

Contribution to the End of Decade Report on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non- Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)

Jamaica

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**Contribution to the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence
Submission to the
United Nations General Assembly at its 65th Session
Bureau of Women's Affairs
May 18, 2010**

Over the past ten years, the Bureau of Women's Affairs (BWA) has contributed significantly to relevant areas of the of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. Programmes and policies have been developed to ensure that the concerns and experiences of women and men are integrated in policy development processes so they benefit equally from the country's resources and gender equality can be achieved.

The Bureau of Women's Affairs has therefore contributed to the eight action areas of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in the following areas:

1. Actions to promote sustainable economic and social development

The BWA has continued to ensure the integration of a gender perspective through the use of gender mainstreaming strategies. In keeping with goal three of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the BWA continues to work collaboratively with partners and other stakeholders towards promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We have therefore implemented special measures to increase our focus on the needs of women, men and children as well as groups with special needs.

Strategic Areas

- Partner with Ministry of Health, National Family Planning Board (NFPB) UNFPA and other partners to educate the public concerning HIV/AIDS Prevention programmes
- Engage in awareness-raising activities such as seminars and other outreach community activities to demonstrate the links between Gender-based violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS & other sexually –transmitted infections (STIs)
- Support interventions that address gaps in health delivery and promote positive behavioural changes in personal health care issues of women, girls and men

Main Activities

- Health and information fairs were conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Health-National HIV/STI Prevention and Control Programme and Jamaica Cancer Society. Women were offered free access to state of the art mammography and breast screening, Pap smear and HIV test services.
- UNFPA sponsored Condom Programming and Promotion Project on the second generation Female Condom (FC2).

Achievements

- Promotion of gender sensitivity among women and men on the issues of Human Sexuality/ Gender HIV and AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights; negotiation skills for safer sex ;
- Increased promotion and distribution of FC2 female condoms.
- Increased participation of youth in gender and health initiatives to include healthy lifestyle practices
- Increased awareness of the relationship between gender and HIV/AIDS transmission.

Challenges/Constraints

- Pervasive gender stereotyping and gender inequality
- Socio-cultural norms impact on lifestyle choices. These include unprotected sex and unsafe high- risk sexual practices especially among youth aged 15-24 years

2. Actions to promote respect for all human rights and to ensure equality between men and women

Strategic Areas

- Promote public education and training regarding international conventions, especially the convention regarding the rights of women and children
- Support education, training, sensitization, information and communications plans and adopt measures to modify the socio-cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, eliminating prejudices, customary practices, based on inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes and on stereotyped roles for men and women
- Develop a proactive media strategy to highlight women's/ gender issues.

Main Activities Implemented

- Seminars were conducted on international conventions on women's rights with Resident Magistrates, and other government officials. These groups were sensitized on conventions which focus on women's human rights namely **CEDAW** and **Belem do Para**
- Public education, training and sensitization of a wide cross-section of stakeholders through workshops, print and electronic media e.g. publication of CEDAW articles in the print and electronic media, presentations and brochures
- Sexual Harassment workshops were conducted in various government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) with members of the public sector to include Police Officers Fire Fighters and Correctional Officers.
- A Schools' Education Programme (SEP) was developed and instituted to assist students in understanding specific concepts and issues such as sex, gender, gender roles, gender based violence, trafficking in persons, teenage pregnancy, sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS, self esteem, school based violence prevention measures to prevent inter personal & community violence as well as conflict resolution.
- The BWA has participated in the UN Decade for Peace and has contributed significantly to the Pathways for Peace Initiative.

Achievements

- Members of staff in (MDAs) have become more aware of Jamaica's responsibility under the specific conventions, CEDAW in particular.
- Increased awareness concerning sexual harassment in the workplace as well as issues involved in trafficking in persons.
- Increased awareness among students in the high schools concerning issues of sexuality.

Challenges/Constraints

- Funding continues to be a major challenge to public education. Though our partners (UNIFEM and UNFPA) are generous in their donation towards specific programmes, there is still a great need for more collaboration and funding in order to have the desired effect of educating the most vulnerable groups in Jamaica.

The BWA has also participated in the development of national policies for the promotion and protection of all human rights. The development of the Sexual Harassment Policy and the draft National gender Policy are two such initiatives.

The Sexual Harassment Policy

Strategic Areas

- Minimise and eventually eliminate the occurrence of sexual harassment through strategies including public education, attitudinal re-orientation, and legislation that affords speedy and adequate recourse to victims at all levels of society.
- Training of public sector employees, human resource managers and practitioners on the draft National Sexual Harassment Policy and how to effectively respond to cases of sexual harassment in the workplace
- Training of members of the justice system to include Judges and Resident Magistrates on international conventions and treaties regarding women's rights and gender-based violence
- Production of brochures on specific aspects of gender-based violence – sexual harassment, domestic violence, rape, incest and trafficking in persons – for national distribution.

Achievements (as of December 2009):

- 175 human resource managers and practitioners trained
- 1,321 employees in MDAs have been trained
- 29 Judges/resident magistrates trained
- 19 Prosecutors trained
- Sex-disaggregated data has been disseminated through the publication of brochures on sexual harassment and various forms of gender-based violence

The National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE)

Strategic Areas

- The **draft NPGE** has been developed to allow for gender to be more definitively mainstreamed in public policies, programmes and plans as well as create more opportunities for redress regarding offences committed among women and girls.
- Includes gender and human rights targets to be achieved and gender indicators to monitor targets. The draft policy is guided by the key principles of **gender equity and human rights**.
- Build on the work that was already started for development plans, strategies, and institutions to take into account the varied circumstances, experiences, socio-economic realities and concerns of women and men.
- Focus on the contribution to the development process, in order to avoid unfair and unequal gender-related outcomes so that the Government can advance and achieve equal and equitable sustainable human and national development.
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building of women's groups to ensure sustainability and to extend the BWA's gender mainstreaming thrust

Achievements

1. Further to discussions and recommendations from the Human Resource Committee (HRC) in the Cabinet Office, the **NPGE** is being finalized, along with the Submission for Cabinet's approval.
2. Annual subventions continue to be made to support the work of the Crisis Centre and other groups. These include Rural Women's groups and other women's groups as well as Fathers' Inc. (a men's NGO).

3. Further Actions to ensure equality between men and women

The Bureau of Women's Affairs continues to engage in the ongoing collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data using gender-specific indicators.

More recently the BWA was involved in the preparation of Jamaica's Combined Sixth and Seventh Periodic Report in keeping with obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The report is an overview of measures taken to implement the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, as well as the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**. In this regard, the Report includes data concerning the monitoring of Jamaica's progress towards the implementation and

reinforcement of the provisions under the Convention to enable women to enjoy their human rights.

Main Activities Implemented

(Adapted from the Combined Sixth & Seventh Periodic Report to the CEDAW Committee)

- The Government has put in place a gender equality framework in its policies, programmes, and plans, in keeping with the international legal requirements, international human rights obligations, commitments, and principles
- The acceleration of legal and constitutional reform to protect against sex discrimination; sexual harassment; law & policy through legal reform to review and amend legislation geared towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls
- Ongoing legislative reform relating to women to ensure that they receive adequate redress under the law
- The introduction of new legislation to provide greater protection and increase the remedies which are available to women and girls
- The establishment of a Male Desk in April 2009 to strengthen the partnership between women and men in working towards the elimination of gender-based and other forms of violence. The Desk was officially launched in November 2009 at the annual observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW) under the theme “Women and Men unite to end Violence Against Women’
- Continued efforts to improve and strengthen the Criminal Justice System to ensure that the rights and privileges of all citizens are preserved and protected, particularly the most vulnerable
- A major initiative is the proposed **Victims Charter** which is geared towards enhancing the protection of women who are victims of violence. It intends to address the needs of victims of crime, rather than focus primarily on the punishment of offenders. The proposed **Victims Charter** aims to institute policies, programmes and initiatives which support victims with fair and just treatment throughout criminal justice proceedings. It is intended that women who are victims of crime will benefit significantly from the **Victims Charter** as it seeks to eliminate the risk of secondary victimization.

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