



Remarks delivered by the UN Women Regional Director for Latin America
and the Caribbean, Luiza Carvalho on the Launch of the Jamaica Women's
Health Survey 2016
Terra Nova Hotel, Kingston Jamaica
21 June 2018

Good morning, it is a great pleasure for me to be in Jamaica once again and to bring greetings on behalf of UN Women Americas and the Caribbean offices.

As discussions continue around the Sustainable Development Goals and the Jamaica – indeed, the Caribbean - we want to see, we know one reality we long for, is an end to violence in our societies.

In the absence of reliable data, it is not possible to adequately treat, reduce and prevent violence against women and girls.

Today a huge data gap has been closed as this survey report reveals that **more than 1 in 4 women will experience intimate partner violence in her lifetime**. As you will hear in the presentation on the results, this prevalence data will allow us to really understand the level of violence, where it happens, why it is happening, who it is happening to, as well as, the severity of violence against women and girls. Women are at risk for both physical and sexual violence by an intimate partner, with young women under 30 years old being particularly at risk. Women who are poorly educated, those who are economically vulnerable and those who began living with a man as minors are shown to be more consistently at risk for a range of violence and abuse. The data raises concerns about the vulnerability of women who have been pregnant, revealing that women's risk of violence increases with pregnancy.

Women who face physical and sexual intimate partner violence in Jamaica have found several ways to cope with and challenge this violence. Though some remain silent, the majority (80 per cent) do not.

UN Women has invested significantly in supporting member states in strengthening capacities to fill the data gaps on violence against women and girls. Working with regional partners, the Caribbean Development Bank and CARICOM, we developed the CARICOM Prevalence Survey Model. The CARICOM Model is based on the long-tested global World Health Organization (WHO) model which is considered internationally to be the best practice for national, population-based studies on GBV.

The CARICOM model captures prevalence data on Violence Against Women, however it also captures information on the consequences for women, their children and families, women's help-seeking behaviours and risk and protective factors for violence.

In Jamaica with our partners the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, (**STATIN**) and the Inter-American Development (**IDB**) we were able to support the training of the enumerators, the survey research and data gathering. On behalf of all the partners I wish to express our thanks to the author Carol Watson Williams and all others who worked so diligently on this report. Minister after much hard work, we are able to realise this launch and plug this data directly into the prevention and response work. We especially want to thank the women, the survivors who welcomed the enumerators and let us into the most intimate details of their lives. Their courage and their willingness to speak out has brought us to this launch this morning.

A regional report launched last 16 Days of Activism, by UN Women and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), found that assaults on women persist in the Americas and Caribbean region, despite severe laws aimed at curbing the phenomenon. 24 of the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have laws against domestic violence.

As we know and the survey results reinforce, we need to address the drivers of gender-based violence which lie in cultural and social norms and practices, which reinforce and perpetuate unequal relations of power between women and men.

UN Women is working on several fronts to address VAW. To respond to women and their children who are victims of violence, the health and justice sectors play an important part. Women's NGOs are also critical partners as they run the shelters and provide other essential services.

To move women and their children out of situations of violence, we know too that economic empowerment is necessary – how can we work with the government and the private sector and the unions to support job training, placement and housing out of the shelters?. We know this is a very special focus of the Government of Jamaica and the Minister herself, in particular.

In November last year, we were here with you to launch the National Strategic Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence. Such plans are the most comprehensive approach to addressing gender-based violence as they are multi-sectoral and support a focus on the core pillars of GBV programming; **Prevention and Response**. UN Women will support your Bureau of Gender Affairs on a public education campaign that will twin the evidence from the Survey with the roll out of the Strategic Action Plan

The Prevalence Survey **findings reinforce the strategic priorities in this Plan** that are needed to strategically and fundamentally address VAWG.

UN Women has received DFID funding to support wider discussion in Jamaica on the survey results across these several sectors. We are proposing dialogues which focus on how the data can be used for policy and programming with:

- The Health Sector
- The Social Services Sector: Social Assistance, Housing among others
- The Citizen Security Agencies including the Police
- The Judiciary: including Judges and Magistrates
- The Ministry of Labour, Labour Unions and the Private Sector

- And Civil Society who have proven to be strong partners for then UNIFEM and continue to do so with UN Women today.

We are working with partners at the community-level on interventions and advocacy efforts, to build a critical mass of individuals and groups advocating against gender-based violence. These include cultural leaders, calypso, soca and creole musicians and we have worked in the past with your reggae singers whose global influence is well known under our UN Secretary-General's UNiTE Campaign.

We are working with young people on violence prevention programming. This programme – **the Foundations Curriculum** can be led in schools or community groups. Developed with the support of our partner, the Maria Holder Memorial Trust, the programme includes step by step guidance on implementing each session of the 12-week programme for young women and men (13 to 24 years of age); a manual for the training of facilitators to deliver this programme; as well as operational guidance and a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Ministers, distinguished guests, UN Women takes this opportunity to re-state its commitment to Jamaica and the Caribbean to ensure every woman girl man and boy is able to realise their right to live lives free of violence.

