



Remarks delivered by Ms. Tonni Brodber, Deputy Representative – UN Women Multi-Country Office, Caribbean at the Regional Training Workshop on Green Climate Fund Project Design

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The Courtyard Marriott

*Often the link between gender and climate change isn't clear, this is often because there isn't clarity among many people when we speak about gender. The fact that the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is trying to address it through its gender policy and this workshop is a fantastic opportunity to reinforce the link and really to reiterate the broader issue, that sustainable development and the achievement of the SDGs is not possible without addressing the impacts of climate change and/or gender inequality.*

In the Caribbean we have achieved some successes with regards to gender equality, and so it is sometimes difficult to understand why gender equality and gender responsive initiatives are still development priorities. Yes, women are the majority of graduates from the University of the West Indies, girls are among the highest proportion of those who

excel in schools and when we look throughout our public sector women are exceling.

However, this is only one side of the story, a story that is not based on a tit for tat but is based on understanding our circumstances and ensuring we invest in women and men in our society attaining their fullest potential through context relevant development solutions. This is what a gender lens and gender mainstreaming does. It does not just look at surface indictors it exposes the foundation.

With the gender lens we see that yes, women are the majority of graduates from the University of the West Indies, however only approx. 70% of the Caribbean's youth pass their CSEC with over 4 subjects. What about those girls and boys. And while girls are among the highest proportion of those who excel in schools they are not the ones who make up the largest proportion of our labour force.

An area that is not often used to demonstrate gender equality is that of access to and use of productive resources like land. Land is a critical resource for human livelihood. Among many other critical things land is our source of food security, it is our foundation for shelter and in the

Caribbean, it is not only the foundation for our agricultural sector it is also the foundation for our tourism sector.

For Dominica, agriculture contributes 17.38% to GDP, and it is also a major employer accounting for an estimated 30% of total employment. Males comprise 85% of skilled agricultural and fishery workers, compared to 15% of females (GoCD, 2014).

In Saint Lucia, the development of agriculture was guided by the *National Agricultural Policy 2009- 2015*. While women are least likely to hold land, they dominate agro-processing. However, especially for rural women, expansion of their production and sales is hampered because standards for international and regional export are not being met, as most products are produced in private homes.

When we look at issues of citizen security, gender-based violence and family violence in particular are critical issues of gender inequality and vulnerability. The data shows that most Caribbean islands either meet or surpass the global average when it comes to women who have experience lifetime prevalence of physical or sexual violence.

The research indicates that the attitudes and beliefs that drive these statistics are that fundamentally, in the Caribbean there is not yet a belief that all people are equal, in fact we still value men over women.

If the impacts of climate change exploit vulnerabilities, we need to reduce the impacts of climate change, and two we need to reduce vulnerabilities.

The Caribbean region is one of the 3 globally, that is comprised of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and sixty-five percent of persons living in SIDS live in the Caribbean, which is not that surprising because of the three SIDS regions, the Caribbean has the highest number of countries, not islands but countries. Of the 13 Caribbean Small Island Developing States covered within the political Caribbean Community (CARICOM) eight (8) are heavily indebted countries, experiencing Debt to GDP ratios over 50%<sup>1</sup>. This high level of accumulated debt is compounded by a lack of economies of scale due to small populations, out migration of the most educated, and reliance on low-growth sectors such as tourism. In addition, Caribbean SIDS are post-colonial spaces and have inherited systems of inequality, including gender inequality, which fundamentally influence the region's social vulnerability and the region's ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by leaving no one behind.

Environmental vulnerability both contributes to and exacerbates the economic and social challenges that the region faces.

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP Human Development Report, 2014 states Jamaica, Grenada, Barbados, St Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Saint Lucia, Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana and The Bahamas.

Since the impacts of climate change exploits vulnerabilities that already exist it is not surprising that the impacts of climate change affect women and men differently.

Research has shown that globally women are the hardest hit by dramatic shifts in climatic conditions. Women's mortality from climate-related disasters is higher than that of men. Compared to men, domestic burdens (e.g. collection of firewood and water) of women increase substantially with various manifestations of climate change. It is going to be interesting to see if this is also the reality in the Caribbean. UNDP, UN Women and the World Food Programme (WFP) will be implementing a project called EnGENDER supported by Global Affairs Canada and DFID, which will study the gender inequality of risk in our region. This will increase the data available it is really fantastic to also have the support of the Government of Mexico, our UN Women office there works closely to support the Global Centre of Excellence on Gender Statistics.

The anecdotal evidence, which I am sure many of you are aware of, paints a slightly different and still extremely concerning picture. Because of the accepted gender roles and norms in the Caribbean often where there are deaths stemming from a natural hazard influenced-disaster, most of the deaths are of men; men who are taking risks to save people or property. Whereas economically, much of the pressure rests on

women, this is because women headed households are often the poorest and established within the most environmentally risks zones and have less access to financial resources. Also, many of these women use their homes as their place of business. Additionally, older women are often left with bloated households responsible for the care of many while young women and men leave to find work in urban areas or outside of the country totally. Also, the psychosocial effects of the storm affect men and women differently leading to anti-social behaviours and attitudes.

There are many issues that we are trying to address re 'old school' development and sustainable development. The first issue is nuance, I'm not sure if there are in Jamaicans in the room but there's a fantastic saying in Jamaica that states 'We little but we tallawah'. It may be one of my favourite of all time...for now at least. The impacts of climate change exploits vulnerabilities and turn on strengths. Small is a vulnerability absolutely and it can also be a strength, the same for being an island and being developing. We have possibilities and opportunities to redefine how and what development looks like to and for us. The SDGs is a fantastic guide in which all Caribbean countries participated and now we work on how that manifests for our region. Just to say quickly, but to say it...resilience is not the only way to address the impacts of climate

change. It is also about changing the development practices that have led to the increased rate in climate change we are witnessing and experiencing.

Gender does not exist in a vacuum, humans are influenced by how gender, sex, race, ethnicity, class, religion, nationality, ability/disability and everything else that intersects, speaks specifically to how they experience opportunities and challenges. Some challenges are institutional and require institutional and systematic responses, however persons often find interpersonal and internal ways of coping that can be mined for resilience. This is incidentally one of the major findings as well from the review of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Gender Policy i.e. 'There is a strong consensus that language needs to shift from vulnerable communities to recognizing the inherent values, importance and potential of populations who might be underprivileged or otherwise marginalized.'

Given the Caribbean's heavily indebted status the need for resources is always a reality. However, according to Regional reports on climate finance from the OECD Creditor Reporting System for 2010 to 2015 across the region show that, with the exception of the Pacific, there is no dramatic increase of flows from developed to developing countries in SIDS regions.

The fact that The Green Climate Fund is the first climate finance mechanism to mainstream gender perspectives from the outset of its operations as an essential decision-making element for the deployment of its resources is amazing. It demonstrates a true understanding of the essential role gender equality and/or inequality plays in development outcomes. This is why the GCF has placed gender as a key element of its programming architecture, and its commitment to gender equality centres on gender-responsive climate action programmes and projects that benefit women and men. It is also fantastic that the head Mr. Yannick Glemarec is a former Deputy Executive Director of UN Women.

In the update from the last Gender Equality plan to this one, one of the most profound is the movement from gender sensitive to gender responsive. 'The policy emphasizes gender responsiveness rather than gender sensitivity. Being gender-responsive means that instead of only identifying gender issues or ensuring a "do no harm" approach, that instead one employs a process that will substantially help to overcome historical gender biases.

This is more than 'add women and stir', which an assessment found was the challenge with many previous proposals, gender was equated with women alone, and while women's empowerment is critical to gender equality, gender equality is much more. This is why gender equality



considerations should be mainstreamed into the entire project cycle to enhance the efficacy of climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions and ensure that gender co-benefits are obtained. As the GCF says ‘mainstreaming gender makes climate interventions more effective and efficient’. The implementation of the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan will focus on the following five priority areas: (a) Governance; (b) Competencies and capacity development; (c) Resource allocation, accessibility and budgeting; (d) Operational procedures; and (e) Knowledge generation and communications.

I am actually recently back from a trip to Fiji with three women farmers from Dominica, two state representatives from Antigua and Barbuda and Jamaica and an NGO representative from Barbados. We learned a lot just listening to the exchange, so I very much look forward to the discussions that will come out of these next few days.

The objectives of the meeting are exactly what is needed:

- The focus on readiness proposals including regional and south-south capacity development opportunities on readiness and adaptation planning window.
- Experience-sharing and lessons learnt from Caribbean readiness projects will be presented during an interactive panel discussion.
- Developing gender-responsive climate change rationale.

- Sharing lessons learned and good practices from project development and implementation in the Caribbean SIDS.

We have much to learn from each other. I mean...We are the region with the most Nobel Laureates per capita...

The first internet search engine was developed by a Bajan...

We can also be the region driving the positive action to address the challenges of the impacts of climate change to sustainable development – gender responsiveness is one way to do this.

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Planet 50-50 by 2030  
Step It Up for Gender Equality