

Antigua & Barbuda
Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
Report

2014 – 2019

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Acknowledgements

The Directorate of Gender Affairs, under the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth, and Gender Affairs, prepared this national review on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

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Antigua & Barbuda's National Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action would not have been possible without the partnership and contributions of our respective stakeholders. Thank you.

Introduction

Antigua & Barbuda is a twin Small Island Developing State located in the Eastern Caribbean. According to the United Nations, Antigua & Barbuda has an estimated population of 103 000 people and occupies a collective land mass of 170 square miles. Antigua covers a land mass of 108 square miles, with Barbuda occupying 62 square miles.

In 1995, Antigua & Barbuda joined countries from around the world in Beijing to discuss and address the issues and challenges facing women at the Fourth World Conference on Women. It was at this conference that Antigua & Barbuda signed on to and adopted the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) – a global agenda for women’s empowerment. This signaled the country’s commitment to prioritize gender equality, and women’s empowerment, and to strengthen efforts and actions to address the challenges faced by women and girls. The BPfA sets strategic objectives for the achievement of gender equality in twelve critical areas of concern:

- 1.) Women and poverty
- 2.) Education and training of women
- 3.) Women and health
- 4.) Violence against women
- 5.) Women and armed conflict
- 6.) Women and the economy
- 7.) Women in power and decision making
- 8.) Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women
- 9.) Human rights of women
- 10.) Women and the media
- 11.) Women and the environment
- 12.) The girl-child

In the year 2000, at the twenty-third special session of the UN General Assembly, the progress being made towards the BPfA was reviewed. The UN Economic and Social Council requested that all states that have adopted the BPfA undertake and submit comprehensive national level reviews of the achievements made and challenges encountered in implementing the BPfA.

Due to its empowering and long-term impact on women’s rights, the Platform for Action is reviewed and appraised every five years to continue to implement its commitments. The year 2020 will mark the 25th anniversary of the Declaration and Platform for Action. Countries are preparing by having national consultations and engaging stakeholders, Antigua & Barbuda is no exception.

During the review period, various consultations and stakeholder engagement sessions were held with government officials, civil society organizations, and vulnerable groups to ensure that the review would be comprehensive, holistic, and provide a true representation of the country.

The review of Antigua & Barbuda's progress in creating an equal and equitable society has been divided into 4 sections. **Section one** provides a macro analysis of priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks. **Section two** provides a more detailed analysis of measures taken to advance gender equality across the twelve critical areas of concern of the BPfA. **Section three** covers national processes and mechanisms, linking those related to the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to those related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; while **section four** highlights progress on the availability of data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics, linking the monitoring of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Acronyms

ABAPD	Antigua & Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities
ABHTI	Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute
ABICE	Antigua & Barbuda Institute for Continuing Education
ABIIT	Antigua & Barbuda International Institute of Technology
ABSTEP	Antigua & Barbuda Skills Training and Empowerment Programme
APP	Agriculture Policy Programme
APPA	Antigua Planned Parenthood Association
ASC	Antigua State College
ASSIST	Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems
AUA	American University of Antigua
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CANROP	Caribbean Agriculture Network of Rural Women Producers
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CHAPA	Central Housing and Planning Authority
CIWIL	Caribbean Women's Institute for Women in Leadership
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DOE	Department of Environment
DoGA	Directorate of Gender Affairs
DV	Domestic Violence
EAG	Environmental Awareness Group
EDP	Entrepreneurial Development Programme
FCASV	Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
FSSD	Family and Social Services Division
GARD	Gilbert Rural Agricultural Development Centre
GATE	Government Assisted Technology Endeavour
GBSV	Gender Based and Sexual Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GIGSIIP	Guidelines for Implementing Gender and Socially Inclusive Infrastructure Projects
GRACE	Government's Residential Assistance and Care for the Elderly and the Eligible
HAPI	Home Advancement Program for the Indigent
HEART	Human Entrepreneurship & Assistive Resource Technologies
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEC	Information Education Communication
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration

IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IWD	International Women's Day
JURIST	Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening Project
LGBTQIA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, And Asexual or Allied
MAP	Men as Partners
MBS	Medical Benefits Scheme
MESI	Men Engage Summer Institute
MOH	Ministry of Health
MP	Member of Parliament
MSJMC	Mount St. John Medical Centre
MSSC	Multi-Sector Stakeholder Committee
MTDS	Medium Term Development Strategy
MWH	Ministry of Works and Housing
NEMMA	North Eastern Marine Management Area
NGEAP	National Gender Equality Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NODS	National Office of Disaster Services
NSLF	National Student Loan Fund
NVRCD	National Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Disability
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OSEC	One Stop Employment Center
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission
PS	Permanent Secretary
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RPFAB	Royal Police Force of Antigua & Barbuda
SARC	Support and Referral
SART	Sexual Assault Response Team
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SIRF	Sustainable Island Resource Framework
SOMC	Sexual Offences Model Court
SSP	Social Safeguard Policy
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SVSU	Special Victims Support Unit
TIP	Trafficking In Person
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHR	United Nations Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency International Development

VAW	Violence against Women
WAR	Women Against Rape
WHO	World Health Organization
WLSP	Work and Life Skills Program
YEEP	Youth and Education Empowerment Programme

Section One: Overview of priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks

Achievements in the empowerment of women in the last 5 years

During the review process key stakeholders identified major achievements in women's empowerment in the following areas:

- A. Education and the training of Women
- B. Women in Power and Decision-making
- C. Women and Health
- D. Violence against Women
- E. Women and Poverty
- F. Women and the Economy

A. Education and the training of Women

Antigua & Barbuda has experienced significant progress in the area of education and the training of women. Women and girls in Antigua & Barbuda enjoy universal access to education and are also well represented at every level within the education system.

In Antigua & Barbuda ensuring that persons have access to quality education has been a major priority for the government. The adult literacy rate has been nearly 99 percent for the past decade, according to UNESCO statistics. This can be attributed to the policy of making school enrollment mandatory for all children between 5 to 16 years. The table (1) below outlines the primary and secondary enrollment figures in Antigua & Barbuda.

Table 1: Male and Female Enrollment Primary & Secondary Level, 2018-2019

School Level	2013-14 Male		2017-18 Male		2013-14 Female		2017-18 Female		2013-14 M & F	2017-18 M & F
	M	%	M	%	F	%	F	%	Total	Total
Primary School	5277	52	4286	46	4895	48	4987	54	10172	9273
Secondary School	3885	50	3864	51	3912	50	3779	49	7797	7643

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

In Antigua and Barbuda, actions were taken to dismantle harmful gender stereotypes in the school curriculum as subject areas that have been traditionally seen as male-oriented, such as Technical Drawing, have been integrated into the curriculum at the nation's only government-run all-female secondary school. Additionally, Home Economics is offered at the only government-run all-male secondary school.

The Gilbert Rural Agricultural Development (GARD) Centre embarked on a multi-year initiative to promote and support women in the pursuit of non-traditional employment fields that maintained significant income potential and focused primarily on trade skills. The project targeted over 200 vulnerable young women up to 35 years of age who were unemployed or underemployed, many of whom had not completed secondary school. This is significant when considering that in Antigua & Barbuda vocational training and trade skills have traditionally been associated with men. Therefore, this initiative is a step towards expanding the level of opportunities for women and also facilitate more women entrepreneurship with the capacity and skills gained.

Antigua & Barbuda has provided access to tertiary level education to persons, particularly women and girls, through the Board of Education and the scholarships and grants that they disburse impartially. Although there has been no affirmative action in this area, women and girls have accessed and benefited from these scholarships at higher rates to pursue their studies as a result.

Moreover, a safe and inclusive learning environment free of harassment and discrimination has been a major goal in Antigua & Barbuda for all relevant stakeholders. The Halo Foundation is a local non-profit organization which has embarked on an awareness raising campaign that highlights the importance of eradicating bullying and harassment in schools, encouraging young persons to speak out and advocate against bullying, and promote an inclusive and safe learning environment for all which is conducive to learning.

Furthermore, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda has ensured that there are adequate facilities in place for girls to have access to safe water, sanitation services, and bathrooms with designated facilities for girls and boys. All government primary and secondary schools maintain these standards.

As it relates to adolescent pregnancy, there has been a decline in adolescent pregnancy rates in Antigua & Barbuda. Furthermore, adolescent girls who become pregnant have the opportunity to continue their schooling through the formal education system.

A. Women in Power and Decision Making

The political arena in Antigua & Barbuda has always benefited from the participation of women in the electoral process as voters, campaigners, and political party organizers. However, this has not translated into women's increased participation in political leadership and decision-making. There are presently two elected females represented in the house of Parliament and nine (9) females within the Senate out of a total of sixteen (16) senators. This indicates some progress as there are currently more women represented in the political arena in Antigua & Barbuda than ever before. With concerted efforts and interventions, along with affirmative action, the current political landscape may allow women to transcend and transform politics and leadership with increased involvement and participation.

The Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership programme is a measure that was implemented through the Directorate of Gender Affairs to increase and promote women's

representation in decision-making positions in parliament, government and the public service in the past years. Through the programme, women politicians and young women leaders were trained and supported to gain elected office and assume other positions of leadership across the public service.

In 2017, the President of the Senate launched the President's Ten programme to support the increased participation of young women in leadership. The President's Ten is a mentoring programme designed by the Parliament to encourage young women to actively participate in political and public life.

Additionally, the national gender machinery, the Directorate of Gender Affairs (DoGA), in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, is working consistently to raise awareness, and increase national discourse and advocacy to conceptualize and design interventions and programmes that will act as a catalyst and foundation for women who have an interest in entering politics and leadership roles.

B. Women and Health

The 2014 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action report stated that the maternal mortality rate had been reduced to zero percent. Due to strengthening of maternal health services, Antigua & Barbuda has maintained a maternal mortality rate of zero. Women have access to free prenatal care within the community clinics. Access to, and utilization of, prenatal care improves the likelihood of a healthy pregnancy by reducing potential risks of complications. In addition to free prenatal care, having access to a skilled birth attendant, such as a midwife or nurse, is a factor that can be attributed to the maintenance of zero maternal mortality.

Registered nurses usually facilitate the delivery of babies at the Mount Saint John's Medical Centre (MSJMC) however, a woman also has the option of having her delivery facilitated by a medical doctor at her request. The presence of a doctor during labour and delivery can contribute to a lower maternal mortality rate, as he/she will be able to address any complications that may arise.

There has also been a strengthening of prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programmes that offer a range of services for women of reproductive age living with, or at risk of, HIV to maintain their health and stop their infants from acquiring HIV. Another achievement, as it relates to women and health, is the official World Health Organization (WHO) validation for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and Congenital Syphilis obtained by Antigua & Barbuda in 2017. This is an important accomplishment for the nation as it means that there is a reduction in infant mortality and more babies are being born healthy. Consequently, the potential need for continuous care and treatment of an infant living with HIV/AIDS is lowered.

C. Women and Poverty

In Antigua & Barbuda many women are heading single parent households, and often times have other dependents, such as the elderly and the disabled, with responsibilities to provide and care for them, particularly economically. This, combined with women occupying the lower paid jobs and engaging in high levels of unpaid care/domestic work, can lead to an overrepresentation of women in poverty and precarious positions which may lead to further vulnerability.

Through a comprehensive social protection reform, Antigua & Barbuda has introduced measures to address gender inequalities that contribute to poverty among women. There is a paradigm shift in Antigua & Barbuda which takes into account the need for gender-responsive integrated social protection systems, and the need for investment in public services and infrastructure to support the implementation of these systems. Antigua & Barbuda recognizes that social protection is a human right, as enshrined in various international conventions. As a result, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda has made significant investments in forming a Social Protection Floor informing the foundation of social justice and economic development. The Antigua & Barbuda draft National Social Protection Policy and Social Protection Bill are intended to focus attention on both social and livelihood development needs for social protection programming, strengthen sectoral integration, and improve the cost effectiveness of social protection programming. The policy builds on a solid underpinning of effective and responsive social service delivery which is already in place across a range of ministries and agencies.

Vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities face multiple barriers leading to inequalities such as: over-representation among people living in poverty; lower participation in social, economic and public life; and lower economic health and education outcomes. Exclusion of vulnerable populations has a significant cost for individuals and households and ultimately growth and sustainable development. As such, the goal of eliminating extreme poverty within Antigua & Barbuda is inextricably linked to improving the economic status of women and also in addressing multiple forms of discrimination. Therefore, a multi-dimensional and holistic approach will be used to implement the social protection measures.

There are a number of social protection programmes that are implemented in Antigua & Barbuda that target women which will aid in improving their economic empowerment. These include:

The Social housing Programme

In 2018 The Government of Antigua & Barbuda announced and began to undertake the social housing programme which targets poor and vulnerable persons in urban communities. The first phase of the project addressed areas that are prone to various socioeconomic vulnerabilities. The project's focus is mainly on low-income families and also includes the provision of housing for mixed-income families. This programme allows more women to have access to safe, affordable, and climate resilient housing.

Employment Assistance

The One Stop Employment Centre (OSEC) is a public employment services centre that offers free services to the community of Antigua & Barbuda including services to both job seekers and employers. Some of these services include (but are not limited to) free monthly workshops, computer & QuickBooks training, career counseling, resume & cover-letter assistance. The Centre is a part of the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Public Safety & Labor. Overall, OSEC offers employment and training services to job seekers at no cost. This centre provides opportunity and capacity building for vulnerable women to earn an income and gain skills.

National School Meals Programme

The School Meals Programme is a feeding programme which has been in place since 2005 by the Ministry of Education. The programme provides daily, Monday through Friday, breakfast and lunch for students in government primary and secondary schools in the most vulnerable sectors of the country, benefiting between 2,700 and 3,000 students daily. This programme eases the financial burden on women, particularly single mothers, of providing breakfast and lunch for their children.

Financial Empowerment Centre

The Financial Empowerment Centre (FEC) enables their clients to achieve financial independence and resilience by offering free financial consultation to help persons develop a financial management plan and strategy. The FEC forms part of the referral network that offers coordinated services to survivors of GBSV.

Government's Residential Assistance and Care (GRACE) Programme for the Elderly

The Family and Social Services Division (FSSD), through the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth and Gender Affairs offers elder care services across communities in Antigua & Barbuda. The programme provides care for persons 60 years and over and also persons with physical disabilities. The GRACE Programme has been operational since 1987. The elder care residential assistance programme ensures the holistic care and treatment of the elderly population in Antigua & Barbuda.

Community Skill Development Project

The Community Sewing Project, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Antigua and Rotary Club Kirkland in Washington State, in collaboration with the Community Development Division in the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth and Gender Affairs. The sewing project is presently being implemented in Six (6) communities and is geared towards the development of quality entrepreneurial skills, particularly women (including girls) and vulnerable persons.

The Youth and Education Empowerment Programme (YEEP)

The Department of Youth Affairs within the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth and Gender Affairs, launched an education initiative in 2016. The initiative is geared towards giving persons between the ages of 16-40 years, seeking a second chance education who were unable to complete formal schooling. The programme is designed to expose individuals to a range of courses giving them an opportunity to acquire the requisite competencies needed to improve their overall livelihood.

D. Women and the Economy

Antigua & Barbuda's economy is heavily dependent on natural resources and on the tourism sector, which accounts for 80% of the output gross domestic product (GDP), approximately 70% of direct and indirect employment and 85% of foreign exchange earnings.

According to the 2015 Labour Force Survey, the unemployment rate for women in Antigua & Barbuda was 15%. The Government of Antigua & Barbuda is determined through the National Sustainable Development Strategy of the 2016-2020 Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS), to "do all in its power to lead the country to attaining a harmonious, prosperous, and modern Antigua & Barbuda founded on the principles of sustainability and inclusive growth... where equality of opportunity, peace and justice prevail for all citizens and residents".

The 2014, Country Gender Assessment (CGA) report commissioned by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) revealed that men dominate in sectors that contribute the highest to the nation's gross domestic product. To address these gaps, there are a number of strategies and programmes that have been implemented to empower women and increase their activity in the economy.

Guidelines for Implementing Gender Equality and Social Inclusive Infrastructure Projects (GIGSIIP) were introduced in Antigua & Barbuda under the road infrastructure and rehabilitation project, which formed part of Antigua & Barbuda's application to the United Kingdom's Caribbean Infrastructure Partnership Fund administered by the CDB. Many infrastructure projects and programmes are gender blind. There is a general assumption that women and men will automatically benefit from new infrastructure, without considering to the full range of social and economic impacts, both beneficial and negative. According to Antigua & Barbuda's 2014 CGA, many policies and programmatic interventions are developed without reference to gender equality. Consequently, women "continue to be adversely affected by systemic, institutional and socio-cultural, political and economic inequalities when their needs are not taken into consideration."

The GIGSIIP was developed through consultations with various stakeholders. The goal and vision were for the guidelines to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Works and Housing and other

relevant ministry partners, and contractors to implement equal employment and gender-responsive safeguard policies in the workplace.

The gender and socially inclusive guidelines for infrastructure projects provide standards for a healthy and safe work environment, and also offer best practices for implementing safeguards against GBSV and harassment, including prevention strategies and support services. The guidelines promote equal opportunity, employee welfare, community engagement, and a complaint mechanism for anyone who is disadvantaged. It outlines the necessary steps to ensure gender and social inclusion from design to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation for all infrastructure programmes in Antigua & Barbuda. The guidelines also call for increased participation of vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities and women, in the infrastructure sector.

The Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development (GARD) Centre provides vocational training and business advice and counseling to help vulnerable youth gain technical and entrepreneurial skills to compete in a global work environment. Through the centre women and girls, and other vulnerable groups, have the opportunity to be trained in non-traditional fields and to increase their economic empowerment.

The DoGA Work & Life Skills Programme (WLSP) aimed to equip young men and women, particularly women between ages 18-30 years with the necessary skills to function effectively in today's workplace. The WLSP was designed to improve young peoples' competencies in both the personal and professional spheres including written and oral communication skills, stress management, self-confidence, and financial literacy and life skills.

F) Strengthening of the Directorate of Gender Affairs

Since the submission of the last report, the DoGA has been upgraded and strengthened. The DoGA has been re-positioned with technical staff to fulfil its functions. From 2014 to present, the Directorate has had seven (7) technical officers; with Bachelor of Science Degrees in Social and Development fields and Master's degrees along with professional certifications in gender and development. The technical staff is supported by 10 support officers. The DoGA is also the coordinating body for the management and functioning of the Support and Referral Centre (SARC); which is a one-stop location for survivors of GBSV.

Challenges and setbacks in the progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years.

Lack of understanding on the importance of gender mainstreaming

There is a general lack of understanding on the importance of gender mainstreaming across sectors in Antigua & Barbuda. While there is a will from the sectors to integrate gender into their work, there is need for capacity building and training on gender-responsive policies and programme development, implementation and monitoring.

Misconceptions about gender and discriminatory beliefs and practices

Traditional cultural beliefs regarding gender roles and stereotypes remain predominant in Antiguan and Barbudan society which has been a barrier to achieving gender equality in a number of ways. Firstly, it contributes to the belief that gender equality has already been achieved. Antigua & Barbuda's constitution assures women and men equal rights under the law, which some have used to debate that gender equality is already a lived reality, while ignoring other systemic or culturally motivated inequalities. There is also the assumption that gender equality and women's empowerment movement ignore the struggles faced by men and boys.

Culture of abuse towards women

In Antigua & Barbuda, there is still a culture of silence and victim blaming related to GBSV. Based on administrative data, women and girls are affected disproportionately by GBSV which impacts their lives, communities and the society on a whole.

Negative portrayal of women in media

Women and girls in Antigua & Barbuda are often presented through a narrow, stereotypical lens. In recent years there has been increasing concern about music and other forms of media that sexually objectify or otherwise discriminate against or demean women and girls. Further, with no media regulatory board to formally standardize and monitor the information presented by the media, local advocates and civil society organizations (CSOs) have resorted to registering their complaints informally via the same mediums responsible for the offence. The absence of a regulatory body or media monitoring framework also leaves little to no avenue for redress when insensitive or offensive material is published.

Women in poverty

In Antigua & Barbuda women are often over-represented among the poor and indigent. Many women are leading single parent households and are responsible for and expected to provide financially for dependents such as young children and the elderly. A large proportion of women in Antigua & Barbuda occupy jobs within the tourism sector that are often low level and low paying, as well as seasonal in nature. They also are predominantly occupying jobs aligned with stereotypical gender roles, such as caretaking and domestic work, which are typically associated with low levels of pay. Furthermore, Antigua & Barbuda is vulnerable to climate change and its effects can exasperate economic hardship and poverty which many women are already facing.

Lack of affirmative action

Equality between women and men is a fundamental right and principle. In Antigua & Barbuda, gender gaps still exist and are evident in the local workforce composition and hierarchy, levels of

involvement of women in political leadership and entrepreneurship opportunities. The current lack of affirmative action through means such as policy, legislation and standardized procedures has led to a lack of diversity in many areas of the workforce which hinders the potential for innovation. The lack of affirmative action also means that many vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are not having their unique challenges considered and met to aid in their advancement. Adopting this type of action is necessary for gender equality and the empowerment of women and will act as a catalyst in breaking harmful stereotypes and providing more opportunities for all.

Lack of accountability and institutional framework

As a nation, Antigua & Barbuda has ratified various international conventions and frameworks that promote gender equality and the elimination of violence and discrimination against women. However, due to the absence of a national gender policy and framework, there has been a lack of accountability from various sectors to promote gender equality. While there are laws that promote non-discrimination and the empowerment of women, the absence of a specific national framework acts as a hindrance to promote gender equality.

Lack of disaggregated and gender responsive data

While there has been progress, there is still a challenge with collecting the disaggregated data and gender statistics needed to inform policies and programmes. The lack of gender statistics presents as a challenge to achieving gender equality nationally.

2) Antigua & Barbuda's top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in over the past 5 years

Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice.

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda has prioritized access to justice and non-discrimination under the law. The Ministry of Legal Affairs has made amendments to local legislation in order to improve both rights of women and girls under the law and their access to justice. Some of these newly introduced and amended laws include the Domestic Violence Act (2015) which expands the definition of domestic violence under the law, and mandates that police offices file a report on every reported case of DV, or IPV, among other measures. This ensures that more women are able to seek redress under the law and makes it more likely for their cases to be heard within the court.

The Evidence (Special Provisions)(Amendment) Act, 2016, allows vulnerable witnesses of crimes such as sexual assault and abuse to give evidence without having to face the perpetrator in court in order to reduce their potential re-victimization. Additionally, the Child Care and Adoption Act (2015) addresses all issues affecting the care and protection of vulnerable children and ensures that children, particularly girls, are placed in safe, nurturing living environments.

Antigua & Barbuda, with the support of the Government of Canada through the Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project, and with support from the Caribbean Court of Justice, has established a Sexual Offences Model Court (SOMC) within the High Court of Antigua & Barbuda to improve access to justice for victims of sexual violence. The court, which was launched in January of 2019, is a set of specialised court procedures for the treatment of sexual offence cases including a dedicated courtroom and presiding judge assigned to the hearing of sexual offences.

The court aims to ensure that victims of GBSV have access to justice and reparation by providing timely, gender-responsive, and coordinated response to complainants of sexual assault cases; ensuring greater coordination between the courts and agencies that provide services to sexual assault complainants; improving the monitoring and evaluation of sexual offence cases; and reducing the secondary re-victimization that complainants experience.

The special procedures implemented by the court include tighter pre-trial management for the quicker resolution of cases, fast tracking process for sexual offence cases, assigning only judges, court administrators, police and prosecutors, with specialized training to sexual offence cases, using video conferencing technology to allow vulnerable complainants to give evidence from a remote testimony room, the provision of a special waiting room at the High Court and court orientation for complainants in sexual assault cases; and integrating the support services offered by the DoGA (SARC) and the FSSD to both adult and child complainants. This will allow complainants to give their report, conduct their medical examination, get counselling, and be assigned survivor advocates. All these services will be available at the SARC, which is operated by DoGA.

Also, through the JURIST Project, members of the local judiciary responsible for dealing with sexual offence cases received training and sensitization on how to deal with those who have experienced or committed sexual offences. The session educated police officers, judges, magistrates, and court personnel, on the basic concepts of gender and GBSV, victim-blaming and other forms of re-victimization, and the relevant support services available to both survivors and perpetrators. The training sessions also underscored the importance of taking a coordinated, holistic approach to the provision of justice in these cases. Approximately 30 justice sector stakeholders benefited from this exercise with the aim to improve access to justice for survivors.

During sensitization and awareness-raising exercises the DoGA provided education and information on local domestic violence (DV) laws and other legislation that speaks to GBSV. This ensures that the public is not only aware of rights and obligations under the law but also empowers the public to make informed decisions when navigating the justice sector.

The DoGA has also compiled a booklet of simplified laws relevant to GBSV to increase the public's legal literacy with regard to their rights and available protection under the law. The booklet

contained information on the Domestic Violence Act (2015), the Electronic Crimes Act (2018), and the Sexual Offences Act, and also included information on consent, protection orders and how and where survivors of GBSV could access support services. The material has been disseminated widely throughout communities and across Antigua & Barbuda.

Since the launch of Antigua & Barbuda SARC, operated by the DoGA, the Special Victims Support Unit (SVSU) was established within the Royal Police Force of Antigua & Barbuda (RPFAB) and has been assigned to the SARC. This specialized unit was reinstated in 2017 and is tasked with handling all cases of domestic and intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual assault, and other crimes of GBSV seen at the SARC and reported to the police. The SVSU is housed within the SARC and comprises of police officers who have received specialized training and sensitization on meeting the needs of survivors of GBSV through a gender-sensitive and client-centered approach.

Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda, through the DoGA, has led a widespread public education campaign dedicated to challenging existing gender norms and discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men. As part of its mandate to empower women and promote gender equality the DoGA integrates a basic gender sensitization or understanding gender module into all its workshop and outreach activities. The introductory gender session provides basic definitions of gender and sex and discusses how rigid gender roles and stereotyping can lead to discrimination and more extreme forms of violence, discrimination, and inequality.

The implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan, with support from the United Nations Trust Fund (UNTF), provided the opportunity for behavioural change interventions and changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes. The DoGA embarked on a three (3) year public engagement and awareness campaign that contributed to fostering change among the target groups which included men and boys, youth, CSOs, women's groups, vulnerable populations, churches and religious leaders, schools, the public service, service providers and policy-makers.

The DoGA's approach has included public sensitization, presentations, training, public engagement and information campaigns, public meeting and forums on gender, gender stereotyping and GBSV conducted at the community level in churches, schools, local business, and community-led organizations and groups.

The DoGA has also produced a series of awareness-raising Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that have been disseminated on local television and radio stations, and through the Directorate's social media spaces including Facebook and Instagram. The PSAs discuss issues of GBSV, gender discrimination, and stereotyping. These PSAs have been produced in both English and Spanish to ensure that the message also reached the Spanish speaking community. Approximately (30) billboards have been erected island-wide. Each billboard challenges commonly-held gender stereotypes, condemns all forms of GBSV, and promote a peaceful and equitable society.

Public informational and education communication materials, brochures have also been produced and widely disseminated across Antigua & Barbuda. The materials are knowledge products used to provide information on how gendered norms and stereotypes limit women's choices, access to opportunities and resources, and explain how this leads to discrimination and violence. Community groups and the general public have used the materials for further education and training among their populations. The DoGA uses various strategies to reach target groups through performing and visual arts at the community level. The annual 16 days of Activism Campaign is also used as a strategic public awareness campaign with the aim to foster change and address harmful social norms and gender stereotypes. Based on feedback provided on the Directorate's public engagement and mobilization work, there seems to be a greater shift among the youth population's attitudes and behaviour towards gender equality.

Eliminating Violence against Women

Eliminating violence against women (VAW) remains a top priority for the nation of Antigua & Barbuda. Several measures have been put in place, to address this area.

The National Strategic Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Girls for the period 2015-2018 was introduced as a policy advanced by the government of Antigua & Barbuda to end violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls.

Through the implementation of the action plan with support from the UNTF and UN Women Multi-Country Office (MCO), Caribbean, the SARC was launched in 2017. Through the introduction of the SARC, standard operation procedures, along with a number of policies and protocols have been written to ensure coordination between actors to provide services to survivors of GBSV.

A national electronic database to record incidents of GBSV and to facilitate referrals between agencies have also been introduced. The database allows for data entry between service providers and aims to improve the collection of administrative data on GBSV.

A comprehensive revision of all GBSV related laws were reviewed, and recommendations were put forward for strengthening of the legislative framework to eliminate discrimination and violence against women. In 2015, the Domestic Violence Act was passed into law. The Act aims "to provide greater protection for victims of DV and to make provision for the granting of protection orders and for matters incidental thereto and connected therewith." An amendment to the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act was passed in 2018. The Act was further strengthened to ensure protection of victims and full enforcement of the law.

Another outcome of the Strategic Action Plan was the implementation of nation-wide public engagement campaigns to strengthen advocacy and awareness on eliminating violence against women. The DoGA implemented a number of social mobilization interventions and programmes to address VAW. In 2016, the Men as Partners Programme (MAPs) was launched with support

from UN Women MCO, Caribbean. The programme trained ten (10) men to advocate against VAW and to act as allies in the fight to achieve gender equality.

Another initiative undertaken by the DoGA targeting men and boys is the Men Engage Summer Institute (MESI) with an overall goal to increase awareness and advocacy among young men and boys. It also aimed to make participants more involved in activism and become advocates for gender equality and the eradication of violence and discrimination against women and girls.

The DoGA continues to educate the general public on gender issues and to advocate for the elimination of VAW through community outreach programmes. The Directorate also provides gender-sensitization and capacity-building training to persons working within the public and private sectors. Specialized training is also offered to key stakeholders who offer direct services to victims/survivors of GBSV. Stakeholders who have received specialized training include medical professionals, police officers, counselors and social workers, judicial officers and judges, and psychosocial service providers. In 2018 the DoGA, in collaboration with UN Women, trained a number of community leaders as Victim's Advocates. These persons form part of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), operate the National GBV 24-hour Crisis Hotline, and assist with the planning and implementation of outreach programmes.

Gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and resilience building

Antigua & Barbuda, like many SIDS, is susceptible to hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters. In regard to the integration of gender perspectives into national disaster management, relief and recovery strategies, steps are consistently being taken for there to be a greater awareness of the importance of mainstreaming gender into this area. The National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) works along closely with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), which is the regional inter-governmental entity for disaster management. CDEMA provides a framework for integrating gender into disaster risk reduction plans, programmes and policies in Antigua & Barbuda. In collaboration with CDEMA a gender responsive early warning system was launched in Antigua & Barbuda.

Through collaborations with the NODS, the DoGA trained all shelter managers in Antigua & Barbuda on the prevention of GBSV in disaster setting using guidelines that were developed.

Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions)

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda through its various ministries, and particularly through the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth, and Gender Affairs, has sought to implement various gender-responsive social protection programmes to meet the unique needs of the population, particularly women and girls. Recognising the importance of a coordinated approach, the government embarked on a social protection reform process which started in 2016. The reform includes the introduction of a gender-responsive draft social protection policy and legislation. The process is supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UN Women under the National Integrated Social Protection Initiative.

Antigua and Barbuda passed the Childcare and Protection Act in 2003. Through the implementation of the act and the Family and Social Services Division, the rights of children are promoted, and standards are enforced for the care and protection of children within Antigua & Barbuda. The Act focuses on monitoring private childcare facilities in order to promote care and protection of children; the provision of psychosocial care through counselling services for children in need of care and protection; investigating allegations on issues related to the abuse and neglect of children, and to promoting the rights of the child and public awareness of those rights.

The Education Act of Antigua and Barbuda, 2008 outlines the framework for the governance of issues related to Education. The Act establishes that all children until the age of 16, attendance to school is compulsory and enforceable by the state. Further, the Act outlines the accessibility of public schools to all students with no associated tuition or school fees.

3. Over the past five years, Antigua & Barbuda has taken specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, specifically:

A. Older women

Government's Elder Care and Residential Assistant Care (GRACE) Programme

Through the GRACE Programme, the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth, and Gender Affairs, provides at-home care, and access and accompaniment to recreational and essential services for elderly persons.

The Fiennes Institute for the Elderly and Indigent

Built in 1929 to aid to the homeless, the Fiennes Institute continues to play a vital role in public welfare by providing care and accommodation for at-risk senior citizens, including those who are unable to care for themselves and those without familial support. Residents are housed across six wards and cared for by a staff of dedicated nurses.

Old – Age Assistance Programme

The non-contributory Old-Age Assistance Programme provides pensions for those who never got the opportunity to contribute to Social Security in their senior years. The assistance pension is designed to be terminated with the death of the last recipient. People with disabilities who are not able to earn their own livelihood are also covered by the programme with the same benefits as beneficiaries due to the age.

PDV Caribe Programme

The government provides senior citizens with utility subsidy and cash transfers for basic essentials. The programme is managed by the PDV Caribe Antigua & Barbuda Limited on behalf of the Government of Antigua & Barbuda and has provided thousands of senior citizens with credits of \$100 per month.

B. Women living with disabilities

The Board of Guardian Programme

Through the Board of Guardian Programme, the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth and Gender Affairs, provides persons with disabilities with a monthly stipend to meet their basic needs.

PDV

The PDV programme provides stipend on a monthly basis to support persons who are living with disabilities and need economic assistance to meet their basic needs.

National Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Disability (NVRCD)

NVRCD falls under the Ministry of Health and the Environment and is an agency where persons with disabilities, who are able to work, can receive training to equip them for the job market. Further, those who are not able to work are taught how to make various items including jewellery, pot holders, floor mats, and the remodelling of shoes. Those enrolled at NVRCD are also involved in sailing and backyard gardening. The Centre operates in collaboration with Adele School, School for the Blind, and the Victory Centre.

Antigua & Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities

The association has a mandate to change the attitude of society towards children & adults with disabilities, and to improve the services available to disabled persons in Antigua & Barbuda. The ABAPD aims to provide access, equality, empowerment and opportunity for disabled locals.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Government signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a result, Antigua & Barbuda has committed itself to enact laws and other measures to improve disability rights, and to abolish legislation, customs and practices that discriminate against persons with disabilities. A Disabilities and Equality of Opportunity bill was drafted in 2017 to ensure full national implementation of the convention.

Para-Transit Mobility Programme

The Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth, and Gender Affairs provides free transportation services to persons with disabilities to ensure their full mobility, access to and participation in public life.

C. Women Living with HIV/AIDS

The AIDS Secretariat is one of the DoGA's implementing partner agencies, and as such, the Directorate often works collaboratively with this agency to mainstream issues of gender, including gender discrimination and stereotyping, into any HIV/AIDS-related programmes and initiatives. Through a collaborative partnership with the AIDS Secretariat, the DoGA has been able to integrate the linkages between GBSV and HIV/AIDS transmission into its sensitization and awareness-raising materials. The AIDS Secretariat provides various prevention, treatment, and health care programmes that target vulnerable groups of women living with HIV/AIDS. The AIDS Secretariat distributes free commodities including male and female condoms, lubricants, and dental dams through the National AIDS Programme.

The AIDS Secretariat also provides free, confidential HIV and syphilis testing. Persons who've tested positive for HIV receive free antiretroviral medication, aligning with the WHO testing and treatment recommendations. Additionally, outreach activities targeting vulnerable groups of women with HIV/AIDS, including transgender women and women in prostitution, are organized to help facilitate access to all clinical and treatment services. These outreach initiatives help to encourage adherence to treatment, provide supportive counselling when needed, and address other social needs and concerns that may arise. In order to provide services without stigma and discrimination, the National AIDS Programme has established a system where sex workers, who access services, are given three (3) cards for distribution amongst other known sex workers. This allows them, and other sex workers, to access services without any challenges. In addition to the card system, the National AIDS Programme offers free and confidential HIV rapid testing. CSOs also provide free and confidential testing to key vulnerable populations within the community.

4. Concrete examples of the effects of humanitarian crises on progress for women and girls in Antigua & Barbuda

On September 6, 2017, Hurricane Irma hit Antigua & Barbuda with catastrophic effects on Barbuda and made landfall as a category 5 storm. Barbuda received direct impact from the storm's eye for over three hours while Antigua experienced tropical storm force winds. However, compounding the situation, following Hurricane Irma, on September 18, Hurricane Maria which was also a category 5 storm affected the island of Antigua and posed a major threat to Barbuda. Although Hurricane Maria did not make landfall, Antigua experienced again tropical storm force winds and associated rainfall. The island of Barbuda was evacuated to Antigua in anticipation of Hurricane Maria.

In the social sector, of the over 400 households registered by the Antigua & Barbuda Red Cross post Hurricane Irma, it was estimated that at least half were female headed households. Female Headed Households were found to be larger than those of male headed households. Most female landowners, are head of households. As the greater share of landowners, women would have experienced more housing losses than their male counterparts, and should receive a greater allocation of the housing and rehabilitation resources.

According to the World Bank post disaster needs assessment report, on Barbuda post Hurricane Irma, four (4) educational structures suffered damage. Preschools were damaged and the Holy Trinity Primary school lost 6 of 12 buildings on campus, and all roofs were lost. Sir McChesney George Secondary school experienced damage from flying debris and lost three wooden out buildings. On Antigua, the Antigua State College reported structural damage to one of the campus buildings. All primary and secondary students were placed in schools in Antigua. Women interviewed during focus group discussions indicated that rather than being detrimental to their children, being displaced to Antigua provided access to better quality schools for their children. In fact, because truancy is closely managed in Antigua reports indicate that some children who were not attending school in Barbuda were now in schools in Antigua.

For productive issues, most women across all ages in Barbuda are employed by the Government or the Barbuda Council. All women interviewed during the focus group discussions who worked for the government were reassigned to positions in Antigua, and were still earning an income. Many of these women indicated that while they were keen to return to Barbuda, they hoped to stay in Antigua a bit longer to gain experience and benefit from the opportunities available on the 'mainland'.

In Barbuda, most women were employed by the council. However, women who were not employed by the Government or the Council either worked in Tourism or in the food industry, selling fish and seafood. Those most concerned about employment were those who worked in Tourism. They were no longer employed and were unsure of how they would be able to transfer their skills.

As it relates to protection issues, although the National Office of Disaster Services trained shelter managers are given yearly training courses based on CDEMA methodology, specific training on protection issues facing women and girls as well as the most vulnerable was not included. Shelter Managers indicated that they are aware of the importance of the special needs of women and girls, however it is not clear what techniques have been implemented to support those living with HIV/AIDS, people living with disabilities and/or members of the LGBTIQ community. The Directorate of Gender Affairs in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund and UN Women Caribbean Multi-Country Office and IOM developed guidelines for prevention sexual and GBSV within shelter settings. All shelter managers were trained on the implementation of the guidelines.

Furthermore, following Hurricane Irma, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda commissioned an assessment of the Health facility on Barbuda which was conducted by Pan American Health

Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization (WHO). The health facility on Barbuda suffered significant damage. The water supply was contaminated, and the emergency generator was damaged. The health conditions would impact the entire population particularly women and girls.

Recommendations for gender-related recovery identified special housing and rehabilitation measures for households headed by women; reconstruction of the schools in Barbuda to be paired with policy reform regarding truancy and efforts to attract and retain quality teachers on the island; develop culturally relevant, innovative and accessible psycho-social support programs; council's additional technical support and updated electronic information management system; standard operating procedures, which include case management protocol in disasters, to ensure the continuity of the justice system; need for longer term skills training programs for women that are both pro-growth and pro-poor; in-depth assessment should be completed to ascertain sexual and GBSV risks for women and children.

5. Antigua & Barbuda considers the following to be the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in the coming five years:

Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda recognises that economic growth cannot take place while the most vulnerable groups in society are left stagnant. Establishing a solid social protection net is a priority going forward as is building on existing programmes and, expanding the reach of the government with new programmes. The social protection reform process will assist the government with ensuring that poverty eradication is achieved.

Greater emphasis will be placed on food security and agricultural production in Antigua & Barbuda. The Lifelong Learning for Farmers initiative is aimed at establishing continuous learning among marginalized farming communities, particularly women, leading to improved knowledge, empowerment, and sustainable livelihoods. The model embodies a multi-dimensional approach to human resource development that holistically integrates social capital, financial capital, and human capital to spiral a self-sustaining and self-replicating development process. Initiatives such as this will continue and act as a catalyst for the continued capacity strengthening of women in this field, and promote entrepreneurship among women. The government through the Ministry of Agriculture will continue to provide capacity building for women and rural women farmers on the use of information technology in farming, resilience-building, agro-processing, and food security with the aim to address poverty and improve sustainable livelihoods.

Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)

The government recognises the importance of unpaid care and domestic work and the value that it provides to the economy. There are gaps as it relates to addressing these issues and facilitating

the redistribution of roles and responsibilities within the household while eliminating harmful stereotypes and gender roles. Although there have not been many steps taken to address the lack of recognition of unpaid domestic work, individuals do have access to the various social protection programmes provided by the Government. Also, through sensitisation, awareness-raising, and advocacy on the topic by the national gender machinery, DoGA, it is anticipated that great attention will be placed on the contribution of unpaid care work to national development and the need for policy interventions.

Gender Responsive Budgeting

Gender responsive budgeting is still in its infancy stages in Antigua & Barbuda. The Budget and Planning Office is sensitized on the issue and has expressed commitment to implementing gender-responsive budgeting across line ministries.

Access to affordable health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

With access to affordable quality health care being a priority for Antigua & Barbuda, new strategies and programmes to ensure this goal is attained have been identified. Firstly, as part of the United States Agency International Development (USAID) Zika virus response, Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) is providing limited Zika care improvement support to the Ministry of Health (MOH) to strengthen newborn and well-baby care systems, specifically with regard to assessment of babies with suspected or confirmed congenital syndrome associated with Zika (CSaZ), and improve overall care and support of children and families affected by Zika.

The MOH is currently working to upgrade its maternal and child care manual; and there has been a strengthening of prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programmes which offer a range of services for women of reproductive age living with or at risk of HIV to maintain their health and stop their infants from acquiring HIV. Through the AIDS Secretariat persons living with HIV/AIDS have access to antiretroviral medication and care at no cost. It has also introduced treatment for opportunistic infections for persons living with HIV/AIDS free of cost. The National AIDS Secretariat upgraded its guidelines in 2017 for the treatment and testing of the HIV virus and is now following the WHO guidelines.

In addition to strengthening the existing mechanisms and programmes to improve access to affordable health care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, Antigua & Barbuda is considering legalizing abortion in cases of rape, incest, threat to the life or health of the mother, and severe fetal impairment. The Government is also considering decriminalizing abortion in all other cases to ensure access to safe, high-quality, and affordable abortions, including post-abortion care in case of complications resulting from unsafe abortions.

According to the 2017 Situational Analysis Report on Adolescent Pregnancy in Antigua and Barbuda commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund and the Government of Antigua

and Barbuda, “the number of adolescent mother live births in Antigua and Barbuda has progressively reduced over the past twenty years.” The draft report also highlighted that the National Health and Family Life Education Policy (2010) of Antigua and Barbuda sets out to mainstream health and family life education, making it a “core curriculum component of schooling as a means of fostering positive life skills and behavioural attitudes in children and youths which will carry over into their adult lives”. Among its four thematic areas are: Self and interpersonal relationships, and; Sexuality and sexual health. Despite this guiding policy framework, there is no legislative provision which provides for the related services to support this forward-looking education model.”

The National Strategy Plan for Health (2016-2020) also sets out the Government of Antigua and Barbuda’s commitment to offering accessible essentials care and services to all. Also, there are a number of private health facilities available in addition to the public health services.

Women Against Rape (WAR) is a civil society organisation promoting inclusive health parity and victim justice through advocacy, education and direct services geared towards direct services to women and families affected by sexual violence. WAR provides free counselling and psychosocial support, advocacy for survivors of GBSV. WAR’s services include: Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) counselling, Sexual Assault Response Training for Outreach Workers, Client Advocacy and Referrals. WAR provides these services to adult women and adolescents.

The Antigua Planned Parenthood Association (APPA) is a civil society organisation providing sexual and reproductive health services and other health services to adolescents and adults. APPA offers free or subsidized modern contraceptives including intrauterine device (IUDS), birth control pills or injections, and condoms. For the year 2017, APPA provided services to one hundred-three (103) adolescents 19 years of age and under.

From September 2017 to June 2018, as part of the APPA humanitarian response for Barbudans, with assistance from the International Planned Parenthood Federation. The APPA provided free services to both Antiguan and Barbudans including, HIV rapid testing, pap smears, breast exams, and contraceptives. The association also conducts regular school visits to discuss sexual reproductive health issues with students at both the primary and secondary school levels. In 2015 the association launched a youth-friendly adolescent clinic which targets young men and women seeking adolescent health services and psychosocial support.

Through the Community Health Caravan Initiative the APPA routinely partners with state agencies to offer non-judgmental and confidential sexual and reproductive health services to communities.

There is a hospital on the island of Barbuda however, it lacks sufficient and efficient resources to tend to severe cases. Therefore, Barbudans have to be airlifted to the Mount Saint John’s Medical Centre in Antigua to get the appropriate medical attention and care needed. To remedy this issue, an increased allocation of budgetary resources is being considered to ensure access to high-quality healthcare in Barbuda.

Section Two: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

6. Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda plans to integrate periodic social and gender assessments into public policies and legislation to prohibit all forms of discrimination against women both directly and indirectly in public and private spheres.

The National Labour Board is currently revising the Labour Code to strengthen its implementation and will specifically correct any existing loopholes in C4 (1) of the Labour Code that could lead to discriminatory or prejudicial behaviour. Article C4 (1) of the Labour Code is respected throughout the country since the importance of equality is recognized. Since the enactment of the Labour Code, the Trade Unions and the Labour Department have not had to deal with many reported cases of discrimination under this law.

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda continues to ensure that the rights of all workers, are supported by the present legislative framework.

The Antigua & Barbuda Labour Code CAP. 27, E 8 (1) ensures equal pay for equal work in both the public and private sectors. According to the law, “No woman shall merely by reason of her sex be employed under terms of employment less favourable than that employed by male workers in the same occupation and by the same employer.”

The feminization of poverty and unconscious biases are other factors that contribute to women being less paid on a whole. Considering these factors, the Antigua & Barbuda Labour Code (1975) underwent a series of amendments, in 1998, 2007, and 2011.

Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace

Antigua & Barbuda denounces sexual harassment in public places including the workplace, schools, and public transport. The Government is developing a national Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination Policy within the workplace which should be adopted in 2020. The Government has also committed to passing legislation on Sexual Harassment modelled from the CARICOM and OECS model sexual harassment bills. These model bills seek to protect both women and men from unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and crude sexual behaviour that affects the quality of life by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. The Government of Antigua & Barbuda is committed to introducing Sexual Harassment legislation by 2021.

Improved access to modern technologies (incl. climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (incl. agricultural extension)

Antigua & Barbuda, recognizing the importance of having and providing equal access to modern technology, has received support from the People's Republic of China in the form of training opportunities for both men and women to build their capacity in areas related to science and technology. The Government also received key agricultural equipment that have been used to increase food security, ultimately helping the country become more self-sufficient.

The Government understands that the different roles and needs of women and men who use public infrastructure must be taken into consideration and addressed during any infrastructural planning or project implementation.

Through grants and support from various donor countries and agencies, the Government has erected new street lights, undertaken major road projects to improve roadways, and added new bus routes and bus stops near local schools and nurseries. This is to ensure easy access to public transportation and mobility for the general public particularly women, children and other vulnerable groups. The Government of Antigua & Barbuda will continue to prioritize gender considerations in infrastructure and work to address any gaps that are particularly detrimental to women and girls.

7. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?

Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable

Antigua & Barbuda has many child care intuitions, ranging from private to public in nature. There is a high level of access to affordable primary schooling, kindergarten and day-care level services. The Government has introduced eight (8) child-care services for children between 0-5 years for low income families, particularly single mothers. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology operates the kindergarten initiative which assists parents with government-funded early childhood education for their young children. Children and persons with disabilities can access the ADELE School for special needs and the National Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Disability (NVRCD).

Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care

The GRACE programme under the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth and Gender Affairs, provides in-home care for elderly persons and access to recreational and essential care and services.

The Fiennes Institute is a government-operated medical facility, which provides care and accommodation for senior citizens, including those who are unable to care for themselves and those without familial support.

Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave

In Antigua & Barbuda, female employees are ensured maternity leave provided they have accumulated a minimum of twelve months unbroken service at their place of employment. Women are also given a maternity benefit which is payable to a woman who has given birth to a child. Maternity Benefits can be in the form of an allowance, a grant, or both. The National Labour Board plans to introduce paternity leave in the revised Labour Code to promote equal sharing of family responsibilities between women and men.

Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers

The DoGA through sensitisation, advocacy and awareness raising, and training, has highlighted the importance of paid care work and its impact on the economy. The Directorate has consistently promoted the need for workers to be compensated fairly and to have access to non-contributory schemes where applicable. The Directorate also has advocated for an end to stigmatisation and discrimination of migrant workers and for them to have full access to essential services.

8. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?

Antigua & Barbuda has introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures in the form of strict allocation of resources and funds to various ministries through their respective budgets, and a hiring based on strategic needs within the public sector. While the impact of these measures have not been assessed from a gender perspective, the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth & Gender Affairs along with the national gender machinery, the DoGA, continue to build capacity and train public sector workers on monitoring and evaluation frameworks and impact assessments to ensure that measures can be examined for their impact on the lives of men and women.

Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

9. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?

The DoGA's Work and Life Skills Program provided training for out of school youth, mainly single mothers. The program provided a number of beneficiaries with useful skills and capacity support to participate in entrepreneurial activity and the labour market.

The Antigua & Barbuda Skills Training and Empowerment Program (ABSTEP) is a government program which offers temporary work and training opportunities to legal residents of Antigua & Barbuda, who are between the ages of 17-50 years. The program is designed to help beneficiaries obtain and maintain employment.

The FEC is a government organisation that offers free financial consultation to aid persons in developing a financial management plan and budget, and to ultimately achieve financial freedom. Women and girls have access to this centre and all services offered are free. The FEC is part of the formal referral network for survivors of GBSV who would like to access financial management or financial counselling services.

The GARD Center provides vocational training and business advice to help vulnerable youth gain employable, technical and entrepreneurial skills to compete in a global work environment. The skills learned at this center can act as a catalyst for women and girls to build capacity in a range of non-traditional areas and engage in entrepreneurial activities.

Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services

In 2018 the Government of Antigua & Barbuda began a social housing programme targeting the poor and vulnerable living in urban communities. The programme prioritizes women, particularly single mothers, as they are recognized as a vulnerable and often disadvantaged groups.

Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHAPA) Residential Community Project is a special housing scheme created for public sector workers, who would be first time home owners, offering them safe and affordable housing and almost full financing to enable the eligible persons to acquire the house. This scheme facilitates many women who may not have the means to purchase a house under normal circumstances.

The Home Advancement Programme for the Indigent (HAPI) is a housing repair program that is implemented through the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth & Gender Affairs in collaboration with other stakeholders and the private sector. Since the introduction of the programme over a dozen homes and families have benefited from home repairs and renovations. The programme is intended to improve the lives and livelihoods of persons from vulnerable populations.

The Prime Minister's Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP) provides access to funds and training for any citizen who presents a viable business plan. A Revolving Fund endowed with \$24 million was budgeted to provide low-interest loans for working capital, machinery, and equipment, leasehold improvements, among other things. Women have the opportunity to benefit from the entrepreneurial programme that was recently established through the Ministry of Finance.

The GARD Center also offers ICT Courses which cater to young people between the ages of 17 – 35 and teaches various technical skills including basic computer repair, operating systems, and

basic personal computer software. The fourteen-week course allows women and girls to gain key skills that can increase their job marketability and capacity to engage in entrepreneurial activity and access education in related fields.

Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women.

The People's Benefit Programme is a Project funded through the Government of Antigua & Barbuda's participation in the PetroCaribe Initiative. The Programme provides a monthly subsidy of EC\$215.00 to approved beneficiaries. Persons can qualify for the enrollment in this programme by virtue of disability or economic disadvantage. Approved beneficiaries are able to use the People's Benefit Card to purchase food and personal items from specially designated supermarkets. This programme allows vulnerable women easier access to acquiring essential amenities such as food and sanitary items.

Board of Guardians - The Board of Guardians Programme caters to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in society including poor and indigent women, children, and men as well as persons living with disabilities. The Board of Guardians is a cash transfer programme which provides a monthly stipend for vulnerable populations to meet their basic needs. This programme will enable vulnerable women to have a security net with a consistent stipend monthly to ease some financial pressure.

The Antigua & Barbuda Skills Training and Empowerment Programme (ABSTEP) is a government programme which offers temporary work and training opportunities to legal residents of Antigua & Barbuda, who are between the ages of 17-50 years. The programme is designed to help beneficiaries obtain and maintain employment. This programme provides a temporary source of income for previously unemployed vulnerable groups, particularly women, and gives them valuable skills for future use in the workforce that may help with job retention and advancement.

Introduced/strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty

The Department of Legal Aid is a Government-assisted Programme that offers legal assistance and advice to vulnerable groups. The Legal Aid Clinic was established to assist low income earners, particularly women and vulnerable persons, with free and subsidized legal representation. Youth accompanied by an adult are also eligible for legal assistance.

Further, through a partnership with the JURIST Project and with support from the Government of Canada and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), Antigua & Barbuda has established a Sexual Offences Model Court (SOMC) within the High Court of justice. The establishment of this specialized court is another measure that has been taken by the Government of Antigua & Barbuda to ensure that victims of GBSV have access to justice and reparations. The SOMC provides tighter case management and reduces the wait time for trials. The SARC offers free

services to all survivors of GBSV and provides assistance with the application for protection orders and referral services.

10. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women (e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programmes, social assistance) – Cash Transfers, voluntary registration.

CHAPA Low Income Housing Project

Social assistance is provided to vulnerable groups in Antigua & Barbuda by way of providing affordable housing for vulnerable groups, particularly women and single headed households. The Antigua & Barbuda Low Income Housing Project under the Central Housing & Planning Authority (CHAPA) seeks to provide nationals of Antigua & Barbuda with high quality housing at affordable prices. This serves to benefit women who may be in low paying jobs and special provisions and arrangements are made to facilitate the ownership of house and land.

Work Experience Programme (WEP)

The WEP is a six (6)-month on the job training opportunity with a stipend for young persons. The Programme aims to make beneficiaries more marketable for employment in various fields' through training and capacity-building. Trainees attend career-building seminars hosted by the ministry of labour, as part of the training process to gain employment, learn positive work ethics, resume writing, discipline, and productivity. This programme is fully accessible to young women and can allow them to earn and save money, while gaining skills and building capacity that will enable them to get and retain jobs consistently in the future.

People's Benefit Programme

The People's Benefit Programme is a Project funded through the Government of Antigua & Barbuda's participation in the PetroCaribe Initiative. The Programme provides a monthly subsidy of EC\$215.00 to approved beneficiaries. The programme targets persons with disabilities and single mothers and vulnerable populations. The beneficiaries use the People's Benefit Card to purchase essential items from various local supermarkets in Antigua & Barbuda including the Central Marketing Corporation. Since the inception of the programme, over 2 000 beneficiaries have benefitted.

The Senior Citizens Utility Subsidy Programme

The Senior Citizens Utility Subsidy Programme was started in Antigua & Barbuda in 2008. The programme consists of a monthly payment to subsidize senior citizens utility bills. The programme is funded through the PetroCaribe Initiative. Since its inception, the programme has benefitted over 4 600 beneficiaries.

Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS)

Women who stay at home to raise children or take care of other family without formal employment, or unemployed women, can access the MBS by enrolling under the status of Voluntary Registration. A person who has been issued with a certificate of voluntary registration and is resident in Antigua & Barbuda is entitled to receive financial benefits.

One Stop Employment Centre (OSEC)

The (OSEC) under the Department of Labour, offers complimentary employment and training services to job seekers within Antigua & Barbuda. The services include, but are not limited to, free monthly workshops, computer & QuickBooks classes, career counseling, and resume and cover-letter assistance. The center provides opportunity and capacity-building for vulnerable women to access the job market, earn an income and gain skills to become more empowered.

Introduced or strengthened conditional cash transfers

The Board of Guardians Programme caters to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in society including poor and indigent women, children, and men as well as persons living with disabilities. The Board of Guardian is a cash transfer programme which provides a monthly stipend for vulnerable populations to access to meet their basic needs. The programme will be strengthened with the introduction of a beneficiary's database and also with the introduced of an integrated social protection system with improved targeting and implementation and monitoring. The Board also provides school assistance to single mothers and funeral grants.

Introduced or strengthened non-contributory social pensions

The non-contributory Old-age Assistance Programme came into force by the passing of the Social Security Amendment Act of 1993. The programme provides pensions for those who were unable to contribute to Social Security due to old age. Persons with disabilities are also covered by the programme with the same benefits as beneficiaries due to the age.

The Home Advancement Programme

The Home Advancement Programme for the Indigent (HAPI) is a housing repair program that is implemented through the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth & Gender Affairs in collaboration with other stakeholders and the private sector. Since the introduction of the programme over a dozen homes and families have benefited from home repairs and renovations. The programme is intended to improve the lives and livelihoods of persons from vulnerable populations.

11. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

Health care is available to all citizens of Antigua & Barbuda with emphasis on mothers, children and the elderly. The country's Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS) provides prescription drugs at minimal cost and subsidized treatment for specific diseases and illnesses. The eleven (11) diseases/illnesses recognized by the MBS are: hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, sickle-cell anemia, cancer, leprosy, certified lunacy, glaucoma, asthma, Parkinson's disease, and epilepsy. Women who stay at home to raise children or take care of other family without formal employment, or unemployed women, can access the MBS by enrolling under the status of Voluntary Registration, Medical Benefits Act, 2010, section 46 Un-employment and voluntary registration.

Antigua & Barbuda has twenty-three (23) community health clinics that provide primary care and prescriptions to the public without any cost. The Community Clinics operate from Monday to Friday 8am to 3pm however, a midwife is located in every district and is on call to ensure access to health information outside of the clinic's normal hours of operation. Apart from the routine medical care provided at the community clinics; maternal, prenatal and postnatal care are made available at no cost. Additionally, children can be seen by nurses at the clinic from the time they are born to help monitor their development and make sure they are in good health. Persons are also able to receive vaccinations from birth throughout the life span. There are also three (3) community clinics that offer free dental care for all citizens. The community clinics have expanded their services to include awareness raising campaigns within the schools and communities, and initiatives such as an open day health screening. The clinics recently introduced additional reproductive health care services and now offer breast examinations, pap smears, HIV and syphilis rapid testing; and the HPV vaccinations.

In November 2016, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda received a donation of two Para-Transit buses to transport the nation's elderly population. The 14-seater bus allows for the provision of two wheelchairs, while the 18-seater makes provision for four wheelchairs. This initiative was implemented through the Community Development Division within the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth, and Gender Affairs. The Para-Transit buses serve all seventeen constituencies across the island of Antigua and offer transportation to community clinics and hospital, pharmacies, doctor's appointments, home care assistance, among other services. The bus service operates daily and caters for approximately 400 persons. There is no cost attached to the use of the bus service.

The Disabilities and Equal Opportunities Act was passed in 2017, which prohibits discrimination against women and men with disabilities, it makes provision for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and for connected matters. Section VII of the act states that, "A person with a disability shall obtain a standard of health care which is equal to the standard of health care which is available to a person who does not have a disability." It also recognizes a person's right to obtain health insurance and prohibits the denial of health insurance based on their disability. The act also covers the duty of healthcare providers to report suspicion of abuse and neglect to the police. If a healthcare provider is aware of such, and does not report it, he/she has committed an offense. Additionally, care-givers who are responsible for the care of a person with a disability must ensure that the person is receiving adequate food, clothing, medical attention,

and other necessities; and shall not assault, ill-treat, neglect or otherwise harm that person. A care-giver who contravenes this section commits an offense.

In 2018 the DoGA developed Project SAVE – Antigua Barbuda, which provided training for healthcare professionals focused on screening patients for GBSV. Project SAVE – Antigua Barbuda was adapted from a past training facilitated by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV) and was restructured to fit the local context. The training beneficiaries included medical doctors, nurses, and other stakeholders who provide direct health services such as the AIDS Secretariat and the Substance Abuse Division. The training aimed to educate health care providers about sexual violence and their role in helping survivors, to help health care providers feel more comfortable screening for and discussing GBSV with their patients, and to offer health care providers skills and tools that enhance their practice with survivors of GBSV, and patients dealing with other sensitive situations.

12. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls?

Access to education has been a major priority and area of emphasis for the Government of Antigua & Barbuda. According to UNESCO statistics, the adult literacy rate has been nearly 99 percent for the past decade. This can be attributed to the government’s mandatory school enrollment policy enshrined under Section (43) (1) of the Education Act. This makes it compulsory for all children between five and sixteen to attend school. Section (7) of the Education Act sets in place a non-discriminatory educational policy which states that: “... No person shall be refused admission to any public school on account of the religious or political persuasion, race or social status of such a person or his parents.” The state provides equal access to education for both boys and girls and education is free at all levels of the public-school system. The Education Act demonstrates Antigua & Barbuda’s commitment to ensuring that all of its citizens have full access to education and that they are not subject to discrimination, particularly vulnerable groups, such as young girls.

Previously in Antigua & Barbuda certain subjects were only offered for male students, while other subjects were exclusively offered to female students which perpetuated harmful gender stereotypes which, in turn, impacted students’ career choices. However, in 2011 traditionally male-oriented subjects, such as Technical Drawing, were integrated into the curriculum at the nation’s only government, all-female secondary school and, Home Economics became available to students at the only government, all-male secondary school.

Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) is taught in Antigua & Barbuda at the primary school level, and in most government secondary schools at the first form level. HFLE is centered on transforming thinking, behaviors, attitudes and habits of children using a positive approach. This programme is expected to help children and young girls to develop effective coping skills for the challenges of everyday life and to help them to become more empowered in their daily lives.

The Gilbert Rural Agricultural Development (GARD) Centre embarked on a multi-year initiative to promote and support women in the pursuit of non-traditional employment fields that maintained significant income potential and focused primarily on trade skills. The project targeted over 200 vulnerable young women up to 35 years of age who were unemployed or underemployed, and many of whom had not completed secondary school. Considering that vocational training and trade skills have traditionally been associated with men, this initiative expands the opportunities available to women and girls and facilitates more female-led entrepreneurial activity.

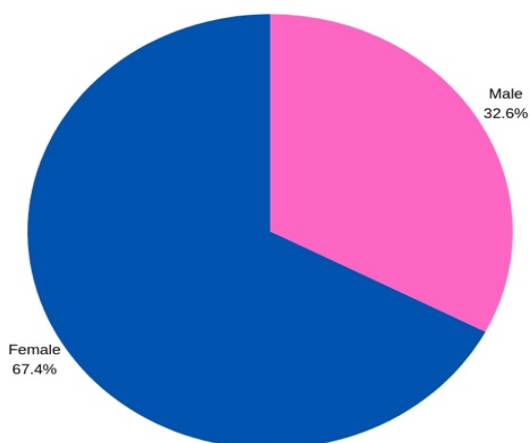
Furthermore, women and girls in Antigua & Barbuda have access to three vocational training institutions, The Institute for Continuing Education (ABICE), the Antigua & Barbuda International Institute of Technology (ABIIT), and the Antigua & Barbuda Hotel Training Institute. The presence of these institutions mean that women and girls have increased opportunity to receive training and capacity building in areas that have been traditionally associated with men and boys, and their competency in these areas will allow them to have a more diverse set of job options and give women greater access to jobs with higher levels of remuneration.

The Work Experience Programme is a 6-month on the job training opportunity with a stipend for young persons. The Programme aims to make beneficiaries more marketable for employment in various fields' through training and capacity-building. Trainees attend career-building seminars hosted by the Ministry of Labour as part of the training process, where they learn positive work ethic, resume writing, discipline, and productivity. This programme is accessible to young women and allows them to gain valuable job experience and the ability to gain key skills, both important elements in securing jobs once entering the workforce.

Antigua & Barbuda has provided access to tertiary level education to persons, particularly women and girls, through the Board of Education's scholarships and grants. Although no affirmative action or set proportion of scholarships are designated for women, there have been more women than men applying for these scholarships and more women have been allocated these scholarships as seen below in chart 1. The Prime Ministers Scholarship is another means for persons, particularly women, to access tertiary level education. The National Student Loan Fund (NSLF) allows citizens to access low-interest loans to assist with meeting the cost of higher education, and women and girls have been attaining these funds at a greater rate (as seen below in Table 2) than men and boys over the years.

Chart 1: Board of Education Scholarships awarded during the period 2014 to 2018.

Board of Education Scholarships Awarded
2015- 2018



Source: Board of Education, 2019

Table 2: Male and Female Student Loan Recipients, 2008-2018

Year	Number of Students	
	Male	Female
2008	18	46
2009	37	87
2010	24	60
2011	20	60
2012	31	60
2013	21	61
2014	31	56
2015	22	53
2016	18	49
2017	15	46
2018	12	35
Total	249	613

Source: National Student Loan Fund, Ministry of Finance and Corporate Governance, 2019

Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

13. In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritized for action?

National Electronic GBSV Database

As part of the National Strategic Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Girls, the DoGA developed a National Electronic Gender-Based and Sexual Violence (GBSV) Database in 2016 to

capture, store, and analyze data and statistics on cases of GBSV. The system allows the DoGA and its stakeholders to input standard information obtained during the client intake process and allows for robust case management. Referrals to other organizations can also be made through the system. The system employs siloed data management along with data encryption to ensure confidentiality, and also offers data analysis capabilities which aggregates fully anonymized case data to perform macro-analysis of the demographics, time periods, and nature of recorded incidents. These statistics form the basis of the DoGA internal reports and are the foundation of initiatives and programmes implemented by the Directorate.

Antigua & Barbuda Support And Referral Centre (SARC)

Established in 2017, the SARC provides legal, medical, and psychosocial services to victims of GBSV and their immediate families, from one location. If requested, victims are able to receive a complete medical forensic examination from a District Doctor after a report of GBSV is made to the SARC or the Police. A shower, dignity kits, and clothing are available in case the victim would like to clean up after the medical examination. Dignity kits contain various hygiene and sanitary products, such as toothpaste and toothbrush, soap, towel, lotion, and sanitary napkins. The RPFAB reinstated the Sexual Offences Unit, which is now called the Special Victims Support Unit (SVSU). The SVSU is located at the SARC and comprises of police officers who have received sensitization and capacity building training to better meet the needs of this vulnerable group. Clients can also receive assistance from the SARC when applying for an Order of Protection.

The SARC prepares the application for an Order of Protection for all victims and accompany victims through its court advocacy service until the order is granted. All reports of breach of orders are made to the police and the court for further redress. Victims and their families are able to access psychosocial support in the form of individual counselling from the SARC Resident Counsellor. In addition to individual counselling, persons can access help from the national GBSV Crisis Hotline which operates 24/7 and is manned by SARC staff and trained advocates. If needed, the SARC also assists its clients with referrals to other agencies to ensure that all of their identified needs and concerns are addressed. Antigua & Barbuda does not have an adequate facility that provides shelter to victims. However, in the absence of a shelter, the SARC has established a relationship with several unidentified private facilities to provide emergency accommodation for clients in extreme situations for up to 48 hours.

Sexual Offences Model Court

The JURIST Project, with support from the CCJ and the Government of Canada, established a Sexual Offences Model Court (SOMC) at the Antigua & Barbuda High Court. The SOMC was officially launched in January 2019 and introduced specialized procedures to remedy the deficiencies in the court's handling of sexual offences. The four main objectives of the SOMC are to: 1) provide timely, gender responsive and coordinated response to complainants of sexual assault cases; 2) ensure gender coordination between courts and agencies that provide services to sexual assault complainants; 3) improve the monitoring and evaluation for sexual offences and; 4) reduce the secondary trauma that complainants experience.

The SOMC makes use of video conferencing technology, which allows vulnerable complainants to give evidence from a remote testimony room. This ensures that vulnerable complainants no longer need to be in the physical presence of the accused while testifying. There is also a special waiting room at the High Court, for complainants, separate from the general waiting area.

Through the JURIST project, specialized training was provided to key actors along the justice chain. Trainings included the following objectives: increase police officers' competence in the reporting and investigation of sexual offences; assist medical professionals with how to conduct examination of sexual assault complainants; assist prosecutors to effectively prosecute sexual assault cases and; equip justice sector stakeholders with the necessary skills to: (a) deal with complainants sensitively and therefore prevent re-victimization by the justice system and (b) handle secondary trauma, which might result from having to engage with the traumatic circumstances of a sexual assault; and to strengthen the capacity of magistrates to resolve sexual assault cases in a manner that caters to both the rights of the complainant and defendant.

The "Youth for Change" Social Justice Conference, was held to sensitize the public about the SOMC. The conference began with a gender session to raise awareness of the role gender discrimination plays in instances of sexual assault and how they can impact the adjudication of these cases. Approximately 60 young men and women benefitted from this exercise. The conference also explored issues of consent and understanding the importance of advocacy and activism.

Trafficking in women and girls

Antigua & Barbuda is committed to addressing human trafficking. The Trafficking in Persons Prevention (Amendment) Act 2015 has been strengthened with provisions for the prevention of human trafficking and allows for protection of its victims. The 2015 amendment strengthens and compliments the 2010 Act and provides for the establishment of a Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Prevention Committee which has the power to formulate policies and programmes to fulfil the objectives of the Act. Similarly, the Migrant Smuggling Prevention Amendment Act 2015 strengthens the Migrant Smuggling Prevention Act 2010 and provides for increased penalties under the legislation. This gives effect to the seriousness of the offence and the international ramifications.

The holistic well-being of Trafficked Persons remains paramount to the State. The State established the Trafficking in Persons Prevention Secretariat in August 2017. Hence, in January of 2018, a Care and Support Services Officer was appointed to function from within the Secretariat and is responsible for coordinating and ensuring holistic care and support services are provided to all Trafficked Persons within the State. Through the Task Force, the Ministry of Public Safety is responsible for providing temporary residence for all Trafficked Persons which is also part of the holistic care.

There are various points of detection for trafficked persons. Once contact is made at any point of entry, the information is immediately forwarded to the Task Force which is mandated to respond within fifteen (15) minutes of receiving any information. A twenty-four (24) hour contingency plan is in place for additional security responses based on circumstances surrounding any detection leading up to the screening and interviewing of individuals. While the regularization of immigration status is also part of the holistic care and support services provided to trafficked persons, persons are normally excited to return to their country of origin within a stipulated time, however, regularization of immigration status is done based on needs. Since information on trafficked persons is case sensitive, detailed information is not required in order to safe guard trafficked persons and all involved.

Sexual Harassment and Violence in public places, educational settings, and in employment

Antigua & Barbuda maintains a zero tolerance with regard to sexual harassment in public places including the workplace, schools and public transport. The Government has drafted a national prevention of harassment and discrimination policy which will be adopted in 2020. The Government is also committed to passing legislation on sexual harassment which is modelled from the CARICOM and OECS model bills on sexual harassment. The local model legislation seeks to protect both women and men from unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and crude sexual behaviour that affects the quality of life by creating an intimidating, hostile, and offensive environment. A draft legislation is in place with plans to commence national consultations.

14. What actions has your country prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?

Legislative Reform

In addition to the Domestic Violence Act 2015, there was an amendment to the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act passed in 2018. Amendments and repeals were made to Sections 1 – 21 which includes Part I Preliminary, Part II Trafficking in Persons Prevention Committee, and Part III Trafficking in Persons Offences, Immunity, Etc.

The Evidence (Special Provisions)(Amendment) Act, 2016, allows vulnerable witnesses of crimes such as sexual assault and abuse to give evidence without having to face the perpetrator in court in order to reduce their potential re-victimization. Additionally, the Child Care and Adoption Act 2015 addresses all issues affecting the care and protection of vulnerable children and ensures that children, particularly girls, are placed in safe, nurturing living environments.

Antigua & Barbuda, with the support of the Government of Canada through the JURIST Project, and with support from the CCJ, has established a Sexual Offences Model Court (SOMC) within the High Court of Antigua & Barbuda to improve access to justice for victims of sexual violence. The court, which was launched in January of 2019, is a set of specialised court procedures for the

treatment of sexual offence cases including a dedicated courtroom and presiding judge assigned to the hearing of sexual offences.

A comprehensive legislative review was conducted in 2014 in Antigua & Barbuda, which included recommendations to strengthen the Offences against the Person Act, Sexual Offences Act, Domestic Violence Summary Proceedings Act, 1999 and successes and opportunities from the 2015 Domestic Violence Act, Criminal Law Amendment Act and Trafficking in Persons Act. The legislative review highlighted existing gaps in the legislations and recommendations to address the gaps. The legislative review did not lead to any amendments within the Sexual Offences Act. The Sexual Offences Act 1995 does not recognize rape in marriage in all circumstances in accordance with Articles 3(1) and 4(1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW).

Additionally, the Domestic Violence Act 2015 includes marital rape as an offence of “domestic violence in the instance of marital separation i.e. a separation order, however it does not unequivocally criminalize marital rape and define it based on lack of consent. However, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda recognizes the need to have effective systems in place to deal with sexual violence, therefore, the Government has committed itself to reviewing the sexual offences act to address the existing gaps.

In 2015, the Domestic Violence Act was passed into law. The Domestic Violence Act aims “to provide greater protection for victims of DV and to make provision for the granting of protection orders and for matters incidental thereto and connected therewith.” The Act speaks to victims’ eligibility and access to protection orders, breach of protection orders, the duties and powers of the Police when handling and investigating incidents of DV, and other provisions.

The DoGA, within the Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development, embarked on a project to translate the legal jargon within the Domestic Violence Act and all related laws into simple language. It was important to ensure that the public not only had access to the information, but the public was able to understand the information. Therefore, with the aid of a consultant, the *Understanding Your Rights: A Guide to Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Laws* was developed and disseminated widely.

Support and Referral Centre

Women and girls who are victims of GBSV have access to comprehensive support services through the DoGA SARC, a one-stop location with integrated services for survivors of GBSV. At the SARC clients are able to receive legal, medical, psychosocial, and referral services from one location. The SVSU is located in-house and is responsible for obtaining clients’ statements, investigating sexual offence cases, and providing assistance with the retrieval of property and clothing if a client decides to leave the abuser. Clients can also receive a complete forensic medical examination, by a doctor, following a rape or sexual assault. A Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit is used during the examination.

Sexual Offences Model Court

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda recognises the need to have effective systems in place to deal with violence against women and girls. To this end a model sexual offences court was established in Antigua & Barbuda. The model court is a collaborative project with the CCJ and the JURIST project and was funded by the Government of Canada. The SOMC employs a set of specialized court procedures for the treatment of sexual offences cases. There is a dedicated courtroom and presiding judge assigned to the hearing of sexual offences using these specialized procedures.

An application can also be made on behalf of the complainant and/or vulnerable witness to give remote testimony via video conferencing. The remote testimony room is located at the DoGA Headquarters. Additionally, complainants receive an orientation to the court process as well as an orientation to the video conferencing equipment, at least two (2) days prior to the start of trial. Vulnerable witnesses are also assigned a support person who is permitted to be present while testimony is being given.

With support from the JURIST Project, key actors and justice sector stakeholders received specialized training. Trainings were held for police officers, medical professionals, prosecutors, and magistrates. A Monitoring and Evaluation Tool and Reporting Template was developed for the monitoring and evaluation of sexual offence cases. The SOMC is governed by a Multi-Sector Stakeholder Committee (MSSC) responsible for overseeing the implementation of the activities associated with the establishment and operations of the court. The committee is comprised of justice sector stakeholders, healthcare providers and psychosocial service providers (both government and non-governmental organizations).

15. Provide details of up to 3 concrete examples of the strategies your country has used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls.

Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours

The DoGA conducts routine sensitization and awareness-raising activities geared towards raising public awareness about GBSV, its contributing factors, and the effects of this type of violence at the individual, community, and national levels in order to reduce and prevent violence against women and girls. These sessions are conducted at churches, schools, businesses, and other community organizations, and are available upon request. Each session includes a session on understanding gender which serves as an introductory course on gender and gendered norms and stereotypes and the harmful impact on individuals and society.

Through partnership with various international agencies including the Caribbean Development Bank, UN Women MCO, Caribbean, and the UNTF Project to End Violence against Women and Girls, DoGA has also produced a series of Information Education Communication (IEC) materials for the purpose of public sensitization. These include brochures, pamphlets, info-sheets, and other materials which DoGA regularly distributes at community events, such as the Sir Andy

Roberts Community Fair, and at similar awareness-raising activities, including the Clothesline Project Reception, hosted by the American University of Antigua (AUA); the World AIDS Day Street Fair hosted by the AIDS Secretariat; and the annual Police Week Street Fair, hosted by the RPFAB. These IEC materials are available nation-wide across communities, schools, churches, private entities and public offices and spaces with life-saving information on understanding the issue of GBSV, promoting equality, and accessing services.

The DoGA has also commissioned a complement of billboards erected island-wide which address issues of GBSV, and anti-violence Public Service Announcements (PSAs) aired on local television and radio, as well as on the Directorate's social media spaces. The presence of the billboards across the island and the PSAs provide the general public with strategies to prevent violence, promote equality and justice, and intervene to provide assistance to persons in need of information and services.

Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education

In 2017 the DoGA held a gender in education workshop with early childhood educators. The session exposed early childhood education on gender socialization perpetrated through the education system, and how gendered stereotypes affect student learning and the achievement of gender equality. Throughout the session, educators had the opportunity to examine their own biases and stereotypes about gender and how it impacts their teaching. The DoGA also conducted a sensitization drive within the school system with students at the primary and secondary school levels on understanding harmful gender norms, gender stereotyping, and gender-based discrimination and violence. The project targeted primary school students and provided tools for youth-based advocacy that promoted peaceful, equitable, and safe learning spaces.

The DoGA also held the "Youth for Change" Social Justice Conference, in October of 2018, which aimed to raise awareness of the role gender discrimination plays in instances of sexual assault and how they can impact the adjudication of these cases. Young women and men were sensitized on understanding consent and other gender-related issues. Approximately 60 young men and women between ages 13 and 30 benefitted from this exercise.

Grassroots and community-level mobilization

The DoGA hosts frequent sensitization and awareness activities at local schools, churches, and other community organizations. These sessions focused not only on defining gender and GBSV, but also discuss the ways in which gender stereotyping leads to discrimination and violence, and how this violence impacts the community. One such initiative was the Community Classroom. The Community Classroom initiative was a 2-night, 8-session programme geared towards exploring the root causes of GBSV within communities, specifically gender stereotyping and rigid adherence to gender roles within relationships. The initiative engaged members of faith-based groups, women's groups, youth groups, schools and educators, and government agencies. Similar sessions geared towards fostering behavioral change were also conducted with front line workers and essential service providers for GBSV services.

Shifting representation of women and girls in the media

The Directorate continues to use international observances and campaigns such as International Women's Day (IWD) as a tool to discuss gender discrimination and stereotypes. On IWD 2017 DoGA hosted a panel discussion on women in the changing world of work. The panel featured women in leadership positions in various fields including technology, politics, and media, and discussed elements of discrimination and harassment that women face in employment. In 2018 the Directorate celebrated IWD with a Young Women's Social Justice Forum where conversations were held on how gender affects women's perceptions of themselves and can limit their access to education and employment, while encouraging them to advocate for the empowerment of women and girls.

Working with men and boys

Understanding that efforts to reduce and ultimately prevent violence against women and girls must include men and boys, the DoGA prioritizes efforts to engage and include them in the conversation through outreach, activities and targeted programmes.

In 2018 the DoGA held a week-long summer camp for young men between the ages of 12 and 18. The initiative, called the Men Engage Summer Institute, aimed to introduce the participants to the concepts of gender and masculinity, while creating a space for them to explore their own relationship with masculinity.

The DoGA has also spearheaded the Men as Partners (MAPs) Programme. Through the programme, men were trained by facilitators from UN Women MCO, Caribbean. Training sessions explained and explored the concepts of gender, masculinity and gender socialization, and examined normative gender roles, and stereotypes. Men and boys in Antigua & Barbuda had the opportunity to learn and share knowledge on gender topics and engage in partnerships, advocacy and activism to promote gender equality within their spaces. Trained advocates from the programme have partnered with the DoGA to implement community engagement initiatives.

Perpetrator programmes

The Family and Social Services Division (FSSD) within the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth, and Gender Affairs, offers rehabilitative services to perpetrators of GBSV, and at-risk youth to include counselling and psycho-social support, and youth- intervention programmes.

Through the Diversion Programme, the FSSD assesses clients' needs and places them into the most appropriate programme. The Juvenile Mentorship Programme (JUMP) reintegrates adolescent law-breakers back into society. The Boys Training Institute provides accommodation, rehabilitation, and vocational training for adolescent boys who have committed offences against society and assists with the reintegration process.

The FSSD also provides a parenting programme which offers counselling and training for parents, particularly those whose children have had an encounter with the law.

16. Provide details of up to 3 concrete examples of the actions your country has taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images).

Introducing or strengthening legislation and regulatory provisions

Given the rise of the internet and online communication through social networks like Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda has taken measures to protect women and girls from violence and harassment perpetrated through these mediums.

The Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, which was passed in 2018, broadens the definition of “child pornography” to include images or other materials, including video or other visual representation, that:

- (i) depicts, presents or represents a child engaging in sexually explicit activity or conduct;
- (ii) for a sexual purpose, shows parts of a child’s body, whether natural or computer generated, pasted to visual representation of an adult’s body; or
- (iii) exploits a child for sexual stimulation”

The amendment makes it punishable by law to intentionally and without lawful excuse or justification take, publish, or share intimate photos of another person without their consent, or capture, publish or share the image, whether whole or partial, of another person in a vulnerable position in a manner that would violate their privacy. The offence is punishable with a fine of up to \$XCD 100 000 or up to two years in prison for a summary conviction, and a fine of up to \$XCD 250 000 or up to 5 years in prison upon conviction or indictment.

The Act further precludes individuals from sending offensive messages through electronic communication services. This refers to any information that could be considered offensive or threatening, false, causing annoyance, inconvenience, damage, obstruction, insult, injury, intimidation, enmity, hatred or ill will, including text messages and emails. The act also criminalizes the act of tricking another person into having a relationship online by assuming an identity other than your own, also known as “cat-fishing”.

Implementing awareness-raising initiatives targeting the general public and young women and men in educational settings

The Halo Foundation, a charitable organization in Antigua & Barbuda, collaborated with the Ministry of Education within the Government of Antigua & Barbuda to launch a nation-wide anti-bullying campaign targeting school-aged youth.

The campaign features a series of billboards that speak against cyber-bullying and other forms of online harassment, featuring local school-aged youth, erected near schools where high instances of bullying and harassment have been reported.

Teachers at three government-operated secondary schools and primary schools also received bullying prevention training in October and November 2018. The Halo Foundation has also held workshops and similar discussions in both primary and secondary schools addressing bullying as it occurs both online and in person.

17. Provide details of up to 3 concrete examples of the actions your country has taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media

Providing training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced, and diverse images of women in the media.

In 2016 the DoGA held a media practitioners' workshop with the aim of sensitizing local journalists and decision-makers within the media fraternity on gender, gender equality and the role the media plays in advancing the goal of gender equality on a national level. This included discussions on normative gender roles and stereotypes, how they play out in media reporting, and their impact on shaping public opinion about gender roles and norms. The sessions also discussed ways GBSV is represented in the media, victim-blaming, and other forms of revictimization, with a concentration on techniques and guidelines for reporting on gender-related issues in the media.

Promoting the participation of women and leadership of women in the media

There is strong female representation among news anchors and journalists on both radio and television in Antigua & Barbuda, however the decision makers in the media are predominately male. An exception to this is the General Manager of the Antigua Broadcast Services under the Ministry of Information Broadcasting, Telecommunications & Information Technology. ABS produces Antigua & Barbuda's lone television station, responsible for airing local, regional, and international news daily, and an attached radio station.

Antigua & Barbuda has a number of radio stations, online new portals and a virtual newspaper. The state-owned television and radio station also features a high proportion of women in leadership roles. Women engage regularly with the media in Antigua & Barbuda.

On IWD in 2017 DoGA hosted a panel discussion on women in the changing world of work. The panel featured women in leadership positions in various fields including technology, politics, and media, and discussed elements of discrimination and harassment women face in employment. The aim of the discussion was to empower and encourage women to take up space in traditionally male-dominated fields, including the media.

In 2018 the Directorate celebrated IWD with a Young Women’s Social Justice Forum where we discussed how gender affects women’s perceptions of themselves and can limit their access to education and employment with a view to empowering them to advocate for the empowerment of women and girls. The forum featured a session on social media activism, which aimed to empower young women to view social media as a valid source of news and information and to use it as a platform both for advocacy and professional development.

18. Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?

The SARC offers services to all persons who have experienced some form of GBSV. The SARC has a strict confidentiality and non-discrimination policy and fosters an all-inclusive atmosphere. It employs a client-centred and non-discriminatory approach and serves all members of the community regardless of race, colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political beliefs. The table (3) below provides data for clients seen in 2018. From the table, it can be seen that persons facing multiple forms of discrimination – LGBT+, living with a disability, unemployed, non-citizens, and Spanish speaking – have accessed services at the SARC. The SARC has a cadre of trained volunteer advocates who assist victims of gender discrimination and violence. Currently there is a team of both English and Spanish speaking victim’s advocates to assist members of the Spanish-speaking community who utilize SARC services. Training on gender stereotyping and discrimination was provided to all volunteers.

MONTHS	Sex		Marital Status			Sexual Orientation		Age Range					Citizenship		Language		Disability		Education				Employed	
	Male	Female	Single	Divorced	Married	Heterosexual	LGBTQ	below 12yrs	12-18yrs	18-50	60+	Citizen	Non-citizen	English	Spanish	YES	NO	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Unknown	YES	NO	
January	1	11	9	0	3	12	0	0	0	12	0	7	4	12	0	0	12	1	6	5	0	6	6	
February	1	10	7	1	3	11	1	0	1	11	0	6	5	11	0	0	11	1	5	4	1	7	4	
March	0	8	5	0	3	8	0	0	3	3	0	5	3	8	0	0	8	0	6	1	1	3	5	
April	2	10	10	0	2	12	0	1	3	8	0	10	2	12	0	0	12	0	3	8	0	3	7	
May	1	9	7	1	2	10	0	1	1	8	0	7	3	10	0	0	10	4	4	2	0	8	2	
June	5	15	15	0	5	20	0	1	4	15	0	12	8	19	1	0	20	2	12	6	0	11	9	
July	0	7	4	1	2	7	0	2	1	4	0	6	1	6	1	1	6	2	4	1	0	3	4	
August	0	6	5	0	1	6	0	1	2	3	0	5	1	6	0	0	6	1	4	1	0	2	4	
September	1	7	3	0	4	8	0	1	0	7	0	5	2	6	2	0	8	2	5	1	0	6	2	
October	4	13	13	0	4	17	0	0	1	15	1	12	5	16	1	0	17	1	10	1	5	9	8	
November	2	9	9	0	2	9	2	0	1	9	1	6	5	10	1	0	11	2	6	2	1	6	5	
December	0	8	7	0	1	8	0	0	3	5	0	7	1	7	1	0	8	1	4	2	1	4	4	
Total	17	113	94	3	32	128	3	7	20	100	2	88	40	123	7	1	129	17	69	34	9	68	60	

Table 3: Directorate of Gender Affairs, Support & Referral Centre Annual, 2018 Statistics

Although there haven’t been any legislative steps taken to decriminalize women in prostitution or measures to reduce the demand for prostitution, there are social protection programmes which can be used for women to exit prostitution. Further, apart from parenting workshops, there have also been no specific measures taken to prevent and address potential cases of exploitation of girls by their parents to supplement family income through prostitution. As it relates to migrant women, through the Department of Labour and Immigration and the Trafficking in Persons Secretariat, there are screening tools and protocols that are used to detect persons who are suspected trafficking victims and migrants. There are also specific victim-

centred interventions that are implemented to ensure that their rights are protected once identified.

Participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions

19. What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?

The DoGA led a nation-wide forum for young women and girls in leadership in 2018. The forum exposed young women and girls to transformational leadership, Science Technology Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) related fields, climate and environmental justice, and advocacy and social change. The theme of the forum was "Press for Progress" and the participants were between the ages of 12-35 years old which gave an opportunity for younger participants to engage in inter-generational exchanges and knowledge sharing.

The DoGA partnered with the President of the Senate to sensitize parliament and girls within the President's 10 Mentorship Programme on the importance of women's participation and leadership in public life. They were also sensitized on the role of the DoGA, differentiation between gender and sex and understanding basic gender terms. Young women in Antigua & Barbuda have the opportunity through this 10-week training programme to become exposed to politics, leadership, and advocacy. The programme is now in its 2nd cohort of mentoring young girls.

There are presently two elected females represented in the house of Parliament and nine (9) females within the Senate of a total of sixteen (16) senators, the current president of the senate is also a woman. This indicates some progress as there is more women representation currently in the political arena in Antigua & Barbuda than ever before, and with concerted efforts and interventions, the current political landscape may change and allow women to transcend and transform politics and leadership with increased involvement and participation.

Antigua & Barbuda continues to experience a slow but steady progression towards increased participation of women in politics. To date, the country has only two (2) elected Members of Parliament (MP), but there is hope for more female MPs in future elections. In 2016, a new party emerged in Antigua & Barbuda, the Democratic National Alliance (DNA), which was formed and is led by a woman, a first in Antigua's and Barbuda's political history.

Antigua & Barbuda's observance of International Women's Day 2019 featured key panels on the theme "Think equal, build smart, innovate for change". The theme focused on innovative ways to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. The panel focused on the gains for the past 20 years and explored challenges faced by women in leadership in Antigua & Barbuda. Building on the dialogue, a panel conversation will be held in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus in Antigua & Barbuda and Women Against

Rape (WAR) to explore the importance of affirmative action to promote women's participation in leadership and public life.

20. Provide details of up to 3 concrete examples of the actions your country has taken in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICTs) specifically

Strengthening the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in the media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership.

Through the ICT Cadet Programme the Government provides youth who have completed their secondary schooling, particularly girls, with training in New Media, specifically video filming, video editing, web journalism, graphic design, photography, social media management, and new media techniques, including the development of websites and web marketing for a period of 6 months with a stipend. The programme is a component of the Government-Assisted Technology Endeavour (GATE). This initiative is led by the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting, Telecommunications, Science and Technology in partnership with local internet service provider, Digicel. The mission of the ICT Cadet Programme is to build human capacity in Antigua & Barbuda in with regard to ICTs with a view to ultimately establishing Antigua & Barbuda as the ICT capital of the Caribbean.

21. Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

The proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women is not tracked. The amount of funds and the budget allocated to the DoGA is tracked and recorded annually. The Directorate uses these funds to mainstream gender and gender considerations into all sectors, and to raise awareness, and sensitise people on gender equality, women's empowerment and GBSV, in addition to conducting various training sessions and workshops in an effort to educate and build capacity on gender issues. Throughout the government sectors, agencies implement projects and programmes that promote gender equality and women's empowerment, however, there is no formal system in place to ascertain the share of the national budget that is invested in promoting gender equality.

22. As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

The proportion of official development assistance invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women is not tracked by Antigua & Barbuda.

23. Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda is presently in the process of drafting a National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (NGEAP). The national policy and action plan will set the national framework for advancing the empowerment of women and promoting gender equality nationally. The NGEAP will be developed by the Government, in partnership with civil society and the private sector, and will aim for mutual responsibility and accountability in achieving its objectives.

The plan will cover the period 2020 to 2025 and will establish the framework for implementing gender priorities nationally. The action plan will integrate the recommendations from the Committee on the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Periodic Review, and other relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms. The national strategy will also integrate the Sustainable Development Goals for national implementation.

The NGEAP will take a developmental approach. The policy will set the key commitments and requirements for Government and civil society through an inclusive, social justice, and human rights approach. The policy will offer practical tools for both government and civil society to adopt in order to ensure that planned policies, programmes, and initiatives are gender responsive.

24. Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, or the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?

The CEDAW recommendations and recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review and all international human rights mechanisms will be integrated within the national strategy and action plan for gender equality for the period 2020 to 2025.

25. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?

Antigua & Barbuda does not presently have national human rights institution. However, Antigua & Barbuda recognizes the need for an institution to oversee compliance with international human rights obligations and establishing monitoring and evaluation systems such as a data system capable of generating information for the compilation of reports. As such, Antigua & Barbuda has committed to establishing a human rights institutions in line with the Paris principles.

26. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?

Antigua & Barbuda recognises the significance of promoting a peaceful and inclusive society for all in order to achieve sustainable development. Some of the steps that the country has taken are to launch a crime prevention national task force and endorsement of the Caribbean Citizen Security Toolkit to strengthen the use of evidence-based programming and policy-making for crime prevention under the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) CariSECURE Project. Additionally, the scope of the Organization of Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy (ONDCP) was expanded in 2012 with the passing of the Office of the National Drug & Money Laundering Control Policy (Amendment) Act 2012 which means the institution now covers the crimes of human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and firearms offences as well as drug trafficking and money laundering. Furthermore, Antigua & Barbuda has a Prevention of Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2017 which signals the country's firm stance on ensuring peace is a priority and ensuring that a legislative framework is in place to support this stance.

27. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?

In 2017, Hurricane Irma devastated the sister isle of Barbuda, with almost all of its infrastructure and buildings completely destroyed. There was one reported death during the storm. As a result of this, the island was deemed unsuitable for habitation, since there were reported cases of stagnant water which became breeding grounds for mosquitos, dead animals, hanging electrical wires, and leaking roofs. With such devastation, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda took swift action to relocate all residents of Barbuda to the mainland Antigua. In addition, residents of Antigua made their homes available for Barbudans to reside temporarily.

Through partnership and humanitarian support from UNWOMEN and UNFPA, post-Irma relief in the form of dignity kits provided were sent and distributed through the DoGA for all the residents of Barbuda while they were temporarily relocated to Antigua. Women from various communities participated in the development and distribution of dignity kits to the affected population. Further, women and girls participated in recovery efforts through their participation on the Barbuda Council. Women's voices and participation have been well represented at the level of the Barbuda Council. Most Council employees are women. However, the efficacy of the Council has been severely challenged since the Hurricane. The Council had one formal meeting in the four weeks since Hurricane Irma hit. It is not clear what the Council's recovery policy is, and how it will be implemented. Barbudan women and men have indicated that they would like more and

frequent communication from the Council regarding the recovery process and the return to Barbuda.

28. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?

N/A

29. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?

The Ministry of Education has established a Girls' Day in most primary government schools consisting of specialized programmes for girls' specific needs and empowerment. The introduction of the Child-Friendly School Initiatives, Safe School Project, youth mental health forums, Youth For Change forums are examples of interventions that have been introduced to eliminate discrimination in schools. Also, through the introduction of school councils, particularly at the primary school level, young girls also have the opportunity to be exposed to and participate in leadership initiatives. Prior to the adoption of the BPfA, women in Antigua & Barbuda enjoyed universal access to education and were well represented in all levels of the education system. The adult literacy has remained unchanged between the years 2001 to 2011 at 98.9%. The literacy rate for women is 99.4% and men 98.4% (UNESCO 2013). The largest employer in Antigua & Barbuda is the Government public service which predominately comprises of female employees.

Success in the empowerment of women can also be attributed to scholarships awarded by the Board of Education established in accordance to the Board of Education Act 1994. A total of 684 scholarships have been awarded between 2014 and 2018. According to statistics from the Board of Education majority of the students requesting scholarships are women. In 2014, 200 persons were awarded scholarships, but the data was not disaggregated by sex. For the period 2015-2018 there was a total of 484 scholarships awarded. Approximately 67% (158) recipients were female and 33% (326) were male.

Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

30. Provide details of up to 3 concrete examples of the actions your country has taken in the last five years to integrate gendered perspectives and concerns into environmental policies.

Supporting women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance.

Recognizing that gender is a cross-cutting issue, with impacts on all spheres of life, and that protecting and capitalizing on our natural resources is essential to sustainable development, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda has made efforts to mainstream gender into the functioning of the Department of Environment (DoE).

The DoE employs a gender focal point among its staff who is responsible for ensuring that all the department's programmes and policies maintain a gendered perspective and are fully gender-responsive. The DoE focal point has received training from the DoGA and often partners with the DoGA on consultations and workshops as required.

The DoE has also introduced an Environmental Social Safeguard policy as well as a gender policy and action plan.

Promoting the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology, and other disciplines relating to the natural environment.

The DoE is currently headed by a female executive director and there are other women in leadership roles within the department.

Separately, the DoGA strives to encourage the education of women and girls in non-traditional areas, including the STEM fields, and areas related to the environment. In 2018, the Directorate hosted a conference for young women aged 18-35 in honour of International Women's Day. Among other things, the event featured a session on Gender & Environmental Justice facilitated by the DoE. The session focused on the impact of climate change on SIDS, like Antigua & Barbuda, and highlighted ways to get involved in environmental advocacy, leadership, and decision-making.

In 2019 the DoGA awarded its inaugural International Women's Day Award to a woman with outstanding national contributions in the field of the environment and climate change. The awardee has been the National Coordinator for the Global Environmental Facility/Small Grant Programme since 2012, has helped several community groups, many of which were led by women, to develop their own integrated development programmes, and has been instrumental in bringing solar energy technology to several churches, schools, and community centers island-wide.

In 2019, the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG), the most prolific environmental non-governmental organization in Antigua & Barbuda is presently led by a woman. The EAG has multiplied its efforts at raising public awareness about environmental conservationism in Antigua & Barbuda and has also led a community wide effort to discuss sustainable development and land management in the North Eastern Marine Management Area (NEMMA), the largest marine protected area in the twin island state.

Taking measures to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in indigenous and local communities in relation to traditional medicines, biodiversity and conservation techniques.

The DoE holds consultation with communities to harness local knowledge about the environment, biodiversity, and conservation techniques including waterways and catchments. Antigua & Barbuda is party to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Under this Convention, targets were developed as it relates to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity includes 20 time-bound, measurable targets to be met by the year 2020 known as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. As such, all biodiversity related projects undertaken by the DoE are designed with the goal of attaining the various Aichi Targets. Target 14 specifically calls for taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, the poor and the vulnerable when designing systems that restore and safeguard essential services related to water and those that contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being.

Antigua & Barbuda is also signatory to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. This Protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity calls for indigenous people and local communities to directly benefit from the use of genetic and biological resources being utilized for research and product development through monetary and non-monetary methods. The current focal point for the Nagoya Protocol under the direct guidance of the Executive Director is a young woman. Young women through the DoE have the opportunity to represent Antigua & Barbuda at various regional and international levels.

31. Provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures your country has taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into programmes and policies for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation.

Supported women's participation and leadership, including those affected by disaster, in disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation policies, programmes and projects

The DoE takes the lead on all government programmes related to climate resilience and mitigation. Further, through DoE, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda has developed a national fund, the Sustainable Island Resource Framework Fund (SIRF Fund), to serve as the primary channel for environmental, climate mitigation and adaptation funding from both international and domestic sources. Under this fund, special provisions will also be made to provide loans and financing options to female, single headed-households in order to increase their resilience to climate change.

Antigua & Barbuda has signed on to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) giving the Government direct access to \$10 million worth of projects for the purposes of strengthening the nation's climate resilience. The projects will be implemented with the fund participation and leadership of women and community groups.

Strengthening the evidence-base and raising awareness about the disproportionate vulnerability of women and girls to the impact of environmental degradation and disasters.

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Irma, the DoGA, in collaboration with UN Women MCO, Caribbean conducted a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment to ascertain the specific needs of those affected by the disaster. This information was then used to inform programmes targeting those affected.

Through a partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), DoGA and NODS led a training exercise with approximately 40 disaster shelter managers. The training introduced participants to the basic concepts of gender, gendered norms, and GBSV, focusing on the risk for GBSV in disaster settings, specifically the increased risks associated for women and girls, and examined ways in which shelter managers can prevent and respond to this type of violence.

Similar training sessions were also held with healthcare providers at the Mount St John Medical Centre. That training provided medical and paramedical personnel at the nation's main hospital with basic knowledge of the definitions, types, and of root causes GBSV, and the unique contributing factors that arise during emergency situations like natural disasters. The session also detailed the specialized role of health sector personnel in both preventing and responding to cases of GBSV during emergencies.

In efforts to raise public awareness of the increased risks for GBSV in post-disaster settings local youth theatre company, Honeybee Theatre, was commissioned by UN Women MCO, Caribbean to create a piece that explored the themes. The presentation, dubbed, "Light in the Dark", follows 15-year old Kimmy and her family who have been displaced by a massive hurricane. As they struggle to adjust to life after the disaster Kimmy must also navigate her heightened vulnerability, instances of abuse and exploitation, and accessing support services. The play debuted to an audience of over 200 persons, including displaced women and young people who were living in shelters at the time.

The DoGA supported the initiative by providing consultation to the playwright and actors, and also led a Q&A session after the staging of the play, discussing psychological first aid and how to access services for survivors of abuse in emergency situations.

Promoting access of women in situations of disaster to services such as relief payments, disaster insurance, and compensation.

Through the Sustainable Island Resource Framework Fund (SIRF Fund), single female-headed households, have access to loans and financing options to retrofit their homes to make them more resilient to the effects of climate change.

After the passage of Hurricane Irma in 2017, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda made significant efforts to ensure that women and girls both participated in and benefitted from measures to mitigate the effects of the disaster.

The NODS through CDEMA offered grants and vouchers to local supermarkets in Antigua that were particularly geared towards Barbudan women and families recovering from the effects of the 2017 hurricane season.

Introduced or strengthened and implemented gender-responsive laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation (e.g. disaster law addressing the vulnerability of women during a disaster).

Antigua & Barbuda signed on to the Green-Climate Fund. As per its Gender Policy, the Fund recognizes that the effects of climate change disproportionately impact women and girls and existing gender inequalities are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. It also acknowledges that gender inequality exacerbated by climate change is linked, as are other development areas, to vulnerability and risks, and that the greater vulnerability of women to climate change stems from gender norms and discrimination that result in the imbalanced division of labour, lower income, and lesser livelihood opportunities; less access and control over land and other productive assets; fewer legal rights; lesser mobility and lesser political and professional representation.

As signatory to the GCF, any programmes, policy, or other initiative implemented by the Government of Antigua & Barbuda will incorporate a gendered perspective.

The DoE has also drafted its Environmental Social Safeguard Policy, and a Gender Policy and Action Plan. Both documents were developed through consultation with the DoGA and several other public and private sector stakeholders.

Section Three: National Institutions and processes

31. What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women?

The national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women is the Directorate of Gender Affairs. The DoGA is responsible for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in Antigua & Barbuda. The gender machinery is the focal point agency for normative policy and programmatic support to women's empowerment nationally. The agency is situated within the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth, and Gender Affairs. The DoGA maintains its coordinator role through the Ministry and acts as the coordinating agency for mainstreaming gender across all government agencies, policies and programmes.

32. Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG for implementation?

Antigua & Barbuda is currently establishing its institutional process for the implementation of the SDGs. Once established, the head of the national machinery will be a member of the institutional process to highlight the importance of goal 5 and of mainstreaming the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 goals.

33. Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

There is a formal mechanism for stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through the DoGA. The critical areas within the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are divided into cluster groups. Stakeholders from civil society, women's rights organizations, academia, faith-based organizations, private sector, parliamentary committee, and representatives from various sectors across government. Stakeholders are consulted through the DoGA to implement and monitor the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The mechanism also ensures that women and marginalized groups, such as women and girls with disabilities, can participate and integrate their concerns in the process.

The DoGA with the assistance of UN Women MCO, Caribbean hosted a consultation with key stakeholders to identify the achievements, priorities, challenges and setbacks for promoting gender equality and the implementation of the 12 critical areas nationally. The consultation also assisted the Directorate of Gender Affairs to divide the critical areas into clusters and establish working groups with key stakeholders to review the implementation of the declaration and platform for action. Each cluster group was led was by a technical officer within the Directorate

of Gender Affairs which is responsible for the thematic areas under the Declaration and Platform for Action.

Further, a workplan was established with key stakeholders which outlined the process and steps to complete the review and report. A desk review of relevant national, regional and international reports was undertaken by the DoGA technical team.

To ensure the national review process is inclusive, participatory and nationally owned, the DoGA led consultations through the established working groups to get their inputs on the questions on the guidance questionnaires.

The following process was used:

1. **A desk literature of review** of the following agreed policies, strategies, national and regional reports undertaken.
2. **National Reports**
 - National CEDAW Report
 - Antigua & Barbuda Universal Periodic Review
 - Antigua & Barbuda Rights of the Child Report
 - Directorate of Gender Affairs annual reports
 - Annual reports of key national ministries
 - National Country Gender Assessment Report
 - Antigua and Barbuda Labour Force Survey Report
 - 2014 National Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
3. **Regional Reports**
 - 2014 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Caribbean Synthesis Review and Appraisal Report
4. **Questionnaires**
 - The questionnaire and guidance note outlining the national review process and requirements was used during consultations with stakeholders.
5. **Bi-lateral meetings ad focused group discussions**
 - Meetings were held with key government officials and civil society groups. The Directorate of Gender Affairs facilitated several formal working groups and consultations and validation meeting and workshop.
6. **Analysis and Report Writing**
 - All findings were analyzed and documented following the structure and content recommended by the guidance note.
7. **A National Report Validation Meeting**

- A validation meeting was hosted and led by the Directorate of Gender Affairs on 25th April 2019 to present the first draft and to ensure that the contents of the report, were articulated to the satisfaction of key stakeholders.

8. Finalization of Report

- Following the validation meeting, all agreed comments and feedbacks and input from stakeholders were incorporated into the draft report for the Government review and approval process.

9. Approval of Report by Government of Antigua & Barbuda

- The final report was submitted to the Government of Antigua & Barbuda for official approval.

A) Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan or strategy for SDG implementation?

Presently, there is no national plan or strategy for the Sustainable Development implementation in Antigua & Barbuda.

Section Four: Data and Statistics

36. What are the top three areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

Established interagency coordination mechanism on gender statistics

An inter-agency coordination was established through the introduction of the National Electronic GBSV Database. The coordination mechanism was established to standardize the intake and assessment form for the collection of data between the RPFAB, FSSD, the health sector, Statistics Division, the DoGA and civil society. The working group was established through a Memorandum of Understanding between agencies, which outlined classification tools for reporting GBSV, training on the use and management of the integrated database system and protocols between agencies on information sharing and confidentiality. The data from the system is used by the national statistical authority and formed part of the statistical information that is collected routinely. The national electronic database was however limited in its scope since it was not linked to the court database system. Presently, there are efforts to merge the system with the Sexual Offences Model Court monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that cases are tracked from reporting all throughout justice chain.

Engage in capacity building to strengthen the use of gender statistics

As part of the implementation of the National Strategic Action plan in 2016, through the DoGA, a gender statistics training was held with key sector stakeholders and civil society organizations across all sectors on the use and importance of gender indicators and gender statistics in designing programs and policies. The Statistics Division continues to play a leading role in coordinating the collection of gender statistics across all of the CARICOM gender equality indicators. A valuable lesson learnt from the training process was the need for follow-up and a sustainable coordinating mechanism that will support the sharing of information and further capacity support for stakeholders.

Used gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programs and projects

In Antigua & Barbuda there is significant improvement on the use of gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and the implementation of programmes. Gender statistics and analysis produced in reports are used to inform policies and programmes. The Social Protection Policy, the Prevention of Harassment Policy, the National Youth Policy, the Service Sector Policy, Environmental Policies and Child Protection Policy are a few examples. The design and development of programmes across sectors in health and the environment, social services, finance and public works, and agriculture sectors integrate gender statistics in the design of programs and interventions.

37. Out of the following, which are your country's top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years?

The introduction of a NGEAP as the overarching framework to promote gender equality will establish the requirement for all sectors and agencies to promote the development of gender statistics. The policy will provide the tools and accountability mechanisms to ensure that sectors are producing and using gender statistics.

The DoGA will prioritize through its gender equality action plan, the introduction of new surveys to produce baseline information on GBSV to determine the prevalence of the issue in Antigua & Barbuda. While Antigua & Barbuda has accelerated efforts with the implementation of coordinated interventions to address GBSV, there is need to conduct baseline studies on GBSV.

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda is committed utilizing and improving the collection of administrative data to address gender data gaps. The use of administrative data will also assist the government with introducing evidenced-based gender responsive policies and programs that seek to address the needs of vulnerable populations.

38. Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

A national set of indicators through the CARICOM Secretariat have been adopted by Antigua & Barbuda for monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Statistics Division in Antigua & Barbuda is responsible for tracking progress made towards the implementation of the SDGs nationally. There are 130 national indicators on the SDGs and 11 of those indicators are gender specific.

39. Has data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs begun?

The data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and gender specific indicators have begun in Antigua & Barbuda. Various agencies and sectors are contributing to the data collection process. The following indicators have been prioritized are below:

- Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age
- Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments
- Proportion of women in managerial positions

40. Which of the following disaggregation is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?

- Geographic location
- Income
- Sex
- Age
- Education
- Marital Status
- Race/Ethnicity
- Migratory status
- Disability

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