Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago


In the context of the Twentieth anniversary of the Four World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2015

Gender Affairs Division
Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development
September 2014
INTRODUCTION

This report provides a review and appraisal for the period 2010-2014 of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the outcome of the twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000). It identifies achievements, gaps and challenges and provides an indication of areas for future action.

BACKGROUND

Trinidad and Tobago is a twin island state situated at the Southern-most tip of the Caribbean Archipelago, between latitude 10º North of the equator and longitude 60º to 62º West. The islands are located 11 km east off the Coast of Venezuela and the South American Continent, at the closest point, with a combined area of 5,128 km². The estimated mid-year population for 2010 was estimated at 1,317,714, while the estimated mid-year population of 2014 is 1,344,000. The total population of Trinidad and Tobago based on the 2011 Population and Housing Census was 1,328,019. Women and men comprise less than equal amounts of the population, females account for 51.56% of the population as compared to males which account for 48.44% as at 2011. Trinidad and Tobago is noted for its ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, approximately 37.6% of the population is of East Indian decent, 36.3% of African decent, 24.2% is of mixed decent, 0.7% Caucasian, and 0.3% Chinese.

JUDICIAL, POLITICAL, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

Trinidad and Tobago is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, and in the political sphere, women have access to participation in decision making processes regardless of race or religion or socio-economic background. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to establishing mechanisms to accelerate the achievement of gender equality in political participation and representation at all levels of the electoral process and women’s full participation on the basis of equality with men in all areas of public life including: governmental bodies; the judiciary; trade unions; the private sector; political parties; employers’ organizations; research and academic institutions; and national corporations. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar S.C., in pursuit of this ideal has established an on-line mentorship programme aimed at developing female leadership within the sphere of politics. Women currently hold many non-traditional portfolios, including that of Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

1 PAHO Health in the Americas 2012 Edition
The legislative power of Trinidad and Tobago resides in a bicameral Parliament, which is comprised of the upper House called the Senate and a Lower House called the House ofRepresentatives. The Constitution establishes a Supreme Court Judicature for Trinidad and Tobago consisting of a High Court of Justice and a Court of Appeal. The Privy Council is theHighest Court of Appeal of Trinidad and Tobago. A Chief Justice has overall responsibilityfor the administration of Justice and heads an independent judiciary. The Judiciary comprises the higher judiciary (the Supreme Court of Judicature) and the lower judiciary (the Magistracy).The Trinidad and Tobago economy has shown remarkable resilience in this turbulent international environment. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stood at 20.7582 in 2010, andstands at 24.6408 billion in 2013. The economy is heavily dependent on energy and energy-related sectors for most of its export earnings, however, the non-energy sector continues to register rapid growth; and for the first time in many years, the non-energy sector grew at a faster rate than the energy sector. Growth in the non-energy sector has been broad-based, covering construction activity, manufacturing, tourism, wholesale and retail trades, and financial services. The unemployment rate stood at 6.4% in the year 2010. Additionally, the unemployment rate in Trinidad and Tobago fell from 4.7 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2012 to 3.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2013 which is the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded in Trinidad and Tobago.

STATUS OF WOMEN

The status of women in Trinidad and Tobago compares favourably with many middle income developing nations. The equal rights of men and women are guaranteed under the 1976 Republican Constitution. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the implementation of concrete measures aimed at promoting gender equity and equality. The Gender Affairs Division (GAD) of the Ministry of Gender Youth and Child Development is the national focal point for gender and development. The Division works collaboratively with state agencies, academia and civil society to promote an active and visible policy to mainstream gender perspectives in policies, programmes, and projects.

Gender and development is also guided by several national and international mandates including the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the CIM/OAS Plan of Action, the Belém do Para Convention, the Commonwealth Plan of Action, and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Over the past decade, Trinidad and Tobago has made significant strides in making gender equality the core of its socio-economic policy. Trinidad and Tobago ranked 36 out 136 countries in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2013.

Profile of the Labour Force - Central Statistical Office

World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2013. The Global Gender Gap Index is an index designed to measure of gender equality. The rankings are designed to create greater awareness among a global audience of the challenges posed by gender gaps and the opportunities created by reducing them http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf
Trinidad and Tobago has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.311, ranking 50 out of 148 countries in the 2012 index compared to 2011 when T&T ranked 21st. In Trinidad and Tobago, 27.4 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 59.4 percent of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education compared to 59.2 percent of their male counterparts in 2012. The number of seats in parliament held by women, amount to twelve (12) in the House of Representatives for 2013.

PART I. MAJOR OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBSTACLES

NATIONAL POLICY ON GENDER

Action to finalize the National Gender and Development Policy, which will guide an effective approach by state and private institutions to promoting gender equity and equality in Trinidad and Tobago, was accelerated in 2011. The National Policy on Gender and Development provides a framework for including gender perspectives in all activities of government and civil society, thereby promoting the full and equal participation of men and women in the development process. On November 3rd, 2011 the Cabinet approved the formation of a Cabinet Appointed Committee (CAC) to Review Public Comments and Finalize the Policy. The Committee commenced work in December of 2011 and fulfilled its mandate in May of 2012. In June 2012, the Draft Policy on Gender and Development for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was submitted to the Cabinet for its consideration and approval.

The Government’s Development Framework the “Seven Interconnected Pillars for Sustainable Development has an inclusive theme of “Prosperity for All”, with Pillar One focusing on People Centred Development as the basis for national development. Additionally, the Trinidad and Tobago Republican Constitution of 1976 acknowledges the “equal and inalienable rights” of all citizens, and the “recognition and protection of their fundamental human rights and freedoms... without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex”. The National Policy on Gender and Development provides a timely and comprehensive platform on which to include gender aware approaches in development, thereby enhancing the possibility of successful, effective and sustainable outcomes in that initiative.

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

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4Trinidad and Tobago HDI values and rank changes in the 2013 Human Development Report http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/TTO.pdf
Pursuant to Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is finalizing its Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention for the period 2002-2009. The Report is based on the Committee’s Concluding Comments on Trinidad and Tobago’s previous Report, as well as recent developments to advance gender equality. The final report once approved would be forwarded to the CEDAW committee.

The Report was prepared by the Division of Gender Affairs, of the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development in collaboration with the Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The approach for developing the report was participatory including nine (9) regional workshops held in communities, collaboration with NGOs, and a questionnaire circulated to collate the work of government agencies.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS

Trinidad and Tobago has a fairly comprehensive legal framework supporting gender and workplace issues. There are criminal, civil and administrative provisions in the laws of Trinidad and Tobago for the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women and children. They include:

a. The Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act (Chap. 45:51) (as amended) was enacted in 1972 to amend the grounds of divorce, nullity and judicial separation to facilitate reconciliation in matrimonial cases, to regulate matrimonial proceedings and to amend the law related to the property of married, divorced and separated persons. Under this Act, the wife has the same rights with respect to property as the husband.

b. The Married Persons Act (Chap 45:50) protects a woman’s rights to make a contract in her own name and without her husband’s permission. This Act also makes provision in respect of the rights of women regarding the administration of property.

c. The Domestic Violence Act (No. 27 of 1999) was enacted to repeal the Domestic Violence Act (No. 10 of 1992) with the aim of ensuring a prompt and equitable legal remedy for victims of domestic violence, for the empowerment of the Court to provide financial relief for the benefit of the applicant of any child, and makes provision for the enlargement of the ambit of Protection Orders. This Act also includes:
   • Enabled a Protection Order to be granted in the Magistrate’s Court
   • Relatively cheap and accessible
   • Improved definitions: Domestic Violence (physical, sexual, emotional or psychological and financial abuse)
   • Categories of persons protected expanded (visiting relationships of over 12 months)
   • Financial compensation for monetary loss (loss of earnings etc.)
• Interim maintenance for applicant and child
• Improved counselling provisions

Trinidad and Tobago is currently reviewing Domestic Violence Act (process commenced April 2014 and is carded for completion by October 2014) with objective to strengthen Act in order to provide greater protection for victims of domestic violence.

d. The Legal Aid and Advice (Amendment) Act, (No. 18 of 1999) was enacted to amend the existing legal aid scheme. The Act has been amended to inter alia allow more persons to qualify for the grant of legal aid and to increase the fees payable to lawyers in legal aid matters. This amendment has also made provision for legal aid to be granted in respect of applications made under the Domestic Violence Act (No.27 of 1999). Furthermore, where a person desires legal aid as a matter of urgency in respect of proceedings relating to domestic violence, the Director of the Legal Aid Authority now has the power to issue an Emergency Certificate to enable that person to acquire prompt representation.

e. The Maternity Protection Act (No. 4 of 1998) was implemented to prevent discrimination against women by employers on the ground of pregnancy. Under this Act, women are guaranteed paid maternity leave for 13 weeks, the protection against dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy, and the right to return to work on the same terms and conditions, of suitably similar terms and conditions after the conclusion of the maternity leave.

f. The Cohabitational Relationships Act (No. 30 of 1998) implemented in recognition of the high incidence of common law unions and the right of common law spouses. In the past, common law spouses had no rights, yet it was estimated that no fewer than 40,724 people lived in common law unions (1990 census). Under this Act, common law spouses who have been living in a cohabitational relationship for not less than five years or who have a child arising out of that relationship, have the right to make an application for maintenance to both the Magistrates’ Court and the High Court. They also have the right to apply to the High Court for an adjustment of property.

g. The Family Law (Guardianship of Minors, Domicile and Maintenance) Act (Chap. 46:08) makes provisions for the custody and maintenance of children and gives women the same rights to custody of their children as men.

h. The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act (No. 31 of 2000) amended legislation relating to sexual offences to protect women against various sexual offences, including rape, sexual assault, incest and sexual indecency. This Act amended the 1986 Act so as to cover all forms of sexual violations, and to increase penalties for previously identified violations. The Act also makes provisions for compensation to be made to victims of rape upon conviction of the perpetrator. The Act also allows for the victim to pursue civil action against the perpetrator.
i. The **Offences against the Person Act, (CH. 11:08) and Summary Offences Act, (Ch. 11:02)** which seek to treat with incidences of verbal and physical abuse.

j. **The Children Act, 2012**
   - Increases the protection of children against sexual conduct.
   - Criminalizes a wider range of sexual conduct against children such as:
     - Pornography
     - Sexual grooming
     - Child prostitution dealt with more adequately

k. The **Children’s Authority Act of 2000** and the **amended Act of 2008** is a comprehensive package of legislation regarding the welfare and rights of children in Trinidad and Tobago. The objectives of the Act are:
   - To promote the well being of all children in Trinidad and Tobago;
   - To provide care and protection for vulnerable children; and
   - To comply with certain obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

l. **Trafficking in Persons Act, 2011; Counter-Trafficking Unit (CTU) established.**

Other pieces of legislation passed relating to the status of women and children include: the Occupational Safety and Health Amendment Act of 2006, which protects pregnant women and recognizes the safety of the unborn child; the Homes for Older Persons Act of 2007, The International Child Abduction Act 2008. The legal framework also includes Laws relating to Minimum Wages (Amendment), Counting of Unwaged Work, and Attachment of Earnings (Child Maintenance).

**Policy Measures include:**
- Child Protection Policy
- Draft National Policy on Gender Equality and Development
- **Sexual Harassment:** No current legislation on sexual harassment exists; victims of sexual harassment can in instances pursue action under the Sexual Offences Act.
  - The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago established a Steering Committee for Action against Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development. This committee was charge with the responsibility of:
    - Overseeing the conduct of a National Study of Sexual Harassment in the workplace
    - The conducting of sexual harassment sensitization through Trinidad and Tobago.
Based on the findings and recommendation to develop a Plan of Action to address the issue and monitor the implementation.

GENDER BUDGETS

There have been substantial increases in the budgetary allocations for gender and development in Trinidad and Tobago over the period under review. The Gender Affairs Division, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development was allocated the sum of TT$8,388,000 for the execution of its mandate in fiscal period 2013 and this sum was increased to $10,000 000 for fiscal 2014/2015.

Concerted efforts have been made to institutionalize gender responsive budgeting (GRB) and the Ministry of Finance has already signalled to the national community that GRB will be significant factor in national budgets within the next two to three years. It should be noted that the following were among recommendations made in the Draft Policy on Gender and Development:

- Inclusion gender as an integral tool of analysis in national budgetary and planning processes, and as a means of integrating economic planning and gender planning.
- Introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting and gender audits in the planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the national budgetary process.
- Revision of national data collection and collation systems related to the economy to ensure disaggregation of data by sex and the inclusion of gender perspectives to inform all economic policy decisions.

Gender-responsive budget initiatives

Following a number of previous initiatives by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to mainstream gender in policy and planning at the national and local government levels of public administration, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development collaborated with the Commonwealth Secretariat, to strengthen the implementation of the Commonwealth Plan of action on Gender Equality in all its member countries. A three-day workshop on Capacity Building Workshop on Gender Responsive Budgeting was held for Public Policy and Planning Officials in Selected Ministries of Government of Trinidad and Tobago in March 2012.

Following a series of workshops and focus group activities and with further collaboration from the Commonwealth Secretariat, a Gender Responsive Budgeting Toolkit was developed and that document has since been approved by the Cabinet for institutionalizing GRB in all Government agencies and Ministries throughout Trinidad and Tobago. In August 2014, a comprehensive three year Action Plan for institutionalizing GRB was developed and the strategies contained in that plan will commence in fiscal 2014/2015.

PARTNERSHIPS

International Development Assistance and Cooperation
The Government of Trinidad and Tobago through the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development (MGYCD) collaborates with regional and multi-lateral agencies to promote gender equity.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago’s collaborative efforts include:

- Cabinet’s approval and disbursement of the Grant of US $5,000.00 annually to UN WOMEN;
- Disbursement of a Grant of US$15,000.00 to the Organization of American States (OAS)/ Convention Belem does Para´ (MESECVI) annually.

**Collaboration with International Agencies/Organizations**

- The Embassy of Chile to Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development, hosted a one day seminar on gender based violence (GBV) for professionals in this field from various Government agencies and Civil Society on 23rd October 2013.

- The Government of Trinidad and Tobago through the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development is currently collaborating with UN Women on a project “Strengthening State Accountability and Community Action for Ending Gender-Based Violence”. This project focuses specifically on reducing violence against women, through the strategies of increasing state actor competencies, strengthening accountability and the promotion of social and cultural change through youth-led, gender responsive social communications. The project is expected to be completed in 2015. The overall project is comprised of two main components namely:
  - To conduct participatory baseline reviews of legislative policy and programmatic action and Consultation of Multi-sectoral Responses to address GBV and SV.
  - Develop the national strategic plan on Gender Based and Sexual Violence for Trinidad and Tobago, and to conduct National Consultations with Government Agencies, NGOs; FBOs; Local and National Government Officials with focus on the National Action Plan (NAP) Draft.

- The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development collaborates with the Commonwealth Secretariat, to strengthen the implementation of the Commonwealth Plan of action on Gender Equality. Trinidad and Tobago has served in the Commonwealth Plan of Action Monitoring Group for the period 2012/2014 and will continue in that capacity until 2015.

- **Women City Centre Project:** This is a collaborative initiative of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Inter American Development Bank (IADB). This centre will provide integrated service for women across five major areas namely: violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, economic autonomy, community education and child care. “Integrated services empower women by
offering under one roof services that meet their immediate and long-term needs.” It is proposed that two centres be established one each in north and south Trinidad. The project is currently in the design phase and several consultancies are being undertaken to address the various components of the project..

**Collaboration/Partnership with NGOs and the Private Sector**

- The Government of Trinidad and Tobago works collaboratively with civil society organizations (CSOs) to deliver services aimed at promoting gender equity and treating with situations which arise as a result of inequity, for instance gender-based violence. These services include shelters for battered women, hot-lines and counselling services. The Government supports the work of key CSOs through the provision of annual subventions, grants, and workshops aimed at strengthening CSOs.

- The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development has an open door policy that allows for Civil Society Organizations (CSO), women’s and men’s organizations to meet with officials of the Ministry as necessary. There are however, other formal mechanism through which the Ministry engages with CSO and women’s groups/organizations. The Ministry through its various Divisions is part of a network through which information is shared and collaborative efforts undertaken to advance gender equity in Trinidad and Tobago. Mechanisms to support this structure and the sharing of information include:
  
  o Workshops including one day Gender Sensitization Workshops on Technical Proposal Writing and accessing resources for NGOs from May and June 2013.
  o Collaboration and participation in international observances including World AIDS Day, International Women’s Day and International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women;
  o Hosting of national consultations aimed at obtaining information in the preparation of several major Reports and the development of national policies;
  o Management of the Division’s Domestic Violence Services by the NGO, Families in Action;

- The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development supports the development and capacity building of gender, youth and child development related Civil Society Organizations (NGOs and CBOs, FBOs etc.) by providing training, technical and financial assistance. These Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) received support to implement approved programmes and projects, conduct training and assistance to acquire property and participate in local, regional and international gender forums.
  
  o Many CSOs receive government subventions to facilitate their work including the operation of shelters for battered women and children;
For the period November 2011 - September 2012 approximately two hundred and ten (210) applications (from organizations/individuals/groups) received assistance in the form of one off grants and subventions.

October 2012- September 2013 approximately ninety-nine (99) applications (from Organization/groups/individuals) received assistance in the form of one off grants while from the period Oct 2013- May 2014 approximately one hundred and six (106) organizations/individuals/groups received assistance.

The GAD collaborates with other state and non-state agencies.

- In November 2013 the GAD partnered with the Women Arm of the South Conference of Seventh Days Adventists to host a Church Service to commemorate International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25th November 2013.
- In celebration of International Women’s Day 2014, the MGYCD partnered with other state and non state stakeholders in hosting a series of Business Clinic for Women in Rural Community during the month of March 2014. Stakeholders included:
  - Ministry of Community Development
  - Mayaro Initiative for Private Enterprise Development
  - Ministry of Food Production (Agriculture Now Training Unit)
  - Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro-Enterprises Development (Ibis/Fair Share)
  - Network for Rural Women Producers
  - Network of NGO for the advancement of Women
  - The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP)
  - Central Bank (National Financial Literacy Programme)
  - National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO)-Development Support Centre
  - T&T Best Village (Pt Fortin, Toco and Guayaguare)
  - Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (TEST)-Career Coach
  - National Training Agency (NTA)- Sangre Grande Skill Centre

MEN AND BOYS

The Defining Masculine Excellence Programme, an ongoing series of “Train the Trainers” Workshops, continued targeting men from various state and private agencies with the knowledge and skills to improve their social relationships, and to provide training, community support and outreach to other men and boys in vulnerable circumstances. For the period 2013/2014 three (3) classes have been conducted with approximately 112 men completing the programme. From 2010 to 2014 four hundred and thirty-two (432) men have benefitted from the programme, several of whom are now in partnership with the Gender Affairs Division to reach other men and boys with personal development skills.
The Non-Traditional Training Programme for men and boys “Food Preparation and Home Management for Men and Boys” introduces men to training in food preparation, home management, and financial literacy. This programme which is aimed at addressing shared responsibilities in the household, trains participants in the fundamentals of meal preparation improving family relationships and prepares males to participate more effectively in home management. Over two thousand men and boys have participated in this programme since its inception with one hundred and thirty-five (135) men and boys completing the programme in fiscal 2014.

In 2013 the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development, through the Gender Affairs Division hosted a Men’s Health Forum in Commemoration of National Men Day celebrated on 19th November. One hundred and twenty men participated in this workshop which covered areas such as male sexually, men health, and aging.

IMPACT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

Trinidad and Tobago’s has an energy based economy. The down turn was mitigated by considerable national savings, accrued during the last few years of unabated positive economic growth. There were job losses in the energy, construction and other sectors. However, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago maintained all its social programmes and social safety nets, many of which are aimed at the economic empowerment and the protection of women and the poor. Research on the effects of trade and trade liberalization was conducted by students of the University of the West Indies as well as civil organisations such as the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA.). The data suggested that prevailing trade agreements and reducing exports may prove the source of financial challenge for some small and micro business persons including women.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN.

a) Equal girls enrolment in primary school education

In Trinidad and Tobago girls enjoy equal access to education. The government of Trinidad and Tobago provides free education for all boys and girls at the nursery school, primary and secondary levels of education. Additionally, qualifying citizens of Trinidad and Tobago may obtain financial assistance for tertiary-level education through the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses Programme (GATE). Gate funds 100% of tuition expenses for undergraduate students and up to 50% of tuition expenses, to a maximum of TT$20,000.00, for postgraduate students.

b) Women’s share of paid employment

- Trinidad and Tobago has a fairly comprehensive legal framework supporting gender and workplace issues. The Occupational Safety and Health Act No. 1 of 2004 was
proclaimed, repealing the Factories Ordinance 1948 and the Night Work Act Chapter 88:12, which limited women’s economic participation. The Act requires employers to provide facilities to include women, and disabled persons, and to protect the health of the unborn child. The legal framework also includes Laws relating to, Sexual Offences, Minimum Wages (Amendment), Counting of Unwaged Work, Maternity Protection, and Attachment of Earnings (Maintenance).

With the development of renewable and clean energy industries, new green jobs are being created and provide an avenue for training and employment for women and men. In order to promote a socially just transition to green jobs, both women and men will benefit from education and training initiatives and labour market policies that facilitate the development of skills necessary for new green jobs and the transition for workers who will lose their existing jobs.

The Ministry of Labour:

• **National Employment Service:** is an initiative of The Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development and is aimed at helping the citizens and residents of Trinidad and Tobago to find gainful employment and to further their chosen careers. The National Employment Service (NES) offers a number of services designed to help jobseekers find jobs and employers to find suitable employees online.

• **Worker’s Rights and Responsibilities:** which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Labour ensures that people are protected while employed i.e. OSHA, Maternity Benefits, and Minimum Wage. The Rights and Responsibilities at the Workplace are enshrined in Labour Law of Trinidad and Tobago and are inclusive of terms and conditions of work (namely Rate of Pay, Hours of Work, Overtime worked, Payment for Public Holidays, Sick Leave, Vacation Leave, Meal Break and Rest Period). Trinidad and Tobago has ratified eight (8) Core Conventions of the International Labour Organization which outlines these fundamental rights and provides guidelines for labour standards as practiced in our country.

• The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development recognized that financial dependence on one’s spouse/partner contributes to the vulnerability of women. Programmes such as the Women in Harmony and the Women in Non-traditional Skills Training administered by Gender Affairs Division equip women with skills that give them earning potential.

• **The Women in Harmony Programme** is designed to help increase employment opportunities for low-income women with limited or no skills, particularly single female head of households between the ages of 26-25 years old. This aim of this programme is to equip participants with marketable skills, which can be used to provide them better employment options and enhance their economic choices.
• **The Women in Non-traditional Skills Training Programme** is designed to provide specialised technical and vocational education and training to low-income and unskilled women between the ages of 18-50 years. It exposes women to training in male dominated fields such as the construction industry, auto and computer repairs thereby increasing employment opportunities for women.

• **Craft Training Programme for Women**: which falls under the Ministry of Community Development this programme promotes the development of the craft, business and life skills necessary to facilitate the establishment of successful, home based craft businesses. This programme benefits single, unskilled or unemployed mother, between 25 - 50 years old.

• The Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training provides a number of initiatives that seek to benefit women inclusive of with the green economy and employment opportunities
  
  o **OJT- On the Job Training Programme** affords young person’s between the ages of 16-35 (who are graduates of secondary, technical/vocational and tertiary institution) the opportunity to gain job experience to develop necessary skills and attitudes thereby preparing them for gainful employment.

  o **MUST- Multi Sector Skills Training Programme**- This Programme provides training in construction, hospitality and tourism for eligible citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Trainees are integrated with either crews on a worksite or staff at hospitality and tourism establishments for four days per week to receive training that is hands-on and work based. Based on the work performance of each trainee and the existence of vacancies within the employer’s organisation, he or she may be offered a position on a more permanent basis.

  o **YTEPP- Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme** - is a skills training programme which is aimed at addressing the issue of escalating unemployment, particularly among young person’s between the ages of 15 and 25.

  o **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition**: Experienced workers with no formal educational or training qualifications in their field can obtain certification based on skills acquired on the job through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Programme. The PLAR Programme is designed to accommodate the schedules of working adults and provides the formal certification that can be the key to better job opportunities, job reclassification or promotion. The PLAR Programme is provided by the National Training Agency (NTA), with support from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (STTE).
• The **CEPEP** (Community-Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme) Company Limited (CCL) is now an incorporated entity under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. This initiative focuses on the environmental protection, enhancement and beautification in priority areas, whilst providing otherwise unemployable women and men with a source of income allowing them to earn a livelihood, and financially support their families, reducing their economic vulnerability. It seeks to address high levels of unemployment among the nations’ lower skilled and unemployed citizens.

• **The Unemployment Relief Programme (URP),** managed by the Ministry of Local Government, provides short-term employment to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. The programme is also designed to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of individuals and community groups, and to assist in the delivery of small-scale projects in various communities. The programme has three components: The Core Employment component provides short-term employment on a rotational basis to unemployed persons; the Women's Programme teaches women marketable skills while providing employment, using an "earn while you learn" approach and; the Special Projects Delivery component awards contracts for work in the community to small-scale contractors.

• **Daily Rated Employment:** All municipal corporations offer employment to members of the public on a daily-paid basis. Jobs include checkers, masons, craftsmen and other skilled and unskilled labourers.

• To promote gender equality in the world of work within the private sector, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago provides a $500,000 tax incentive to any private sector organization that establishes a childcare centre for their employees.

c) **Women’s equal representation in national parliaments**

• The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to establishing mechanisms to accelerate the achievement of gender equality in political participation and representation at all levels of the electoral process and women’s full participation on the basis of equality with men in all areas of public life including: governmental bodies; the judiciary; trade unions; the private sector; political parties; employers’ organizations; research and academic institutions; and national corporations.

Women are afforded equal opportunities to participate at all levels of national politics and have served at several positions in national leadership including political leaders and deputy political leaders of various political parties, deputy speaker of both Houses of Parliament and have also acted as President of the Republic.

**B. Challenges**

• Lack of implementation of policies to promote gender equality.
• Limited technical staff to facilitate projects poses a severe problem to the development of the gender equality.
• Development of laws and legal frameworks are time-consuming.
• There are continuing challenges in meeting the needs both of vulnerable groups and of the population at large. Income and wealth disparity remain largely unaffected by the Government’s redistributive policies and pockets of poverty endure, especially affecting women, youth and the elderly
• Limitations in human and financial resources as well as the availability of trained personnel to conduct gender and development work.
• Limited sectoral “buy-in” to affect a comprehensive programme of gender mainstreaming in governmental agencies. During the period 2004 to date, the Gender Affairs Division has worked relentlessly to mainstream gender in various sectors including in the health sector, in the area of sexual and reproductive health and in the calypso fraternity.
• National and regional research in gender and development issues on which to base programmes and policies to address gender inequality.
• A persistent lack of understanding of the relevance of gender concerns at the macro level and non-social levels of development. Macro-economic policy for instance, continues to negate gender realities, especially in the context of globalization and world trade agreement.
• Strong ideological positions in some quarters persist, contradicting the need for gender equity and equality initiatives. These include the issue of child marriage as it pertains to the standardization of the age of marriage prescribed in the various marriage acts of Trinidad and Tobago and the erroneous definition of construction of the definition for gender.

C. Major factors that causes setbacks in gender equality
• Crime impacts on domestic abuse and violence towards women and girls;
• Even though women achieve academically they are not occupying leadership positions especially in the area of the private sector;
• The norms in Trinidad and Tobago gives greater valuing of male privilege over girls and therefore they have greater access to resources – society typically values attributes considered to be male;
• Fragmented data (lack of disaggregated data) impedes measurement of progress. The scope of the problem posed by the systemic lack of reliable data hampers the depth of the analysis of development and growth and can impair efforts at development programming in Trinidad and Tobago.
• Challenges of men/boys based on notion of masculinity including but not limited to:

II. CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION
i. WOMEN AND POVERTY

The Government has established poverty reduction as one of its development priorities, as a prerequisite for economic and sustainable development. Poverty is a multi-faceted phenomenon, located at the nexus of other critical development challenges such as unemployment, violence and HIV/AIDS and which, as evidenced by data, has significant gender dimensions.

It is recognized that financial dependence on one’s spouse/partner contributes to the vulnerability of women and their offspring (particularly the girl child), to exploitation and gender-based violence. Within the context of poverty eradication, education and the empowerment and advancement of women, the Gender Affairs Division, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development continues several of its programmes, including the Women in Harmony Programme, which began in 2002. It was designed to address the problem of unemployment among women between the ages of twenty-six (26) and forty-five (45) who are single heads of household with low/ no skills, and low/ no income. The Programme consists of an intensive twelve week, full time training in two modules; Elderly Care or Agriculture/landscaping and Life Skills and is conducted in regions across Trinidad. For the period under 2012-2014 five hundred and ninety-one women have been empowered and became employable. To facilitate mothers of young children to participate in the programme child care services are offered free of charge at the training sites. The cost for these services is covered by the Government.

The Non-Traditional Skills Training Programme for Women delivers specialized skills training is a technical/vocational discipline to low-income women. The programme is approximately 350 hours conducted over a six-month period; training is part-time and is conducted three evening per week. Women between the ages of 18-55 years benefit from training provided and childcare services are provided to facilitate mothers during training. Over the past five years over three hundred women were beneficiaries of this programme, some of whom have established their own businesses.

The Poverty Reduction Programme (PRP) supports the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in formulating a National Poverty Reduction Strategy that is more responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable groups of society, and serves as a forerunner to the implementation of a decentralised system for the delivery of social services to communities. The Programmes include:

- The Micro Enterprise Loan (MEL) Facility, managed by the Ministry of the People and Social Development and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), offers assistance to under-privileged persons who wish to establish a small business but are unable to do so due to limited financial resources. This service is administered by various Community-Based Organisations in a professional, personalized and supportive atmosphere. Persons applying for this
facility are offered assistance in business plan development as well as training in entrepreneurial skills. A maximum loan of $10,000.00 is available. Person eligible for this grant include persons who are: 18 years or older; In receipt of public assistance or other forms of social support; Earning at subsistence level or minimum wage, or unemployed; Living within five miles of a community-based organisation offering this programme.

- **The Micro-Enterprise Training and Development Grant (METDG)** is offered to needy persons who are interested in undertaking a small business venture or skills training. This grant is managed by the Poverty Reduction Programme and is intended to assist in empowering and transforming the lives of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, allowing greater self-sufficiency and financial independence. An officer from the Ministry of the People and Social Development is assigned to work with the recipient of the grant to ensure the success of the business. The maximum amount of the grant is $5,000.00. The grant is paid directly to the supplier or suppliers of the goods or services required to start the business. This grant is available to: a needy person 18 years or over; A national of Trinidad and Tobago who is interested in undertaking a small business venture or skills training and is unable to bear the cost and; A person earning at subsistence level or at the minimum wage.

ii. **EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN**

In Trinidad and Tobago girls enjoy equal access to education. The government of Trinidad and Tobago provides free education for all boys and girls at the nursery school, primary and secondary levels of education. School attendance by children under the age of 16 years is legislated and mandatory. Additionally, qualifying citizens of Trinidad and Tobago may obtain financial assistance for tertiary-level education through the **Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses Programme (GATE)**. The GATE Programme funds 100% of tuition expenses for undergraduate students and up to 50% of tuition expenses, to a maximum of TT$20,000.00, for postgraduate students.

The Government has also instituted measure to ensure that education is accessible to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago including. Additional Support includes:

- The daily provision of breakfast and lunches at the nursery, primary and secondary school levels;
- The **Clothing Grant** which facilitates the purchase of school uniform for victims of natural disasters including fires and floods as well as necessitous persons;
- The **Education Grant** which assists in meeting a child’s maintenance costs for school including transportation and the purchase of school supplies;
• The **School Textbook Grant** which assists with the purchase of children’s text books and writing material for victims of natural disasters including fires and floods as well as necessitous persons; and

• **Free transportation on the public bus system.** All students in school uniform are allowed free passage on buses operated by the Public Transport Service Corporation. The Government also proposes to expand the Public Transport system dedicated to the education system particularly in remote areas.

The government of Trinidad and Tobago through its various ministries and agencies administer a number of training, financing and employment programmes which create job opportunities for women in the non-agricultural sector. These include:

• The Multi Skills Training Programme (MuST);
• The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP); SERVOL;
• The On the Job Training Programme (OJT);
• Women in Non-Traditional Skills Training; and
• Women in Harmony Elderly Care and Agriculture and Landscaping Programmes.

The MuST and Non-traditional skill Training programmes provide training in field traditionally dominated by men such as automotive repairs, air-conditioning and refrigeration and construction technologies. The on the job training programme affords young persons the opportunity to gain job experience thereby preparing them for gainful employment.

**Financial Assistance Programmes:**

The Government and the Tobago House of Assembly have made provisions for the support of Entrepreneurs in Trinidad and Tobago. Women desirous of engaging in business activities as well as those who have already established businesses can access financial support as well as capacity building initiatives through the Community Development Fund, NEDCO and the Tobago House of Assembly’s Enterprise Assistance Fund.

iii. **WOMEN AND HEALTH**

In Trinidad and Tobago women and girls have equal access to health services provided by the government. The government through the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development is currently in the process of constructing an “Institute of Healing” to provide care services to all particularly, women and girls. Family planning, sexual and reproductive health services are available at public health centres and hospitals at no cost. Primary care facilities include the Port of Spain General Hospital, Mt. Hope Women's Hospital, and San Fernando General Hospital.
The Government of Trinidad and Tobago through the Regional Health Authorities and the Tobago House of Assembly, operates a network of Health Centres throughout Trinidad and Tobago which attend to the basic health needs of citizens. This is part of the comprehensive Health Sector Reform Programme (HSRP) which decentralizes the delivery of health services. Additionally, rural women benefit from mobile health services provided by Non-governmental organisations such as the Trinidad and Tobago Family Planning Association and the Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society. Both organisations provide health services specific to women. The Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago (FPATT) provide sexual and reproductive health services inclusive of pap smear and pregnancy tests; and the Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society provides breast examinations and pap smears for women. FPATT receives an annual subvention from government to partially finance the delivery of their services. Additionally, FPATT has also partnered with the government to train health care professionals in the delivery of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.

To promote good nutrition among the population the Government has approved a National Breast Feeding Policy and a national media campaign on the importance of Breast Feeding. Two general hospitals were upgraded to baby-friendly status in keeping with international standards.

The Ministry of Gender Youth and Child Development, in partnership with the Child Welfare League provides funding and support to the Choices - Adolescent Mothers Programme Programme. This project specifically targets young mothers, pregnant teenagers and teenagers at risk. The programme provides preventative, remedial and developmental services through the establishment of community intervention centres. Services include: Day care services; Individual and group counselling; Skills training, literacy and academic courses; Health and nutrition information; Parenting courses; and Personal development training.

Trinidad and Tobago Midwives Association promotes public education midwifery and pre and post natal care. The Trinidad and Tobago Informative Breast Feeding promotes similar education and advocacy on breast feeding.

A national Workplace Policy on HIV was established to reduce discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS. A Policy on Mother to Child Prevention on the transmission of the virus was established in since 1999. Expectant mothers are voluntarily tested throughout Trinidad. Anti-retroviral drugs are made available free of charge to HIV positive mothers at public health institutions and there have been a dramatic decrease of mother to child transmissions within recent times.

The Prevention of Mother to Child (PMTC) Programme is provided by the Government, through the Ministry of Health provides free Anti-retroviral treatment to pregnant HIV positive women so as to minimize the transmission of the virus from mother to child during pregnancy or delivery. Mothers are also educated about the modes of HIV transmission for instance via breast feeding so as to reduce the possibility of transmission of HIV to the child. Pregnant women are encouraged to access HIV testing to determine their
status. HIV positive mothers are provided with formula for their infants free of charge for the first two (2) years of the infant’s life.

The Queen's Park Counselling Centre and Clinic (QPCC&C) provides health care and counselling to clients with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and diseases. Services provided include: Clinic Care; Counselling; Blood Testing for STIs / HIV/AIDS; Treatment for STIs; Referrals for further care and/or treatment of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. These services can be accessed by a Walk in service, free of charge to all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Anti-Retroviral Treatment Programme provides anti-retroviral therapy at a number of public health facilities for HIV/AIDS patients at Tobago Regional Health Authority, San Fernando General Hospital and the Medical Research Foundation. The programme is available to persons who are infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. This is a 'walk in' service accessible via several Public Health Facilities and Hospitals.

iv. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The Government works closely with civil society and private sector organizations, as well as international agencies to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence and to provide a number of these support mechanisms for victims and survivors at no cost. The government provides support services such as: free legal aid and advice; housing assistance; and free health care services which include the administering of HIV prophylaxis and emergency contraception in instances of sexual violence in Trinidad and Tobago's.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago ratified and enacted into law of international legal instruments, American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belem do Para and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women a broad spectrum of measures, including legislation to prevent gender based-violence, punish those who commit, such crimes, and provide remedies for those affected. Measures to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women are being implemented these include:

Policy Frameworks and Resources to Address Violence against Women

Trinidad and Tobago has implemented a number of successful projects with regard to violence against women. These include:

• The establishment of a Domestic Violence Unit. This unit is responsible for the administration of the Domestic Violence Hotline. The National Domestic Violence Hotline (800-SAVE) is a toll free service operated 24 hour a day seven (7) days per week (inclusive of public holidays). It provides counselling, listening and referral service for victims and perpetrators of DV;
• The establishment of the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch (CAPA), Trinidad and Tobago Police Service as a data processing unit that analyses information from crime reports and other sources to better inform the crime deterrence, disruption and detection efforts of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and by extension the Government of Trinidad and Tobago;

• Training of police in Domestic Violence Response. A comprehensive manual has been produced and is used to guide police officers in the management of Domestic violence reports;

• Training of support services workers as well as community leaders;

• Standardization of data collection on domestic violence; the establishment of a Central Registry for collection of data on domestic violence. The Central Registry for Domestic Violence (has been pilot tested and is being established). Once established the Registry will:
  o assist in obtaining the profiles of victims and perpetrators
  o allow for a deeper understanding of the incidence of DV
  o Identify the groups at risk
  o Monitor the effectiveness of violence prevention and intervention activities.

• Institutional strengthening of NGO’s; and

• The establishment of a National Task Force to address Child Protection and Domestic Violence.

Legislation:
• Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2000
  o Increased penalties
  o Marital rape (rape and sexual violence within marriage are now crimes)
  o Anonymity of victim
  o Mandatory reporting of sexual abuse of minors
  o Notification requirements for sex offenders

• Children Act, 2012
  o Increases the protection of children against sexual conduct.
  o Criminalizes a wider range of sexual conduct against children such as:
    ▪ Pornography
    ▪ Sexual grooming
    ▪ Child prostitution dealt with more adequately

• Trafficking in Persons Act, 2011: Counter-Trafficking Unit (CTU) established
• Domestic Violence Act, 1999
  o Enabled a Protection Order to be granted in the Magistrate’s Court
- Relatively cheap and accessible
- Improved definitions: Domestic Violence (physical, sexual, emotional or psychological and financial abuse)
- Categories of persons protected expanded (visiting relationships of over 12 months)
- Financial compensation for monetary loss (loss of earnings etc.)
- Interim maintenance for applicant and child
- Improved counselling provisions

**Legal Aid and Advice Act, 1976**
- Amended in 1999 to introduce an emergency certificate in respect of domestic violence applications.

**Policy:**
- Child Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Draft National Policy on Gender Equality and Development. (Awaiting Cabinet approval).

**Models of care to prevent and address Violence Against Women and Girls**

Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development (MGYCD):
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline (800-SAVE):**
  - toll free service is operated 24 hour a day seven days per week (inclusive of public holidays). It provides listening and referral service for victims and perpetrators of DV.

- The Gender Affairs Division continues to conduct training and public education to reduce the incidence of gender based violence. A large volume of publications are produced and distributed with the aim at public information and sensitization.

- **National Family Services**
  - utilizes remedial, preventative, developmental and supportive approaches to address “inter alia” issues relating to the child and family such as drug abuse, crime, domestic/family violence relationship issues, and sexual abuse and to investigate cases, which are referred from the Courts.
  - Provides counselling and psychological care for victims/survivor of violence and other issues
  - Parenting Policy (Work in Progress)
  - National Parenting Unit- Parenting Programmes

- **Socio-economic empowerment programmes for women:** increase the employment opportunities towards reducing the level of poverty and thus vulnerability to gender based violence and exploitation.
  - Women in Harmony Programme
  - Non Traditional Skills Training Programme for Women
• Gender Mainstreaming
  o Public Awareness and Sensitization programmes (ongoing)
  o Training workshops (key stakeholders)
  o Gender Responsive Budgeting
  o Media Outreach
  o Development and dissemination of materials on GBV
  o Community Outreach programmes (caravans and workshops)
  o Commemoration of International Observances: (International Women’s Day
    (IWD) March 8th, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against
    Women).
  o Collaboration with Cultural Fraternity e.g Trinbago Unified Calypsonians’
    Organisation (TUCO)

Family Court under the Judiciary
• Offers a range of related support services such as Mediation and Social Services
  including psychological care and counseling for victims/survivors and perpetrators of
  violence.

Ministry of Health and other health providers
• The Government of Trinidad and Tobago through the Regional Health Authorities
  and the Tobago House of Assembly, operates a network of Health Centres throughout
  Trinidad and Tobago which attend to the basic health needs of citizens.
  
  o The Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (CDAP) provides all
    citizens, regardless of age with free prescription drugs and other pharmaceutical
    items to combat chronic diseases including diabetes, asthma, cardiac disease,
    arthritis, glaucoma, mental depression, high blood pressure, epilepsy, and
    thyroid disease.
  
  o Girls in rural areas benefit from mobile health services provided by Non-
    governmental organisations such as the Trinidad and Tobago Family Planning
    Association and the Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society. Both organisations
    provide health services specific to women. The Family Planning Association of
    Trinidad and Tobago provides sexual and reproductive health services and the
    Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society provides breast examinations and pap
    smears for women.
  
  o the Ministry of Health and its network of health facilities seeks to protect
    victims of sexual violence/ rape from HIV transmission and pregnancies as a
    result of such violence through the provision of free health service
  
  o The Prevention of Mother to Child (PMTC) Programme: The
    Government, through the Ministry of Health provides free Anti-retroviral
treatment to pregnant HIV positive women so as to minimize the transmission of the virus from mother to child during pregnancy or delivery. Mothers are also educated about the modes of HIV transmission for instance via breastfeeding so as to reduce the possibility of transmission of HIV to the child. Pregnant women are encouraged to access HIV testing to determine their status.

Legal Aid Department
- Free legal advice is available to victims and perpetrators of violence among other issues through the Legal Aid Department, and the Ombudsman. The services of the ombudsman are made available in rural communities on specific days of the month. Additionally, citizens are afforded access to the court and other social interventions.

Housing Assistance
- Victims/survivors are eligible for housing assistance including public housing and rental assistance.
- Comprehensive Models of care to prevent and address GBV and Sexual Violence.

Ministry of National Security
- Victims and Witness Support Unit, of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service: This unit provides services and support to victims and witnesses of crime. The provide help for victims of:
  - Sexual violence
  - Domestic violence
  - Child Abuse
  - Stalking and Harassment

Institute of Gender and Development Studies, UWI St. Augustine
- The Break the Silence Campaign
  - Focuses on Child Sexual Abuse and Incest
  - The symbol — a blue teddy bear with a plaster on its heart
  - Comprehensive Models of care to prevent and address GBV and Sexual Violence

Police Support
The Domestic Violence Investigative and Procedural Manual provides information for police officers to guide them in supporting the victim through: the investigative process; and the preparation for and during the trial phase. Officers are also equipped with information about services available to victims in their communities and are guided not only to give this information to the victim, but to assist by making the initial contact with these organizations.

In 2007, Cabinet approved the establishment of Victim Support Unit within the Police Service. This Unit is staffed by approximately twenty persons inclusive of Victim and Witness Support Officers. Two of the functions of this officer are to “provide emotional support and advice to victims and witnesses of crime before, during and after a trial” and to “provide victims with early assistance in order to prevent repeat victimization”.

24
**Families in Action:** A non-governmental organization, Families in Action provides counselling, assessment and referral services for victims of sexual violence. It also manages a helpline which offers 24-hour emergency/crisis intervention. Other services of the organization include community outreach programmes, group support and workplace support.

**Trinidad and Tobago Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CADV)**
The Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a Non-governmental Organisation with the capacity to provide both counselling services and Shelter to victims of sexual violence.

**ChildLine** a project of the Trinidad and Tobago Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a proactive response to the needs of children and young persons. It is a free, confidential telephone hotline for children and young persons in trouble or danger or who simply need someone to talk to. **ChildLine** responds to calls from anywhere in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Rape Crisis Society**
The Rape Crisis Society is a Non-Governmental Organisation which provides continued counselling for victims and their families. Victims also engage in group therapy. Counsellors assess victims and refer them for relevant services for instance, HIV testing and counselling or to shelters.

**Civil Society (NGOs, CBOs, FBOs) lead initiatives to address GBV and SV**
- Provide support services (inclusive of counseling and care)
- Conducts training and sensitization workshops
- In recent times focus has expanded to include prevention.
- Domestic Violence Clinic (operated by ASPIRE)
- Safe Homes/Shelter to victims of domestic violence etc.
  - managed by civil society, aided by Government through subventions and grants
  - provides safe haven and emergency refuge for victims of violence and their children (free of charge).

v. **WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT**
Trinidad and Tobago comes from a region that is not affected by situations of armed conflict.

vi. **WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY**
Through legislations such as the Equal Opportunity Act both women and men enjoy equal access to employment and appropriate working conditions. It also supports in the elimination of occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination. Women have the ability to own land and have equal rights to inherit property and engage in business transactions regardless of marital status.

Employment among women has grown. The Labour Force of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago registered 635,100 persons at the end of the 1st Quarter 2013 (Table 1 refers). This
represented an increase of 5,400 or 0.8% when compared to the 4th Quarter 2012. From a gender perspective, this increase in the Labour Force was reflected among the males which rose by 400 or 0.1% and the females which increase by 5,000 or 1.9% when compared with the previous quarter. The overall Labour Force Participation Rate for Trinidad and Tobago rose from 61.7% in the 4th quarter 2012 to 61.9% in the 1st quarter 2013. The Labour Force Participation Rate for males fell to 72.4% while females increase to 51.5%. When compared with the corresponding quarter of 2012, the overall Labour Force Participation Rate increased from 61.8% to 61.9%. 1st quarter, 2013 showed an increase of 11,500 or 1.9% in the number of persons with jobs, in the quarter under review. From a gender perspective, the number of employed males increased by 4,000 or 1.1% while the females increased by 7,500 or 3%. When compared to the corresponding quarter a year earlier, the data showed a significant increase of 22,100 or 3.7% in the total number of employed persons in Trinidad and Tobago.

vii. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

Women have the capacity to access managerial and political positions throughout Trinidad and Tobago. There have been increases in women’s overall participation in national leadership and decision-making. In the past, women have acted as Prime Minister and President of the Republic on several occasions and a woman has also held the position of President of the Senate. In 2010, Trinidad and Tobago welcomed its first Female Prime Minister Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar who currently leads the Republic. Ms. Marlene Coudray (Alderman) stood as the only female mayor of Trinidad and Tobago, from 2010 to June 2012. She was one of five mayors.

Based on results of the 2013 Local Government Election in Trinidad and Tobago, women held 65 out of 191 of local government positions which represent 34%. This is a marginal increase from 2010 election where women held 54 out of 164 or 33.3 percent of the positions. In 2014, in the House of Representatives, females account for 29% (12 female out of 41 members of the house of representative) and 19% (6 female out of 31 senators) in the Senate. Women in Trinidad and Tobago are afforded a number of opportunities to participate in decision-making. These include:

- Rural women of Trinidad and Tobago enjoy membership in the Country Women of the World through the membership of the Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women’s Institute;
- Public consultation;
- There exists within Trinidad and Tobago the Network of NGOs for the Advancement of Women. They act as an advocate and support for all women’s organizations in the country inclusive of rural women and is committed to the aims of UN Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- The Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP) is the Trinidad & Tobago chapter of CANROP. The main goals of the Network are to provide rural women with access to credit for micro-business projects, to contribute to government policies that are sensitive to and supportive of the special needs of rural women producers, to contribute to the elimination of the gender bias in the
ownership of land, ensuring that women have the same opportunities as men to own property. The Network also seeks to provide marketing support for rural women producers and to offer training, research, technical support and outreach services.

viii. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

In Trinidad and Tobago the Gender Affairs Division, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development serve as the national focal point for the promotion of gender equality and equity. Accordingly, the MGYCD works collaboratively with state agencies, academia and civil society to promote active and visible mainstreaming of gender perspective in policies programmes and projects. The Gender Affairs Division is charged with the responsibility for the advancement of women in Trinidad and Tobago. Over the past decade the Division has vigorously promoted gender mainstreaming in all government ministries and agencies; facilitates capacity building activities for NGOs; conducts programmes for the empowerment of women and the empowerment of men; and engages in activities to build gender awareness and sensitivity among the population. The Ministry in partnership with other critical stakeholders have embarked on a Gender Responsive Budget initiative to address gender gaps in sectors and local government policies, plans and budgets.

ix. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

The individual rights of all citizens, men and women and boys and girls, resident or alien within the jurisdiction of Trinidad and Tobago, are protected under the Constitution. The Constitution expressly declares that the fundamental rights which it sets out exist without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex.

An individual, whose Constitutional Rights are violated or are likely to be violated by any branch of Government, or any servant or agent of the State, may apply to the High Court for redress. The High Court has original jurisdiction in Constitutional matters, with provision to appeal to the Court of Appeal and further right of appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

In addition to the Constitution, other legislation provides the general legal framework for the protection of human rights. Those specifically related to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women include inter alia, the Domestic Violence Act, No. 27 of 1999; the Sexual Offences Act, 1986 and its amendment Act, No. 31 of 2000; the Legal Aid and Advice Act, Chap 7:07 and its amendment Act, No. 18 of 1999; the Public Assistance Regulations, 1997; the Maternity Protection Act, No. 4 of 1998; the Cohabitation Relationships Act, No. 30 of 1998; the Attachment of Earnings (Maintenance) Act, No. 14 of 1995; the Attachment of Earnings (Maintenance) Amendment Act, No.14 0f 1998, the Administration of Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, No.28 of 1996, the Counting of Unremunerated Work Act, No. 29 of 1996; the Minimum Wage (No.2) Order of 1998; the

The Judicial Review Act, No. 60 of 2000 provides remedy for the violation of Human Rights if no alternatives remedies are available and if a person’s rights have been violated by a body or authority exercising function in the nature of public law. The High Court must approve ex parte leave before proceedings are brought under Judicial Review. The High Court can then conduct a review of the decision or conduct of the public authority to determine whether or not the authority acted within its powers and in accordance with the principles of natural justice. The Court can award damages on an application of Judicial Review, if such damages would have been recoverable in an ordinary action begun by writ or Constitutional motion.

The Ombudsman Act, No. 23 of 1977 provides an administrative authority with jurisdiction for investigating alleged infringements of human rights. The Ombudsman investigates complaints made by individuals concerning administrative acts or decisions of Government agencies. The Ombudsman holds office for a period of five years and is appointed by the President acting in consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The Ombudsman may refer matters to the authority competent to take disciplinary action or other proceedings where there is evidence of any breach of duty, misconduct or criminal offence on the part of any officer or employee of any government department or authority.

The Police Complaints Authority is a statutory authority set up in 1995 consisting of five members that are appointed by the President. The Complaints Authority receives complaints on the conduct of any Police Officer and monitors the investigation of complaints by the Complaints Division. The Complaints Division, which is set up by the Commissioner of Police and staffed by Police Officers, investigates and resolves bona fide complaints by way of counselling, instituting disciplinary proceedings or by criminal Court action.

x. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

The Gender Affairs Division, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development works with the media to promote gender awareness in Trinidad and Tobago. In 2007, the Division hosted the women in the Media with the aim of engaging them on Gender and Development issues in Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, as part of its public education strategy, the Division held a panel discussion with women in the media to discuss their achievements and the challenges which they continue to face. In Trinidad women have held and continue to hold leadership positions in media. Currently, 2014, the CEO of Trinidad Guardian Media Limited is Ms. Lisa Agard. Likewise, Ms. Maria Cooper is the CEO of Trinidad and Tobago Newsday Newspapers. Additionally, Ms. Lisa Wickham is the CEO at Imagine Media International Ltd, while Ms. Samantha John is the news anchor for CNEWs.

Extensive public sensitization and education on gender and development continued to promote gender equity and equality. Gender Training Workshops are offered consistently to agencies such as Schools, the Armed Forces, Government Ministries, NGOs
and Community Based Organizations, Gender Focal Points within their Ministries, and other key agencies.

xi. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the important role women and men play in the use and management of natural resources particularly in agriculture. The intestacy laws of Trinidad and Tobago, recognizes women and men equally, allowing women access to lands in spite of gender biases. Additionally, the Government has set up the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) and the National Entrepreneurial Development Company (NEDCO) from which women in agriculture or those involved in agro processing may access credit at affordable rates.

The Network of Rural Women Producers provides an ongoing forum for women from various communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago, involved in agriculture and environmental projects to collectively deal with the issues confronting them. The Network has participated in various local, regional and international fora aimed at strengthening that technical skills and marketability.

The GAD gives annual support to the celebration of world food and environment days to promote public education and sensitization on the gender concerns associated with food production and environmental development and protection.

The Community Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP). CEPEP operates within communities and promotes entrepreneurial development, providing employment for semi-skilled and unskilled persons in environmental protection and beautification. This programme targets person at least eighteen (18) years of age, unemployed, unskilled or semi-skilled, and single parents. Over fifty percent (50 %) of the employees are female. The programme aims to:

- Provide sustainable employment for semi-skilled and unskilled persons in every community throughout Trinidad and Tobago.
- Protect and enhance the physical environment in all local communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago.
- Empower communities to improve and maintain the physical conditions of their respective local environments.
- Promote the establishment and development of small enterprise in local communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

xii. THE GIRL-CHILD

The status of girls in Trinidad and Tobago compares favourably with many middle income developing nations. The equal rights of men and women are guaranteed under the 1976 Republican Constitution. Girls in Trinidad and Tobago including those in rural communities enjoy equal access to Health, Education and other services. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago through its extensive network of primary and secondary schools as well as through the
network of primary health care facilities and outreach health programmes provides for the needs of girls.

The Government provides a subsidy in the form of a tax-break for companies providing child care, including after school initiatives, for their employee’s children. Even before this provision, the British Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago (BPTT) had established a Home Centre for its employee’s children. The Association of Female Executives of Trinidad and Tobago (AFETT) also hosted a forum to encourage companies to establish employee’s child care facilities. The Ministry of the Attorney General features as a public sector agency with after school facilities, however, public sector agencies, including the GAD, generally provide a secure environment for employee’s children in the work place after school.

Promote the girl-child’s awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life

A number of organisations in Trinidad and Tobago promote the social, economic and political participation of girls. These include but are not limited to:

- The Girl Guide Movement
- The Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force. This is a voluntary youth organisation that acquires its membership form Secondary Schools. The training of Cadets is patterned after basic military practice and discipline and the Cadet Force is seen as a base for sourcing recruits for the Protective Services and the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force.
- The Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society and Junior Red Cross
- The 4H Club
- The St. John’s Ambulance Brigade
- The Trinidad Youth Council which comprises the network of youth organisations in Trinidad
- The Tobago Youth Council which comprises the network of youth organisations in Tobago
- The Youth Arms of Political Parties through which some of Trinidad and Tobago’s female elected officials begun their political careers
- Youth Programmes administered by financial institutions including the Republic Bank Limited’s Youth Link Programme and the RBTT Bank’s Young Leaders Programme
- The Prime Minister’s Best Village Competition
- The Junior Achievers Programme which seeks to foster young entrepreneurs
- The Junior Cooperative Society which seeks to foster good saving habits at the primary school level

PART III DATA AND STATISTICS

a) Has a core set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality been established? If so, please provide the indicators in an annex.
Under the auspices of the United Nation Development Programme, Trinidad and Tobago has a set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality.

**Human Development Report 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Gender Inequality Index</th>
<th>Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)</th>
<th>Seats in national Parliament</th>
<th>Population with at least secondary education (% ages 25 and older)</th>
<th>Labour force participation rate (% ages 15 and older)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Data is collected from various organisations throughout Trinidad and Tobago. They include:
  - Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development;
  - Crime And Problem Analysis Branch, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service;
  - Domestic Violence Unit, Gender Affairs Division, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development;
  - Regional Authorities, Ministry of Health
  - Family Court, Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago
  - Rape Crisis Society of Trinidad and Tobago
  - Families in Action,
  - Coalition Against Domestic Violence,
  - Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago
  - Association of Female Executives in Trinidad and Tobago.

The data collected from official national sources through the questionnaire are supplemented with information from official secondary data sources. The secondary sources cover: official country data from websites of national ministries, national publications and related country data reported by various international organizations.

b) Has data collection and compilation on the minimum set of gender indicators begun which was agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013.
o Data collection and compilation on the minimum set of gender indicators have not begun.

c) Has data collection and compilation on the nine indicators on violence against women, as agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013, begun?
  o The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development is in the process of establishing a Central Registry on Domestic Violence in Trinidad and Tobago. This registry will provide data and statistics on domestic violence across Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, the Ministry is also in the process of establishing a National Action Plan on ending Gender Based Violence in collaboration with the UN Women funded project.

d) Collection of data on the situation of particular groups of women, such as rural women, older women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, women living with HIV and AIDS, or other groups?
  o Data is collected from hospitals and health clinics throughout Trinidad and Tobago.
  o Civil Society Organization also collects data on a range of issues.

PART IV KEY EMERGING PRIORITIES
a) What are the key priorities for action over the next three or five years for accelerating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and subsequent intergovernmental agreements for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the national level?

KEY PRIORITIES FOR ACTION OVER THE NEXT THREE OR FIVE YEARS:
  o Violence Against Women and Girls
  o Legislative Review and Reform
b) What are your country’s priorities and recommendations to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women in the current discussions on Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda?

COUNTRY’S PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Violence Against Women and Girls:
   i. Change in cultural and social attitude, norm and values of men, women boys and girls.
   ii. Strengthening of the Domestic Violence Unit, in the Gender Affairs Division, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development. The DV Unit a ministerial unit which provides a Domestic Violence Hotline.
   iii. Review of legislation that treats with issues of Domestic Violence. Trinidad and Tobago has begun the Review of the Domestic Violence Act in July 2014.
   iv. Strengthening of support service and access to justice by victims of violence.
   v. Strengthening the service delivery and building capacities with agencies/organization that works in the area of GBV.
   vi. Rehabilitation for perpetrators
   vii. Review of programmatic actions aimed at prevention and response
   viii. Establishment of a Central Registry on Domestic Violence
   ix. Establishment of Women City Centre Project in Trinidad and Tobago (this project is a collaboration between the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development and Inter American Development Bank (IADB))

b. Legislative Review and Reform:
   i. Reviewing and amending legislation in order to ensure that all legislation and public documents are gender-sensitive and also protect and ensure the rights of women and men in number of areas such as domestic violence and abuse.

c. Strengthening data collection and analysis mechanisms:
   i. Establishment of a Central Registry on Domestic Violence
ii. Strengthen the capacity of governmental and non governmental agencies in the area of data collection and analysis.

d. Promotion of Gender Equality and Equity
i. Implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting and Capacity building;
ii. Continued gender mainstreaming by promoting greater awareness of gender issues by shaping public policy and implementing practices which are gender-sensitive;
iii. Developing specific programmes and projects such as training and employment initiatives tailored to men and women in order to address issues peculiar to each sex.
iv. Finalization of the National Policy on Gender and Development (currently before cabinet awaiting approval).

REMAINING CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS AND FUTURE PLANS AND INITIATIVES

Several challenges and constraints remain. These include:

• Finalization of the National Policy on Gender and Development to systematically advance gender equity in the work of government and the wider society.

• Improvement in human and financial resources. There is the need for the Ministry to fill key permanent positions at the managerial level that will result in enhanced training, research, programmes and policy analysis. Efforts to address this have commenced with the posting of advertisements in the newspaper to fill existing vacancies.

• Implementation of a comprehensive plan and programme of gender mainstreaming in governmental agencies that has been initiated and will continue through the strengthening of Focal Points. This will promote greater levels of understanding of the relevance of gender concerns at all levels of development, and in all sectors of government.

• Engage in rigorous public education and sensitization programmes to promote wider understanding of gender and development issues, and specifically a major public education campaign on gender based.

• Advance the legislative agenda in partnership with the relevant government agency, including Sexual Harassment, Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value, and Paternity Leave, based on mandates emerging from the Draft National Policy on Gender and Development.
• Increased outreach, collaboration and partnership with NGOs, CBOs and other actors toward the further promotion of gender equality and equity in Trinidad and Tobago.

Gender Affairs Division
Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development
September 2014