



REMARKS

Ms. Monica La Bennett

**Vice-President (Operations), Caribbean Development Bank
on the occasion of the**

**Seminar on the Conduct of National Prevalence Surveys on
Gender-Based Violence in CARICOM:**

Sharing Knowledge and Experiences from 5 CARICOM Member States

UN House, Barbados

4 March 2020

- Ambassador Gail Mathurin, Director General of CARICOM Secretariat's Office of Trade Negotiations
- Didier Trebucq, Resident Coordinator, UNDP, Barbados and the OECS
- Alison McLean, Representative, UN Women Multi Country Office – Caribbean
- Representatives of Bureaux of Gender Affairs; National Statistical Services; University of the West Indies; youth-led organisations
- Consultants supporting this very important work
- UN and CDB colleagues
- Media
- Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning.

Gender Based Violence is a global challenge affecting all countries and especially those countries in the Region but for years, we have had to use global statistics on women's and girls' experience of violence and extrapolate these to the Caribbean. However, today as we meet for this seminar on the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV), there is good news and bad news! The good news is that through the surveys undertaken in five countries from 2016-2018, we now



have the statistics to tell us more about the phenomenon. Indeed the surveys revealed that 28% to 38% of women have experienced physical and or sexual violence from a partner in their lifetime. The bad news is that, based on the evidence gathered across these countries, we understand that violence against women and girls continues to be a major obstacle to gender equality and to women's and girls' ability to live full and fulfilling lives.

It is also a barrier in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5, where countries committed to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation.

Support for efforts to achieve gender equality, including ending gender-based violence, is a priority for the Caribbean Development Bank. Without gender equality we cannot achieve our mandate to reduce extreme poverty in the Caribbean. Forgive me for “preaching to the choir”, but GBV comes at a significant cost to all of us: it is harmful to women, children, families, communities, and the society as a whole. While much of GBV remains less visible than other forms, it is no secret that the related shame, physical and mental health issues and absenteeism from work results in decreased human capital and lower productivity. It also leads to increased public spending on social services, and higher policing and judicial system costs. The impacts are also felt for generations. Children who witness violence at home are likely to experience episodes of vicarious trauma, which may lead to poor school performance and, if unaddressed, in later years, manifest in expressions of violent behaviour. GBV is indeed a vicious cycle of violence threatening the sustainability of the Caribbean societies.



The situation is even worse for women and girls who experience greater vulnerability because of race, class, disability, indigenous or migrant status. However, as we are on the eve of this year's International Women's Day - under the theme #EachForEqual – there is hope! We have a rich body of evidence and a sanctioned instrument for collection of regular and comprehensive national data on the prevalence, nature and response to gender-based violence.

CDB is pleased to have had an opportunity to support both the Grenada Prevalence Study as well as the regional component of the project aimed at increasing regional knowledge in the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of comparable prevalence data on gender-based violence. We have worked closely with UN Women and partnered with CARICOM to support the implementation and formal adoption of the CARICOM Model thereby deepening the region's expertise in GBV prevalence data collection and analysis. It is anticipated that this common approach to measuring GBV will enhance regional cooperation and harmonisation on one of the most pressing citizen security concerns.

Allow me to thank all whose efforts have got us to this point, including the experts from the Global Women's Institute who provided technical guidance to this process, the regional expert group whose members stayed the course, even as the project timelines were extended, and importantly, UN Women, leading efforts ensuring the day-to-day delivery of the project components. The quality of outputs is a testament to combined efforts.



While we meet today to discuss the evidence and lessons learnt, let us resolve, wherever we are positioned, to make clear commitments to continue all we can to end the scourge of GBV in our Caribbean.

Thank you!



HANDOVER REMARKS
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CDB recognises its responsibility as an advocate and partner in the efforts to end Gender-Based Violence. This made our decision to collaborate with UN Women quite a simple one and one to which we restate our unwavering commitment. The partnership between CDB and UN Women was further enhanced through strong collaboration with the CARICOM Regional Statistics Programme and engagement with development partners including the Inter-American Development Bank, Pan-American Health Organisation, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). There were also a cadre of regional experts, across multiple fields and sectors, who have stayed the course and remain invested in efforts to end GBV.

A key output of the regional component of this project has been a Compendium Knowledge Product “Caribbean Experiences with Collecting Data on Violence against Women and Girls”. This compendium details Caribbean experiences in collecting data on violence against women and girls. It also includes a Technical Guidance Note on Caribbean national prevalence surveys on GBV, the Question by Question Manual and, of course, the actual survey instrument.

It is envisioned that these resources will aid CARICOM Member States’ to generate regular and reliable data on GBV. Importantly, the CARICOM Heads



of Government have approved the 2019-2030 Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics. This includes a commitment to, “develop and implement specialised surveys as needed to capture issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment across the region, including the conduct of Gender-Based Violence surveys for the monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of gender equality commitments.” We have the political commitment and, under the regional component, have provided resources to support capacity building in the Region. We believe that CARICOM Secretariat is best positioned to lead the efforts in the Region.

Given the Secretariat’s track record in supporting development, including development statistics, and given progress on the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics, we have every confidence that effort will continue apace, with CARICOM’s continued leadership, to build regional knowledge and ensure sustainability in the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of comparable GBV prevalence data for decision-making.

I now, therefore, invite Ms. Alison McLean, UN Women MCO representative to present and handover the Compendium Knowledge Product “Caribbean Experiences with Collecting Data on Violence against Women and Girls” to the CARICOM Secretariat.