our local human resources. Nonetheless, this situation may well severely limit institutional learning over time and indicates the need for stronger reporting, research and documentation activities on-island.)
3. Reports, information sheets and statistical data.

For a list of the various contact persons and organizations that provided information and facilitated this research see Appendix AI.

Preparation for Beijing

Dominica's preparation for the 1995 Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing was extensively collaborative. The Women's Bureau (a governmental body), in conjunction with the Dominica National Council for Women [DNCW], (the main local women's NGO umbrella organization) conducted four (4) zonal consultations during 1993 and 1994. Additionally, at the regional level, several joint preparatory committee meetings were convened by UNIFEM CARICOM and ECLAC. Pre-Beijing consultations helped to assess the status of women in Dominica and served to pinpoint the two main areas for national focus viz. *'Women and Poverty'* and *'Violence Against Women'*. It was observed that nearly every regional country identified *'Violence Against Women'* as critical.

Dominica was represented by a three person delegation. The Minister for Community Development and Women's Affairs, Honorable Gertrude Roberts, and Neva Edwards of the DNCW, attended the governmental forum; whereas Josephine Dublin from the Small Projects Assistance Team [SPAT], attended the NGO forum in Hairou.

National Action Priority [NAP] - post-Beijing

Subsequent to the Beijing conference, a report was produced by the Honorable Gertrude Roberts, and Mrs Neva Edwards. This included recommendations for National Action Priorities, but, it was NOT a formal National Action Plan document. The recommendations it made serve in lieu of such an official document and are hereafter referred to as the National Action Priorities [NAP]:-

1. Adoption of two (2) of the critical areas of concern from the Beijing Platform; Violence Against Women and Women and Poverty.
2. Therefore, funding to be focused on violence and poverty programs/projects.
3. Strengthening of the national machinery to facilitate implementation of the National Action Priorities [NAP], though improved inter- and intra-governmental linkages as well as collaboration with NGOs.
4. Strengthening gender sensitivity in the elaboration and delivery of policies, plans and strategies.
5. Development of a public information campaign to mobilize society behind the National Action Priorities, gender equity, gender and development, and the family unit.

Interviews revealed that formal cognizance of the NAP per se is patchy. Few persons interviewed knew off-hand what were the national priority action areas. Only two (one being the WB) appear to have access to a copy of the NAP. Some informants profess never even to have heard of the Beijing Conference. Nonetheless, these organizations are all involved in encouraging action on the ground; with programs and project activities often attempting to address the issues identified in the NAP. Perhaps this is indicative of an informal mechanism of policy dissemination that is more dependant on the personal exposure of individuals in the organization rather than the result of concerted, holistic efforts to guide developmental interventions. This is supported by the fact that the WB, the DNCW and SPAT (all represented at Beijing), appear to be the most *au courant* with the Beijing criteria and the NAP. Moreover, one may ask whether this informal mechanism of policy dissemination and implementation may well testify to the indirect but extensive sphere of influence of external agencies (through funding, consultants, lobbying and other aid/support)?

#### National Policy Statement on Women

The National Policy Statement on Women was finally ratified in 1989<sup>1</sup>, almost a decade subsequent to the initial establishment of the Women's Desk (now Women's Bureau). Implementation was to be based on "*a systematic approach which necessitates inter-sectoral collaboration*".<sup>2</sup> Permanent Secretaries within the various departments were to be "*ultimately responsible for the implementation of the policy and...for promoting strong inter-ministerial linkages*".<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, it is unclear as to what agency is holding Permanent Secretaries responsible for their Ministry's implementation of women's policy requirements<sup>3</sup>. It is also unclear as to the exact mechanism by which women's policy requirements are to be articulated to these various departments: thus, the question of mainstreaming gender and the advancement of women is pertinent.

The policy statement is currently undergoing a much needed review by a multi-disciplinary Advisory Committee comprising senior representatives of various ministries, government departments and NGOs. The National Policy Statement on Women recognizes the substantial contribution of women in every section of Dominican life and establishes their right to equal opportunity. It rejects negative bias against women in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. The recommended approach is one of gender neutrality in policy programs and projects. Granting of "*special favors*" is expressly rejected. It is important to note that the 1989 version emphasized the principle of gender equity as enshrined in the Dominican Constitution.

the woman focus for a more politically correct but less forceful strategy. Conversely, there is also the recognition that the backlash of the WID era has produced an antagonistic approach to gender relations which may be addressed through gender equity rather than the past exclusivity.

Regionally, the following have been identified as the principal constraints on gender mainstreaming in the policy, planning (and practical) processes, viz.; relatively inflexible bureaucracies and the overriding technical control exercised by external funding agencies<sup>5</sup>. Suggested strategies for improving mainstreaming of gender analysis include improved data collection and analysis and dissemination of results. The process can be facilitated through community education and gender-sensitization training to public and private sector top-level management.

### Major Achievements

In the absence of an official poll, the single-most visible achievement since 1995, has perhaps been the increased level of exposure given to violence against women and in particular domestic abuse. The two main proponents have been the DNCW and the WB. They have achieved this through collaboration with the police<sup>6</sup> and the media. The DNCW has successfully established a Crisis Hot-Line and a Shelter (housing 5 adults). A television series has been produced by the Women's Bureau. The program has been well received and the Women's Bureau is in the process of having it repackaged for commercial availability. The Bureau, working with the Ministry of Legal Affairs has also undertaken an extensive series of community education programs concentrating on Women and the Law.

A number of interventions have also occurred targeting poverty alleviation. A Poverty Assessment Report was prepared with the assistance of the British Development Division in the Caribbean, which concluded that despite considerable improvements in access to water, sanitation, electricity, health, education and media exposure, there is a trend of intensifying rural poverty in Dominica. Approximately twenty-eight percent (28%) of households were estimated to be living in poverty. The Government of Dominica has managed to secure a SEC 3.54 million loan from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and a Community Development Self-Help Project grant of SEC 3 million from the British Government which will establish projects to impact on the poor particularly in the rural areas. A joint loan of SEC 12 million has also been secured from CDB and International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD) to finance the Dominica Rural Enterprise Project targeting rural poor especially women-headed households.



## Macro-Economic Effects: SAPs, Trade Liberalization & the Banana Industry

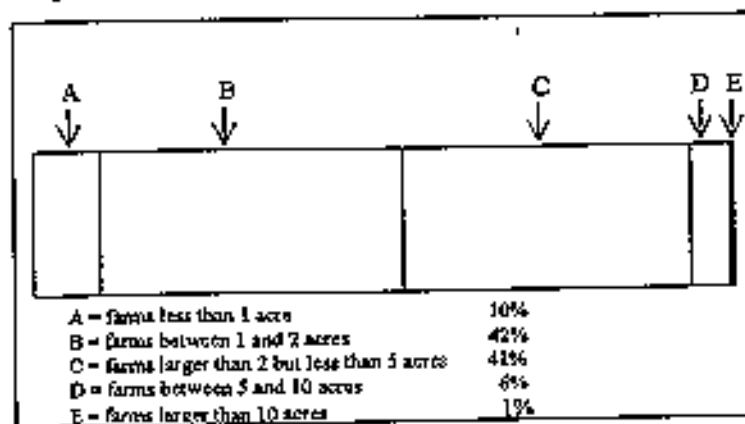
A structural adjustment program (SAP) was introduced in 1986 aimed at strengthening fiscal discipline and public finances and encouraging private sector investment. Therefore, major cutbacks have occurred in social and service public expenditures. Privatization of the two major utilities - water and electricity - has meant increasing costs for these services. User fees have also been introduced at the island's hospitals. This has had devastating consequences for the poorest households (many of them women-headed).

Government policies have also emphasized agricultural diversification, strengthening exports and eco-tourism promotion, nevertheless, the banana industry remains the top income earner for Dominica. Though Caribbean banana exports only represents a mere three percent (3%) of total global banana sales, the industry is critical for the islands. In Dominica, the banana sector employs more than 30% of Dominica's total workforce, and contributes up to sixty percent (60%) of export earnings.

Over the past few years, the sector has been forced to restructure under the pressures of trade liberalization. The matter currently before the World Trade Organization (WTO) was initiated by the United States (US) in response to a complaint filed in October 1994 by Chiquita, a part of a \$25 billion conglomerate, and one of the two major US banana trading companies, (the other being Dole), which objects to the preferential trading agreements made under LOME between Europe and the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) countries.

Two features of Dominica's banana industry, makes impending market deregulation of paramount concern. Firstly, the crop is harvested weekly, benefiting from one of the few organized, agricultural marketing systems in the country, and thus provides a regular and reliable source of income for growers. Therefore, loss of banana earnings can put immense strain on ability to provide for the short-term household requirements

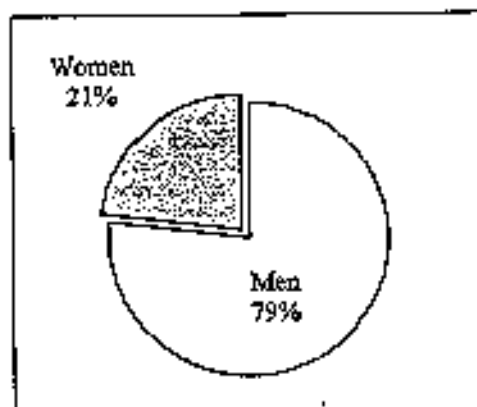
Secondly, cultivation is spread throughout numerous small-holders, a substantial number being women. In the last quarter, (January to March 1999), Dominica Banana Marketing Corporation (DBMC) records show that over fifty percent (50%) of the active farms are two acres or less and ninety-three percent (93%) of



farms are less than five acres. This disperse production means that a substantial number of Dominican households will be adversely affected by any downturn in the industry.

Diagram 2. Farm Ownership by Gender

Though women-owned farms form a strong minority of the banana production base - twenty-one percent (21%), the industry is dominated by men. Therefore, negative effects are experienced in two ways; directly by women banana farmers and indirectly by the spouses and children of male banana farmers.



Impending deregulation of the banana market has already begun to take its toll. Marginal farmers, typically the smallest producers, are being forced out of production.

Table 1. Statistics on Plots Abandoned 1996-1998

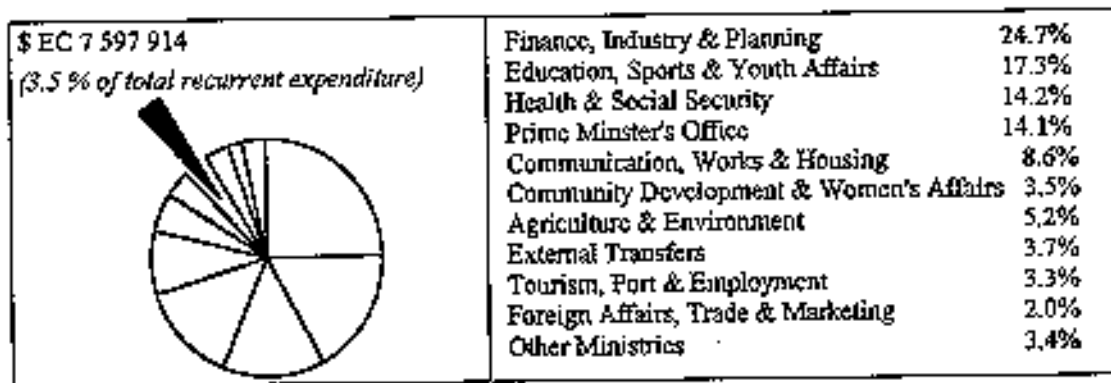
	Acres	No. Farmers	Avg. Acres Abandoned
Women	574.77	276	2.08
Men	2206.40	943	2.34
Total	2781.17	1219	

For women and men the period 1996 to 1998 shows an average of two (2) acres abandoned per grower. However, ultimately, the repercussions will exhibit powerful gender differentials because women's farms tend to be smaller than men's. Sixty-one percent (61%) of women-owned plots are two (2) acres and less whereas the percentage for men with plots of two acres or less is about fifty percent (50%).

**How Gender Equity & Women's Advancement is Addressed in the Budget**

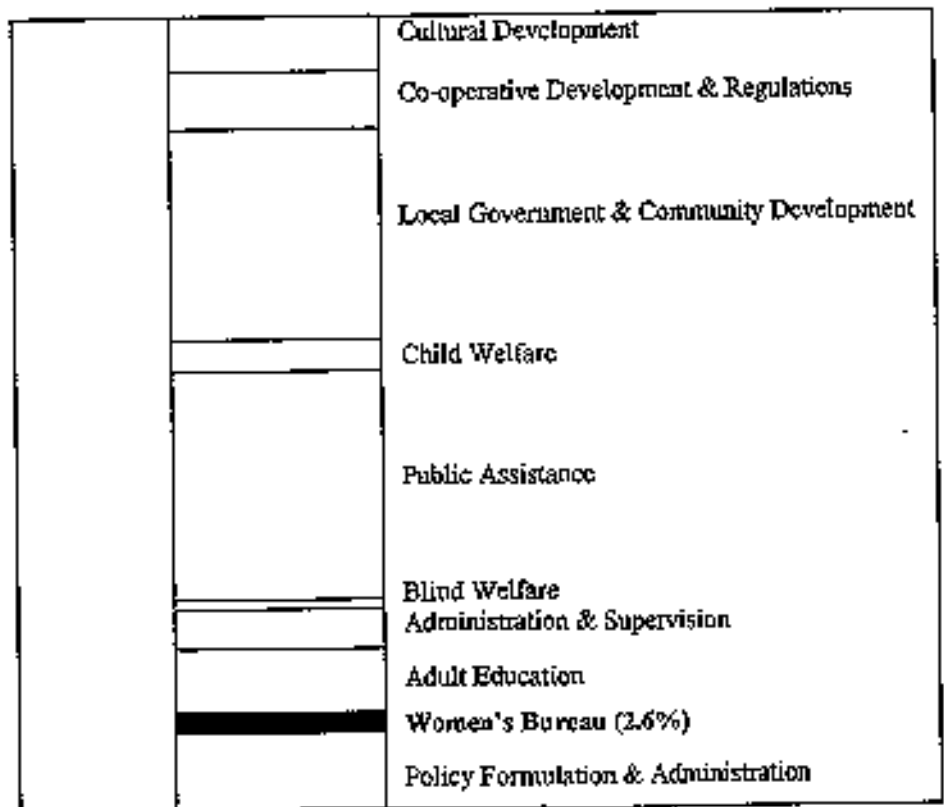
A summary of recurrent expenditure by the major government ministries is given in Appendix II, Table 1. Distribution of expenditure among the ministries has remained relatively consistent over the past several years. However, the proportion of recurrent expenditure on Community Development and Women's Affairs (CD&WA) is low. For 1998/99, the Government of Dominica allocated \$ EC 7 597 914 to CD&WA.

**Diagram 1. Budgetary Allocation to CD&WA 1998/99**



**Diagram 2. Percentage Expenditure - Intra-Ministerial Budgetary Allocation\***

Similarly, intra-ministerial budgetary allocation (recurrent expenditure) to the Women's Bureau is only \$ EC 199 595 or 2.6%. Nonetheless, there has been an increase in the total amount assigned to the Bureau; from \$ 74 350 EC in 1995/96 to \$ 199 595 for the period 1998/99, representing a significant overall increase of 168 %. (See Appendix II, Table II).

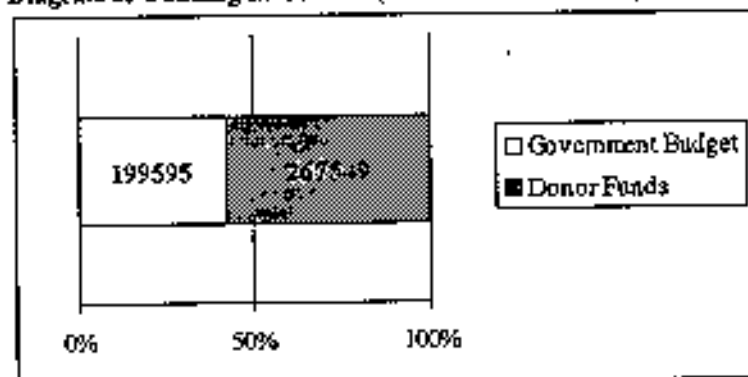


\* The Basic Needs Trust Fund, a Community Development and Local Government Department Project is funded entirely by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and is not shown here.

For 1998/99, total capital spending (equipment and other capital goods) for CD&WA is \$EC 7 478 684; of which \$EC 1 844 230 is government financing and \$EC 5 634 454 is grant funds. There is no formal capital allocation for the Women's Bureau. However, the bureau received \$EC 200 000, under the Stabex 95 European Union Poverty Safety Net Program. The Stabex monies are assigned to support the following initiatives; capacity-building within the Women's Bureau, assistance to victims of violence, and a skills training program. (See Appendix II, Table III). Some additional funding was also received from the Inter-American Commission on Women [CIM] through CARICOM, to improve exchange and contact among the various Women's Bureaus throughout the region, by establishing electronic contact via the internet and e-mail services.

Diagram 3. Funding Allocation (Government & Donor)

SOURCE	FUNDING		
	Recurrent	Capital	Project
Government	199595	-	-
Grant			
EU	-	-	200 000
CARICOM	-	-	7 749



The Government and People of Dominica fund Forty-three (43%) of the Women Bureau's activity, with donor funds accounting for the balance.

### National Machinery

The establishment of the Women's Desk (now Women's Bureau) in 1980 gave birth to the formal institutionalization of a national machinery for representation of women's issues in Dominica. The Bureau was set up as a part of the Ministry for Community Development and Social Affairs, beginning with a staff of one - the Director. A multi-disciplinary Advisory Committee was also formed to provide advice and direction. Funding for support staff (including a Program Officer, Field Officer and Secretary) depended on the procurement of international funding, as did all the developmental activities initiated by the Bureau. The Bureau went through a period of dormancy in 1989-1991 and was resurrected within the Economic Development Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister. It was thought that the relocation of the Bureau would 'put it on the agenda' especially as there was a woman Prime-minister at that time. However, during this period the staffing levels dwindled back down to one, and again the desk became quiescent. After the 1995 elections and ministerial re-shuffling, the Women's Bureau was shifted back to its old location now called the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs, thus indicating a heightened profile.

After a short lapse, the Bureau was finally reactivated by the present Director. Presently, the organizational structure remains basically unchanged; with an Advisory Committee and the core Bureau staff consisting of the Director, Field Officer, Peace Corps Volunteer, Secretary and Messenger. A Research Co-ordinator and Program Development Officer with experience in research and policy development has recently been employed in an attempt to improve that dimension of the Bureau's work. A proposal for a trained full time counselor and an additional Field Officer has also been submitted. It is hoped that the strengthening of the human resources in conjunction with increased funding will allow the Bureau to improve its institutional capacity and its practical effectiveness.

The original role of the Women's Bureau was envisaged as primarily coordinating and catalytic. Collaborative work has always been its prime mechanism for action, particularly under circumstances of limited financial and human resources. The Bureau's Mission Statement as defined in a 1995 evaluation report is as follows: *"...a national planning body...It ensures that appropriate policies, legislation, and plans are in place to achieve the improvement of the status of women, and carries out its mandate in collaboration with Government and non-Governmental organizations"*.

The Strategic Objectives up to the year 2000 are listed below, embracing four (4) major program areas; Institutional Strengthening, Gender Planning and Analysis, Entrepreneurial Development and Advocacy:-

1. To institutionalize gender analysis in all aspects of the government's planning process. (This has not yet been tackled, but may form part of the proposed pilot program for gender mainstreaming to be done in conjunction with the Commonwealth Secretariat).
2. To encourage and enforce policies and legislation that promote and protect gender equity in social and economic spheres.
3. To improve women's access to economic resources. (This could be strengthened by working with the 3 main small lending agencies - SPAT, National Development Foundation [NDFD], and the Dominica Rural Enterprise Project [DREP] as well as with the Aid Bank and a few commercial banks or Credit Unions).
4. To improve women's participation in political affairs and in decision-making. (With Community Development, Adult Education, and women in leadership positions throughout the society).
5. To improve women's access to basic services. (Collaboration with the Welfare Department is indicated).

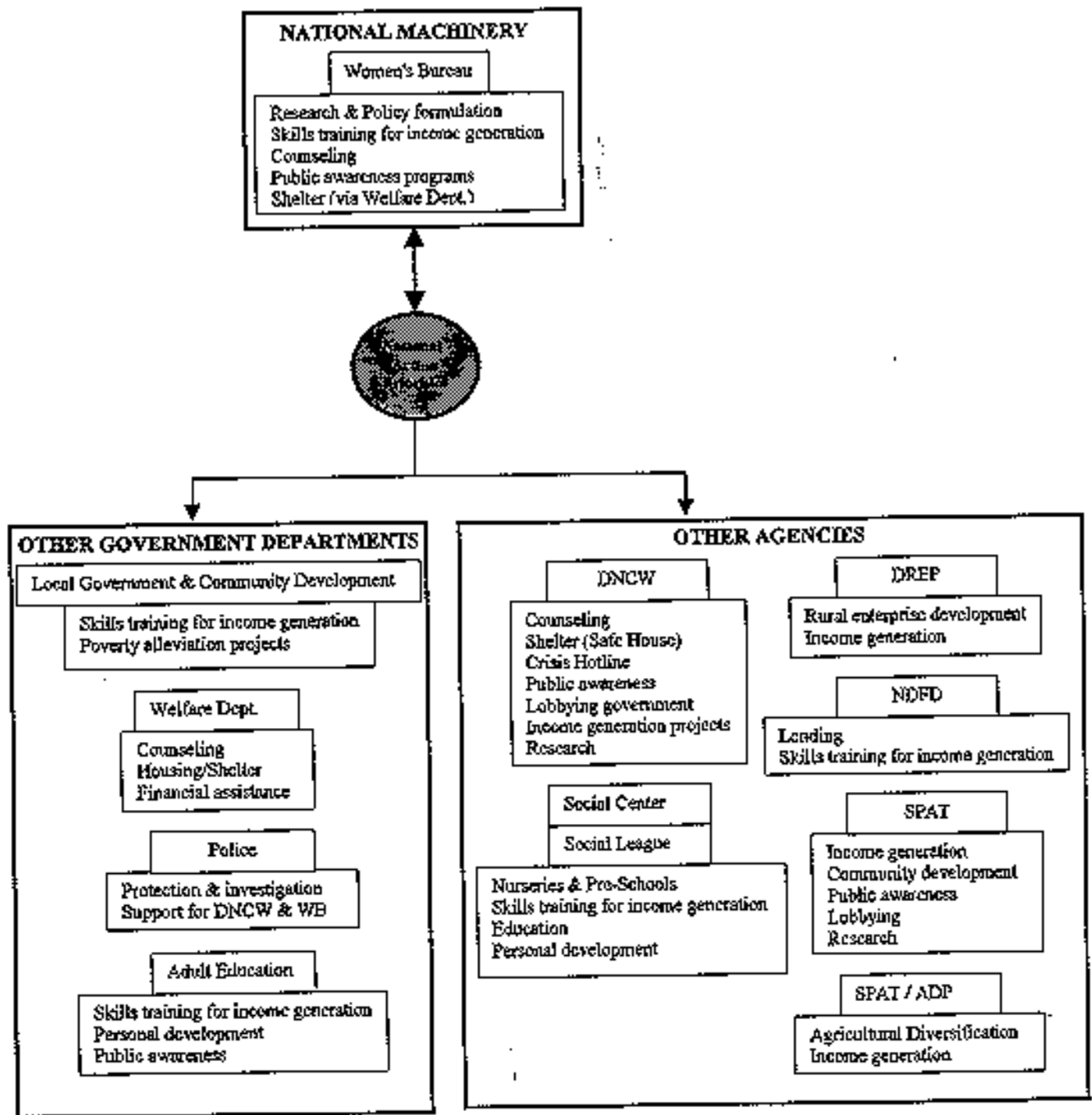
Work has begun in all areas, however, most are far from completion and will probably be reincorporated in the next 5 year plan for the Women's Bureau. It is advisable that the Bureau set itself even more specific/detailed targets so that its progress and achievements can be more realistically assessed and the development and strengthening of the organization be more easily justified. It is hoped that the human resource strengthening will facilitate the institutional capacity of the Women's Bureau.

### Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action

Cognizant of Dominica's limited financial resources, the National Action Priorities recommended improved inter- and intra-governmental linkages and closer collaboration with NGOs as the most pragmatic way forward. Therefore, the current national machinery remains substantively as it was pre-Beijing, with the Women's Bureau as the main body whose prime objective is gender equality and the advancement of women. However there are a number of other departments and agencies whose work programs focus on similar target groups. (See Diagram 3, page 13, for a brief overview).

There is some co-operation among the various organizations and agencies, however, this is largely ad hoc, or on an 'as needs basis'; and could be improved. The level of collaboration is strongly reliant on personalities and their individual commitment (or lack of interest) in working co-operatively. It appears the situation is exacerbated by some level of 'turfism' or mild tensions with respect to responsibilities and jurisdiction. Even among the various governmental departments there is very little systematic joint action. The result is that most of the developmental bodies have an 'add women and stir' approach to their mainstream, typically 'gender-neutral' programs. The possibilities for improvement through gender mainstreaming or other means deserve consideration.

Diagram 3. National Machinery & Other Governmental Departments & Agencies Implementing Activities Related to the National Action Priorities Recommendations



## SECTION III - Implementation of Critical Areas of the Beijing Platform for Action

### Violence against Women

#### Women's Bureau

For the period 1998/99, a three (3) month program of Community Education Sessions on Women and Law was held covering eight (8) districts. Some of the topics included Marriage Law, Inheritance Law, Child Maintenance, the Sexual Offences Act, Violence Against Women and Incest. The sessions were done in conjunction with the Department of Legal Affairs. Feedback from these sessions indicated the need for legislation to protect the property rights of women in common-law unions, and provision of legal aid for women.

A one year campaign was observed (November 1997 - November 1998) to reject violence against women. An inter-agency team organized a number of activities including a march, a rally, panel discussions and radio programs.

A TV drama serial 'Wake Up Call' was produced locally; the Movement for Cultural Awareness [MCA] was contracted for this purpose. It has been well received and should soon become commercially available to the public.

The Women's Bureau does not have access to a counselor, however, the Director and Field Officer both offer the service in addition to their normal work load. A proposal has been submitted for the employment of a full-time trained counselor to be attached to the Women's Bureau.

#### DNCW

The Dominica National Council for Women was inaugurated in 1986, six years after the establishment of the Women's Bureau. Its membership comprises of a range of women's groups that "seek to advance the cause of women and ensure the integration of women in all aspects of society"<sup>13</sup>. DNCW is managed by a Management Committee - a planning body that consists of nine (9) executive members and fourteen (14) zonal representatives. For the last ten (10) years of its twelve (12) year existence, the DNCW has chosen to focus primarily on the social aspects of women's lives and gender relations, in particular, domestic violence.

As part of their Crisis Facility, the DNCW offers daily counseling services. A formal program for training of counselors is also operational. A Crisis Hotline is also available for giving advice in acute situations. Appendix III, Table 1, gives an idea of the type of complaints that are most common. The service is used by women and men.



The DNCW also runs a shelter for short-term stay. It can comfortably accommodate five (5) adults, but additional space is required. Moreover, the shelter is located in the city, Roseau, and a decentralized service is necessary.

### **SPAT**

As a member of the DNCW, the Women's Arm of SPAT, called SPAT Women Association for Progress [SWAP], contributed to much of DNCW's work. SPAT also held a carnival band whose theme denounced violence against women. SPAT has a strong lobbying history and was instrumental along with DNCW and the Women's Bureau in making representation for the Sexual Offences ACT which was recently passed.

### **Welfare Department**

The focus of the Welfare Department is primarily on the NCH Action for Children funded program addressing child abuse and violence against children. However, since these are normally family matters, women are often counseled as well as their children, though the Welfare Department may refer women to the Women's Bureau or the DNCW where it deems it appropriate. The data on abuse is not specifically gender dis-aggregated. (See Appendix III, Table II for a summary of reported cases).

### **Police**

Domestic abuse and violence against women is handled by the general Criminal Investigations Department [CID], there being no specialized unit for managing such cases. The presence of an informed, woman Inspector as head of that department has also improved the seriousness with which the police pursue reports of domestic abuse. Unfortunately, many women are unwilling to take up legal proceedings and this tends to frustrate the police who feel that they are wasting precious time and financial resources in commencing investigations that are often dropped. (See Appendix III, Table III, for data on reported incidence of violence against women 1992- 1999).

### **Women and Poverty**

#### **Women's Bureau**

The Women's Bureau has chosen to address poverty through training for income generation. The main target area is in the North-East region of the island (Concorde, Marigot, Wesley and Woodfordhill) where a Skills Training Program was set up. The choice of target area was threefold.

The Marigot-Wesley Women's Group was especially vibrant and was requesting such programs. Moreover, the region is an intensive banana production area and it was hoped that the Skills Training Program could help to counterbalance the negative effects of a declining banana industry. It is also expected that an international airport will be constructed in the area and will offer opportunities for employment for the women who have the correct skills. The Skills Training Programs include sewing, computer skills and catering. They are funded under the STABEX 95 EU Poverty Safety Net Program.

However, many other groups benefit on an island-wide basis. The Vielle Case branch of the Northern District Progressive Women's Group received a sewing machine for their training program. In the South East, the Delices Adult Education Program and the women's groups in Grandfond and Morne Jaune, received material and supplies for their skills training as well as payment for the instructor.

#### **DNCW**

The DNCW has chosen to focus its income generation programs for poverty alleviation in the Carib Territory. They promote small agricultural projects (livestock and vegetables).

#### **Welfare Department**

The Welfare Department also offers some short-term, basic financial assistance for basic utilities and an allowance of \$75 per month per adult and \$60 for children. The assistance is not gender specific but since approximately 38% of families in Dominica are women-headed households, by default, a significant amount of the assistance goes toward women and their children.

#### **SPAT**

SPAT identified the Dublanc/Bioche area as one of the poorest in Dominica. Thus its poverty alleviation program is centered on those communities. Interventions include training for income generation, improving the fishing facility in the area, supporting the village in fund raising, providing training for young women in information technology, training for vendors, and tourist guide training for young persons.

#### **Social Center**

The Social Center carries out a Food Aid Program as well as providing material assistance to persons in acute need.

## Women and the Economy

Access to credit and income generation are intimately related to poverty alleviation. This subsection looks at income generating projects and women's access to credit. Women typically borrow smaller amounts and have better repayment rates than men. They appear to take fewer loans but tend to have indirect access to funds (i.e. it is often the male counterpart who takes the loan for the woman to do business, or the woman is actually completely responsible for the management of the business. This can be problematic for loan recovery and does not allow women to gain full experience. Women generally tend to prefer to borrow for non-agricultural enterprises and services despite the fact that many rural women do agricultural work. This may reflect the implicit male bias in many agricultural extension programs, as well as a conscious choice by women to become involved in businesses that more easily accommodate their reproductive roles, for example catering.

The Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce [DAIC] indicates that approximately 14 % of their top level contact persons in industry are women. Central Statistics shows that entrepreneurial activity of self-employed women and men is almost equal at 19% and 20% respectively. However, going up the next level to employing others to work in their businesses, women drop back much further than men, to 6% and 15% respectively.

### **DREP**

DREP is an IFAD/CDB project which targets resource poor households who do not generally take advantage of rural services such as extension, marketing and credit. Rural, women-headed households and or women farmers are one of their specific targets groups. Loans are made available to individuals, organizations and community groups. DREP also offers extension and marketing support. The Community Implementation Advisory Committees set up in target areas ensure high levels of community participation and stakeholders sense of project ownership. The project is relatively new, however, men seem three times as likely than women to access funds. Funds are disbursed primarily by NDFD and Credit Unions. (See Appendix III, Table IV).

### **SPAT**

SPAT's Agricultural Diversification Program offers loans to disadvantage members of society. Though there is not particular gender focus, the number of women receiving grants has increased. Of the \$ EC 118 175 paid out between June 1995 and June 1997, approximately 40% was directly paid out to women.

## **NDFD**

The NDFD has also seen a rise in the number of women taking credit. Approximately 35 % of loans disbursed went to women. However, figures were not available for amounts. (See Appendix III, Table V) for some basic data on lending patterns. In 1997, NDFD ran an Entrepreneurial Development Program to support it's lending activities for a women's group in Good Hope. Fifty-five (55) women attended the 5 day program.

## **Aid Bank**

The Aid Bank is a national developmental bank. Though it does not have a specifically women development arm, it does keep gender dis-aggregated data, unlike many commercial banks. The trends observed are similar to other lending agencies. Women's borrowing tends to be less, with very little going towards agricultural or industrial type enterprises. However, it is interesting to note that borrowing for educational purposes (predominantly tertiary education), in 1995-96 and 116-97 women borrowed in a ratio of almost 2:1 as compared to men. The trend appears to be evening out however with almost equal numbers borrowing in the period 1997-98. (See Appendix III, Table VI).

## **Education and Training of Women**

As mentioned above the Women's Bureau, SPAT, DNCW, and DREP all have training components for their poverty alleviation and income generation programs. Adult Education also undertakes some training of adults. The program is supposedly gender neutral, however, attendance rates of women tend to be high in the 'traditional' activities such as catering whereas, programs on electronics are followed by men only. Overall, the programs are dominated by women but this may probably reflect the type of courses offered. However, in 1996 and 1997, it is interesting to note that over 67% and 77% of the participants in basic literacy were women, but this fell to just below 50% in 1997. (See Appendix III, Table VII).

A 1995-96 Poverty Assessment (referred to previously) indicated that at secondary level, the percentage of girls doing well tends to be better than that for boys, but that more boys tend to pursue tertiary and university education than girls. The data collected from the Aid Bank seems to indicate a changing trend. However, a more extensive investigation is necessary to ascertain the current status of tertiary level training.

## Women and Health

The respondent from the Ministry of Health indicated that they were unaware of the National Action Priorities following the Beijing conference, but that new and revised programs addressing the health of women and children have been incorporated in the National Health Plan. Primarily, these include, Mother to child transmission program to reduce the number of children infected by HIV AIDs, various immunization programs for children and young people, a National PAP smear program and an extensive Family Planning program.

## Women in Power and Decision-Making

There did not seem to be any formal program for promoting women in leadership. Some interesting bits of data can be found in Appendix III, Tables VIII, IX and X. A spot check of women in senior civil servant positions revealed that of the eleven (11) departments polled, twenty-seven percent (27%) of one of the highest administrative positions (permanent secretary) was filled by women, whereas the percentage of women at the level just down (assistant secretary) soared to 81%. However, personnel are rotated frequently, therefore a longer-term assessment is necessary to ascertain any possible trends.

The only three women political figures currently in government are all members of the ruling United Workers Party, and they are assigned responsibility for the Ministries of Health and Social Security and the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs.

In Local Government, no village council has more than 50% women delegates. Interestingly the councils with 50% women representation were all in rural areas. Neither of the 2 municipal town councils (Roseau & Portsmouth) make the 50% mark though the Roseau town council is almost there at 46.2% while Portsmouth fares badly with less than 25% women councilors

## LIST OF RESOURCE PERSONS

Organizations		Contact Person
AB	Aid Bank	Dechaussy J (Marketing & Research)
AE	Adult Education	Blaize Lucia (Ag. Adult Educ. Officer) Richards-Andre Martha (Ag. Ass. Educ. Off)
CD&WA	Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs	Roberts G (Hon. Minister)
CID	Criminal Investigations Department - the Police	Ausric (Inspector)
DAIC	Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce	Gunter J
DBMC	Dominica Banana Marketing Corporation	Andre (Public Relations Officer)
DNCW	Dominica National Council for Women	Edwards N George M
DREP	Dominica Rural Enterprise Project	Pascal C (Project Officer)
Legal Affairs		Felix Evans H (State Attorney)
NDFD	National Development Foundation	Elnhoffe B (Senior Projects Officer)
SC	Social Center	Douglas R (Managing Director)
SPAT	Small Projects Assistance Team	Dublin J (Researcher)
SPAT ADP	NGO - Agricultural Diversification Project	Foye J (ADP Program Officer)
Statistics		Oscar A (Statistician)
WB	Women's Bureau	Brown R (Director)
Welfare		McIntyre A (Welfare Officer)

**APPENDIX I**

**Table I**

**LEGISLATION ADDRESSING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN\***

The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Dominica	1978
Corporal Punishment Act	1987
The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act	1938
Intestates Estates Act	1958
Labor Contracts Act	1983
Labor Standards Act	1977
Maintenance Act	1982
Maintenance Orders (Facilities for Enforcement)	1921
Married Women's Property Act	1887
Matrimonial Causes Act	1973
Offences Against the Person Act	1873
Pensions Act	1944
Prison Rules	1956
Sexual Offences Act	1887/1998
Small Charges Act	1891
Social Security Act	1975
Age of Majority Act	1983
Commonwealth of Dominica Citizenship Act	1978
Title by Registration (Amendment) Act	1998

\* (compiled from List Provided by State Attorney & DNCW Report 1991)

**APPENDIX II**

Table I.

**RECURRENT EXPENDITURE 1995/96, 1998/99**

MINISTRY	1995/96	1998/99
Finance, Industry & Planning	\$ 45,485,688	\$ 54,317,524
Education, Sports & Youth Affairs	\$ 29,379,819	\$ 38,096,913
Health & Social Security	\$ 25,162,981	\$ 31,247,956
Prime Minister's Office	\$ 25,454,756	\$ 30,893,790
Communications, Works & Housing	\$ 15,211,001	\$ 18,787,985
Agriculture & the Environment	\$ 7,370,622	\$ 11,336,677
External Transfers	\$ 1,864,333	\$ 8,236,860
Community Development & Women's Affairs	\$ 6,156,478	\$ 7,597,914
Tourism, Ports & Employment	\$ 3,550,853	\$ 7,298,064
Foreign Affairs, Trade & Marketing	\$ 2,230,367	\$ 4,411,736
Other Ministries	\$ 4,652,073	\$ 7,444,218
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 166,518,971</b>	<b>\$ 219,669,637</b>
<b>Percentage spent on Community Development &amp; Women's Affairs</b>		
	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

Table II

**BREAKDOWN OF CURRENT EXPENDITURE**

*(Ministry of Community Development & Women's Affairs)*

Program Summary	1998/99	1995/96
Policy Formulation & Administration	730670	626223
Basic Needs Trust Fund <i>(Grant Funds only)</i>	0	0
<b>Women's Bureau</b>	<b>199595</b>	<b>74350</b>
Adult Education	609642	456705
Administration & Supervision	385007	251633
Blind Welfare	89378	61739
Public Assistance	2182303	1936762
Child Welfare	302468	306854
Local Government & Community Development	2008318	1617963
Co-operative Development & Regulations	560615	474650
Cultural Development	529917	349599
<b>Total</b>	<b>7597913</b>	<b>3156478</b>
<b>Women's Bureau gets about 2.6% of the total recurrent budget for the Ministry of CD&amp;WA</b>		



**APPENDIX III**

Table I

**REPORTS OF VIOLENCE AND OTHER DOMESTIC PROBLEMS April 1997 - March 1998 (DNCW)**  
**(Amalgamation of Counseling Service & Hotline Figures)**

Category	Female	Male	Total
<b>Domestic Violence</b>			
Physical Battery	38	3	41
Psychological/Emotional	31	9	40
Sexual (Incest)	4	-	4
<b>Non-Domestic Violence</b>			
Physical Battery	2	-	2
Sexual (rape)	8	0	2
<b>Other problems</b>			
Psychological	8	1	9
Legal	18	1	19
Maintenance	11	-	11
Security	5	1	6
Family related	7	12	19
Other	3	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>68</b>

Table II

**REPORTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE (WELFARE DEPARTMENT)**

1995	1996	1997	1998
260	239	267	303
Of the 267 cases reported in 1997, 222 (approximately 83%) were female, and 45 were male.			

Table III

## REPORTED INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 1998/99 (POLICE FILES)

(Up to period 1999 24<sup>th</sup> May)

CATEGORY	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Murder						2	3	1
Attempted Murder							0	1
Shooting with Intent							6	1
Grievous Bodily Harm							8	3
Wounding							16	6
Robbery							5	0
Assault with Intent to Rob							0	1
Assault							0	1
Kidnapping							1	0
Rape			1	2	2	1	22	6
Attempted Rape							13	0
Unlawful Carnal Knowledge		39	68	13	45	76	34	7
Indecent Assault		31	33	18	26	33	36	17
Incest	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2
Abduction (under 16, sexual)		1	1	1		2	1	0
Infanticide	1				1		1	
Physical Abuse		4	5	5	4	10		

Table IV

## DREP DATA ON RURAL ENTERPRISE PROJECTS DIS-AGGREGATED BY GENDER

Gender	Crops	Livestock	Fisheries	Micro-enterprise	Total
Women	5	0		2 (craft - manufacture & trading)	7
Men	13	5	2	1	21

APPENDIX III CONTD.

Table V

SUMMARY OF LOANS DISBURSED FOR 1997 (NDFD)

Sector	Male	Female
Service	40	33
Industry	15	7
General Construction	11	-
Retrofitting	18	17
Distributive Trade	1	4
Agriculture	32	2
Fishing	6	-
Other	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>66</b>

Table VI

SECTOR PERFORMANCE INDICATORS BY GENDER (AID BANK)

Sector	Jul '95 - Jun '96		Jul '96 - Jun '97		Jul '97 - Jun '98	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Agriculture	17	213	34	205	28	252
Industry	8	23	4	28	4	31
Tourism	1	9	1	14	3	16
Housing	11	40	21	31	24	38
Education	46	27	51	20	30	33
Personal misc.	0	0	49	80	124	286
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>656</b>

APPENDIX III CONTD.

Table VII

TRAINING PROGRAM ATTENDANCE (ADULT EDUCATION)

Year	Course	Total Participants	No. of women	Women %
1995	Basic Literacy	442	297	67%
	Basic Electricity]			
	Tailoring]			
	Home Economics]	357	349	98%
	Sewing]			
	Cake Decorating]			
1996	Basic Literacy	396	304	77%
	Sewing]			
	Cake Decorating]	275	275	100%
	Cooking]			
	Floral Arrangement]			
1997	Basic Literacy	387	185	48%
	Sewing]			
	Home Economics]			
	Cake Decorating]	296	292	99%
	Electronics, men]			
	Floral arrangement]			

Table VIII

SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS BY GENDER

Ministry or Department	Permanent Secretary	Assistant Secretary
Community Devpt & Women's Affairs	Man	Woman
Health & Social Security	Woman	Woman
Establishment/Human Resources	Woman	Woman
Tourism, Port and Employment	Man	Woman
Education & Sports	Man	Woman
Trade & Marketing	Man	Man
Agriculture & Environment	Man	Woman
Legal Affairs & Immigration	Man	Woman
Finance, Industry, Planning	Man	Man
Communication & Works	Woman	Woman
Prime Minister's Office	Man	Woman
	27% are women	81% are women

## APPENDIX III CONTD.

Table IX

## POLITICS

- The United Workers Party [UWP], the ruling party, fielded 3 women candidates; all 3 of these won their seats and are ministers in the Ministry of Health & Social Security, and the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs. The third is a junior minister or parliament secretary, in the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs.
- The Labor party put forward 2 women candidates - neither won seats.
- The Freedom party fielded 4 women candidates - none won seats.

Table X

## WOMEN REPRESENTATION ON VILLAGE COUNCILS

	No. of village councils	No village council has more than 50% women delegates. Interestingly the councils with 50% women representation were all in rural areas. Neither of the 2 municipal town councils (Roseau & Portsmouth) make the 50% mark though the Roseau town council is almost there at 46.2% while Portsmouth fares badly with less than 25% women councilors
50% women	6	
≥ 25% women	26	
< 25 % women	7	
Total	39	

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<sup>1</sup> Women's Bureau (1995) Report on the Status of Women. Prepared for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China - 1995. Women's Bureau Economic Development Unit, Prime Minister's Office. Roseau, Dominica.

<sup>2</sup> Women's Bureau (1989) National Policy Statement on Women. Women's Bureau, Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs. Roseau: Dominica. (p. 4)

<sup>3</sup> DNCW (1991) Report on the Status of Women in the Commonwealth of Dominica. DNCW. Roseau: Dominica

<sup>4</sup> Personal communication with State Attorney.

<sup>5</sup> Gwendoline Williams (1997) Mainstreaming Gender Analysis in the Developmental Process. Gender a Caribbean Multi-disciplinary Perspective. Barrow et al (eds). Ian Randle Publishers, Kingston: Jamaica

<sup>6</sup> The appointment of the first, female Inspector (Inspector Aubrie) to the head of the CID department has greatly facilitated collaboration.