



**Remarks delivered by the Deputy Representative - UN Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean,**

**Ms. Tonni Brodber, at the None in 3 in collaboration with UN Women**

**“Preventing Domestic Violence Training Workshop”**

**UN House Barbados, 18 July 2017**

It is a pleasure to be able to give remarks at this training. Un Women is pleased to collaborate on this project, which brings innovative strategies to build on the foundation of work laid by government, civil society and intergovernmental agencies.

The qualitative research report produced by this project was a difficult read. Reading people’s own words of their experiences with domestic violence brings a face and a story to the statistics we often quote. UN Women has for many years also done research on gender based violence including baseline studies of how women and men are able to access justice in cases of gender based violence. A few things stood out to me from the 21 lessons:

1. Violence/Domestic Violence is multifaceted and cyclical: what we see is what we do... and not only is it a dysfunctional unforgiving cycle but it is comprehensive. The stories of women who were dismissed and isolated from their families and friends from childhood into adulthood. Legacies of shame, not enough of redemption in some part because of the lack of trust in professionals.
2. Violence/Domestic Violence is normalised: Some women, a lot of the men interviewed and many of the youth, didn’t recognise key characteristics of domestic violence e.g. sexual violence and economic violence...one can only assume that it was just seen as how things are and/or should be between a couple?

3. Violence/Domestic Violence is about power. The exercise of 'power over another person' in order to feel valued, worthy, important. As the first lesson highlights, this unhealthy power dynamic is perpetuated against intimate partners, to youth and infant children. The multifaceted nature of violence and how it is manifested is shaped by how a person applies whatever they believe is the source of their own individual power- in order to gain standing. This could be a knife in the case of one women interviewed, strength or the tongue/spoken word.

I'm not sure if you've all seen the recent article in a regional newspaper that has been making the rounds on social media highlighting the Reasons 'Why Caribbean parents aren't raising the next Mark Zuckerberg' (Nerissa Golden, Jamaica Observer, 9 July 2017). Most comments acknowledge that we don't necessarily want another Mark Zuckerberg we want empowered individuals confident in their ability to use their potential to serve, themselves, their families, their community, country and the world.

It collated many things that have been said many times, and was generally very interesting – we could have a four-day session alone on what was raised! However, when thinking about efforts to end violence against women and reading the None in Three project research two reasons stuck with me:

8. 'They do what they see us do...Children are more likely to copy you - good or bad. Let them see you do something new and stretch yourself in new areas of life.' Although Ms. Golden outlined consumption and the lack of learning and growth, I see
9. The blame game: They see us complain about what everyone else is not doing rather than solving problems.

It seems that the two are intertwined. We play the blame game, which is what we do, and they do what they see us do. We perpetrate and play the blame game with intimate partner violence - competing victimhoods (as Roberta Clarke calls it) 'she made him do it' 'he deserved it' 'she deserved it'. Underpinning this is a fundamental lack of empathy, maybe driven by a lack of self-awareness and accountability i.e. it doesn't matter what anyone else does, you are responsible for your actions. Instead we should be understanding and addressing the root causes, while curbing unhealthy behaviour patterns. This is what is especially inspiring about this training; it is action-oriented, research-based and addresses how those who serve can and should refuel. This training will enhance your already wizened tools to better serve victims and perpetrators, especially among the most marginalised.

The research paints a picture that is bleak but not hopeless. Initiatives like this demonstrate that Caribbean people are resilient and determined to continue to learn, grow and contribute to building sustainable and empowering communities for all people.

UN Women's programme of work on Social Mobilization to End Gender Based Violence in the Eastern Caribbean is aimed at supporting strategies and approaches at the national and community level which challenge social behaviours and perceptions that perpetuate the root causes of gender-based discrimination and which reinforce unequal relations of power between women and men. This work will be carried out in partnership with national and community-based partners, and in coordination with other international organisations, including UNICEF, so as to ensure complementarity of support to member states in addressing Domestic Violence.

In particular, this work in the Caribbean region focuses on:

- Community-based and nationally-based dialogue on the root causes of gender-based violence, including the concepts of masculinity; which facilitate shifts in values, beliefs, behaviours and practices recognizing GBV as unacceptable. The discourse supported should target young women and men, adult women and men and local organizations;
- Community led efforts which aim at building a critical mass of individuals and groups engaged in activism against gender-based violence. This includes building the capacity of community support networks;
- Building girls and women's social assets and safety nets e.g. through the provision of girl and women only spaces that provide social support and skills training, raise self-esteem and help cope with crisis;
- Social advocacy which develops momentum at national and community levels for the adoption/revision of key pieces of legislation, plans and policies to End Gender Based Violence, including Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence;
- Increasing public education and awareness about rights and access to services in overcoming gender based violence.

We don't exist in a vacuum. As per Marcus Garvey 'A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.' We are the products of history, we don't have to

be bound to it, but acknowledgment of this will help us untie the dysfunction that binds us and enhance the strengths we cultivated.