

Remarks - UN Women MCO Caribbean Representative, Ms. Tonni
Brodber, to the CARICOM Pre-CSW Meeting
- Feb 17, 2022

The Commission on the Status of Women has always been instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women being the birthplace of many of the normative standards on gender equality and women's rights that we use today e.g., CEDAW. In 1996, ECOSOC expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It considers one priority theme, based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly and linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is meant to create opportunities for representatives of UN member states to discuss emerging issues, trends, focus areas, and new approaches to questions affecting the situation of women, including equality between women and men. It is meant to ensure timely consideration and, agree on further actions for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by adopting agreed conclusions and resolutions.

One year after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, where Caribbean delegates were integral to the successful negotiations, civil society and governments reflected on successes and barriers. Now since all that time, 1996, one success was that many countries made steps to establish national gender machineries, the impact of which we feel today. A few challenges noted were the absence of women from the highest levels of decision making, the lack of training for more women on broader socio-economic, cultural and political issues to enable them to negotiate and carve out a space for themselves. While much progress has been made these challenges still exist especially as it relates to the CSW Priority theme: Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

Now CEDAW General recommendation 37 is specific to the **gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change. It's an accessible document that advises states on a comprehensive approach to addressing the dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change. It also states that:** The categorization of women and girls as passive 'vulnerable groups' in need of protection from the impact of disasters is a negative gender stereotype that fails to recognize the important contributions to disaster risk reduction, post-disaster management and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies that women are already making. We are here to discuss, so that the Commission on the Status of Women agreed upon conclusions reflect the reality and aspirations of Caribbean SIDS.

In the new UN System for cooperation in the Caribbean, which is called the Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. There are 4 main pillar areas with two outcomes each. The Pillars are "Shared prosperity and Economic resilience", "Equality, Well Being and Leaving no one Behind", "resilience to Climate Change shocks and sustainable natural Resource Management" and "Peace safety, justice and Rule of Law". The Pillars and outcomes are bound to the SDGs and as such it should be no surprise that they are deeply interconnected. The Outcomes specific to Climate Resilience – Outcomes 5 and 6 will not be achieved without peace, safety, justice, equality and inclusive approaches or economic resilience, cannot have economic resilience in SIDS without climate resilience.

CARICOM member and associate member states as small island developing states have a unique understanding of the impacts of climate change and disasters. Member states deeply understand through a lived experience, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines most recently, the ways in which the impacts of Climate Change and disasters exploit vulnerabilities. There are vulnerabilities based on how our histories affect our present. There are vulnerabilities based on how our institutions are constructed, on our ideologies and more personal inter-relational and individual vulnerabilities Now the Government of Canada and UK FCDO UNDP WFP, UN Women and CDEMA Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean

(**EnGenDER**) project has [reports on the Gender Inequality of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Resilience across 9 CARICOM countries](#). Launched during the last sensitisation a few weeks ago. These studies demonstrate how men and women are affected by these vulnerabilities. However, while important, the story of vulnerabilities is a single story and not our only story. Our story is also one forged from resilience and the love of liberty where indigenous, Indian, African, Chinese, European people contributed to the foundation of the beautiful countries of the Caribbean. The foundation may have been marred by systemic inequalities but it has been fortified by faith in a more equitable and equal reality. So, in the words of Dame Nita Barrow a former Ambassador to the United Nations and the first woman Governor General of Barbados, 'One fine day I will walk... free of all the symbols and signifiers that tell me I am less than who I am
Those I am walking with will know how I feel
We are walking a road we have all paved together
And it is finally taking us to the places we want to go together.'

Thank you to the CARICOM Secretariat for the commitment to ensure CARICOM walks together free from the symbols and signifiers that tells the people of CARICOM that they are less than they are.

Look forward to a very robust negotiation, a shared position for CARICOM and hope ministers are able to attend CSW and if of interest please contact our office.