

Distr.: General
7 December 2017

Original: English

ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION

**Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women**

**Combined fourth to seventh periodic reports
submitted by Antigua and Barbuda under article
18 of the Convention, due in 2014***

[Date received: 6 December 2017]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

Acknowledgements

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda wishes to acknowledge its indebtedness to a number of individuals and agencies that have contributed in no small measure to the completion of this report. Among these are:

Ministry of Agriculture

Legal Affairs

Land Registry

Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda

Mount St. John Medical Centre

Social Service Advocate; Koren Norton

Board of Education

Citizens' welfare Division

Establishment Department

Health Information Unit

Ministry of Labour

AIDS Secretariat

Barbuda Council

Antigua and Barbuda Planned Parenthood

There are many non-government organizations who attended consultations and provided very useful information. Among these are: -

Antigua and Barbuda Bar Association

Antigua Commercial Bank

Women's Groups

Civil Society Groups

Faith-based Organizations

The work of some of these organizations is mentioned in the text.

A special thanks is also extended to the Acting Executive Director and Staff of the Directorate of Gender Affairs for their leadership in guiding this project from start to finish.

Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|----------|---|
| ABDB | Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank |
| ABICE | Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education |
| ABHTI | Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute |
| ABIIT | Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology |
| ASC | Antigua State College |
| DYA | Department of Youth Affairs |
| CAPE | Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community |
| CDB | Caribbean Development Bank |
| CEE | Common Entrance Examination |
| CFGC | Child and Family Guidance Centre |
| CIM | Inter-American Commission of Women |
| CPA | Childcare Protection Agency |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| CCOPE | Collaborative Committee for the Promotion of Emotional Health in Children |
| CSEC | Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate |
| CWD | Citizens' Welfare Division of the Ministry of Social Transformation |
| CXC | Caribbean Examinations Council |
| CYP | Commonwealth Youth Programme |
| DARE | Drug Abuse Resistance Education |
| DoGA | Directorate of Gender Affairs |
| GARD | Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Center |
| HFLE | Health and Family Life Education |
| HIV/AIDS | Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| ICPD | International Conference on Population and Development |
| IMR | Mortality Rate |
| MMR | Maternal Mortality Rate |
| MSJMC | Mount St. John Medical Centre |
| NCPP | National Childcare Protection Policy |
| NCPRC | National Child Protection Reform Committee |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NHRI | National Human Rights Institute |
| NYP | National Youth Policy |
| NSMP | National School Meals Programme |
| OECS | Organization of Eastern Caribbean States |

| | |
|--------|--|
| ONDCP | Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy |
| PANCAP | Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/Aids |
| PBP | The Peoples' Benefit Programme |
| PDV | Caribe Antigua and Barbuda Ltd. |
| PEPFAR | The United States President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief |
| RPFAB | Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda |
| SAPD | Substance Abuse Prevention Division |
| SIRMZP | Sustainable Island Resource Management Zoning Plan for Antigua and Barbuda |
| SMEs | Small and Medium Enterprises |
| SUGP | Schools' Uniform Grant Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | The United Nations Children's Fund |
| USE | Universal Secondary Education |
| UWI | University of the West Indies |

Introduction

1. The nation of Antigua and Barbuda ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women on 3rd May 1989. It completed a Consolidated Report (Initial, Second and Third Periodic Reports) in 1995, which was presented at the 17th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1997. Following this, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda signed the Optional Protocol in April 2006 with no reservations.

2. This present consolidated report (4th, 5th, 6th and 7th periodic reports) will not repeat the general information on the political, economic and social structures of Antigua and Barbuda discussed in the previous consolidated report. Rather, it will focus on pertinent developments that have occurred in the ensuing 20-year period, 1995-2015. In its discussions, this report will also take into consideration, the observations and recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee (See ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA /CEDAW A/52/38/Rev.1 (1997)).

3. Since the last report of 1995, the State Party has brought into being new laws, policies and measures that have either focused specifically on gender relations or have incorporated gender concerns in their mandates. Several civil society organizations (CSOs) have also been founded which address pertinent issues that affect women. These developments have greatly enhanced the status of women and the elimination of some forms of discrimination against them. The most significant ones will be discussed under the appropriate headings in subsequent sections of this report but the majority of them are noted here in this introduction.

4. Laws, Policies and Reports

- Sexual Offences Act, 1995
- Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act, 1999 and Domestic Violence Act, 2015
- OECS Family Law and Domestic Violence Reform Initiative (2001)
- Childcare and Protection Act, 2003
- Education Act, 2008
- Revised Domestic Violence Act, 2015
- Maintenance of and Access to Children Act, 2008
- Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act, 2010
- National Policy on Health and Family Life Education (2010)
- National Report of Antigua and Barbuda: Situational Analysis of Sexuality Education, 2010
- CDB Country Gender Assessment - Antigua and Barbuda (2014)
- Antigua and Barbuda National Review of the Beijing Platform for Action + 20 (2015)
- The National Strategic Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence (2013-2018)
- Review of Legislation and Policies on Gender-based and Sexual Violence: Antigua and Barbuda (2015)

| <i>New Programmes</i> | | <i>New Organizations</i> | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Women's Political Participation: Training in Governance and Democracy (2002) | 1 | POWA - Professional Organization of Women in Antigua (1997) |
| 2 | School Uniform Grant Programme (2004) | 2 | Health, Hope and HIV Network (1999) |
| 3 | National School Meals Programme (2008) | 3 | WAR - Women Against Rape (2006) |
| 4 | The Senior Citizens' Utility Subsidy (2008) | 4 | CIWIL - Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (2008) |
| 5 | The People's Benefit Programme (2009) | 5 | Together We Must (2009) |
| 6 | Sexual Offences Unit (2008) | 6 | NCPRC - National Child Protection Reform Committee (2009) |
| 7 | Sexual Assault Referral Centre (2010) | 7 | Trafficking in Persons Prevention Committee (2010) |
| 8 | The Training of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (2010) | 8 | Women of Esteem (2011) |
| 9 | UNICEF's Break the Silence Project (2013) | 9 | Walking into Walls (2012) |
| 10 | UN Trust Fund Project to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls (April, 2015) | 10 | Crisis Centre Advisory Committee (2015) |
| 11 | Establishment of a Crisis Centre (in progress to be completed early in 2016) | 11 | Intersect (2015) |

5. As part of the process of compiling the required information for this report, the Directorate of Gender Affairs (DOGA) established a committee, which was comprised of representatives from key government ministries, organizations and NGOs. This committee met regularly to discuss the progress of the report. In addition, the Directorate hosted a number of national consultations, which started in July 2007 through to 2016 that sought to advise the public and key stakeholders about the CEDAW Convention. Through this, the Directorate was able to receive further support in gathering information and statistics.

Country profile: Selected demographic indicators

6. Vital health statistics pertaining specifically to women will be discussed later in this report under Article 12 - Health of Women.

Population (Estimated Residents)

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 2011 census | Total 85,567 | Females 44,581 | Males 40,986 |
| 2001 census | Total 76,886 | Females 40,777 | Males 36,109 |
| 1991 census | Total 62,770 | Females 32,767 | Males 30,003 |

Population growth rate

| | |
|------|------------------------|
| 2014 | Approx. 1.25 per annum |
| 2000 | Approx. 1.30 per annum |

Life Expectancy Rate

| | | |
|------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 2014 | Females 78.30 years | Males 74.04 years |
|------|---------------------|-------------------|

2001 Females 73.14 years Males 68.50 years

1991 Females 73.00 years Males 70.00 years

Crude Birth Rate (live births per 1,000 inhabitants)

2014 15.94

2011 16.19

2000 14.04

1991 19.90

Crude Death Rate (per 1,000 inhabitants)

2014 5.70

2000 4.45

1990 6.50

Infant Mortality Rate

2014 13.29

2011 17.00

2009 15.67

1999 17.00

Maternal Mortality Rate (per 10,000 births)

2014 0.00

2011 0.00

2010 0.81

2009 1.42

2000 0.00

Total Fertility Rate

7. In 2014, it was 2.03 approx. per woman.

Immunization Record

8. For the last two decades or more, almost 100% of children living in Antigua and Barbuda are immunized against childhood diseases.

Access to Clean Water

9. According to the 2011 census, 91.4% of the population (both rural and urban) has access to clean drinking water. In 1999, access was 91%.

Access to Adequate Sanitary Facilities

10. According to the 2011 census, 99.6% of the population (both rural and urban) has access to adequate sanitary facilities.

Ownership of Mobile Phones

11. According to the 2011 census, 83.46 % of households own at least one mobile phone.

Article 1: Definition of discrimination against women

12. The definition of discrimination in the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda is not incompatible with the definition in CEDAW. However, it is not as broadly interpreted to encompass all of the facets of the CEDAW definition. Protection from gender discrimination is couched in a broader framework of a general anti-discrimination clause in the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda. The Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda makes provisions for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of all individuals. Thus, the Constitution guarantees women the full exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. Women as well as men can apply for legal aid in claiming cases as set out in the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda.

13. Section 14 of the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed and sex. This means that where a measure may not be discriminatory on its face, but affords less favourable treatment to someone or a group of persons in its application, then that, too, is discriminatory.

14. In 1999, the State Party established a Constitution Reform Committee. The Directorate of Gender Affairs (DOGA) consulted widely with women's groups and women's organisations and made a submission to the Committee on the issue of incorporating CEDAW's definition of discrimination against women into the Constitution. However, no Constitutional changes have been made to date.

15. There are no specific laws that define discrimination against women in particular, but it is worth noting here the provision in the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code Section E8(1) that makes it a criminal offence to accord women less favourable remuneration and other working conditions than men on account of their sex. The law states, "No woman shall, merely by reason of her sex, be employed under terms of employment less favourable than that enjoyed by male workers employed in the same occupation and by the same employer"...The offence is punishable on summary conviction with a fine of \$1,000.00 E.C. Furthermore, the employer may be mandated to pay the employee a sum of money to the extent that she has been underpaid. That order has the status of a judgment debt and can be enforced as such.

16. It must be pointed out as well that the legal definition of discrimination in the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda does not include gender-based violence against women. As is the case the world over, most of the victims of domestic violence are women and children. However, legislation dealing specifically with the troubling issue of domestic violence, the Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act, was passed in 1999 and a subsequent act, the Domestic Violence Act was passed in 2015.

17. The Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act of 1999 defines domestic violence as:

"Any act of violence whether physical or verbal abuse perpetrated by a member of a household upon a member of the same household which causes or is likely to cause physical, mental or emotional injury or harm to the abused party or any other member of the household" (p.3)

18. According to the Act of 1999, a person who has been abused by another person in the same household can apply to the magistrate's court for a protection order, an occupation order, a tenancy order and other ancillary relief. Penalties may be applied (both monetary and custodial) if protection orders are contravened. If she wishes to pursue legal action, an aggrieved woman can obtain free or subsidized legal representation from the Legal Aid Clinic in the Ministry of Legal Affairs. One critical provision in the law is the guarantee of the anonymity of the parties. The general public is excluded from the court proceedings and domestic violence cases cannot be reported on in the media. However, the author of the "Review of Legislation and Policies on Gender-based and Sexual Violence: Antigua and Barbuda pointed out one of the serious limitations of the act:

"The Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act 1999 does not establish any forms of restitution for victims, beyond the protection of their rights to maintain

occupancy or tenancy, which are issued at the discretion of the courts". (Huggins, 2016: 31)

19. The Domestic Violence Act of 2015 sought to improve on the previous act by addressing several of its limited provisions. One the most important improvements in the 2015 Act is the expansion of the definition of the term, "domestic violence". Under the Domestic Violence Act of 2015, its definition extends beyond physical and verbal abuse to include emotional, psychological and economic abuse as well as stalking and the relatively new crime of cyber harassment.

20. The new act also makes provision for safe houses to be established where victims of domestic violence can be protected from the perpetrators. However, like the previous act, the new act makes no mention of any possible restitution or redress for the victims of domestic violence. (Huggins, op. cit: 36). In addition, the term, "domestic relationship" in the act remains limited to opposite sex partners (Ibid: 34).

Article 2: Obligations to eliminate discrimination

21. Local laws that specifically oblige the State Party to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women have yet to be instituted. However, there are local laws that make provision for several kinds of discrimination cases (including those of gender discrimination) to be brought before the courts. One such piece of legislation is the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code. (Anti-discrimination provisions in Labour Code will be referenced from time to time in later discussions). Another is the Ombudsman Act passed in 1994.

The Ombudsman Act of 1994

22. The Ombudsman Act called for the establishment of an Office of the Ombudsman, which was opened in 1995. The Office accepts complaints against their officers by civil servants within the government, statutory bodies and/or public agencies and institutions. The Ombudsman is an arbiter of last resort. Aggrieved persons, irrespective of gender, have to go through the normal or prescribed channels before they can approach the Ombudsman.

23. A male served as the first Ombudsman from 1995 until 2006. He was succeeded in 2007 by a female who retired from the post in 2014. A new Ombudsman has not been appointed to date. The Office currently has six officers (excluding the Ombudsman) all of whom are female.

The Education Act of 2008

24. One of the stated goals and objectives of the Education Act of 2008 is, "to develop an understanding of the principles of gender equality and equity" (Division 1c). This is a clear indication that the State Party is committed to raising awareness among its youth of the critical importance of eliminating discrimination that is based specifically on gender.

The Training of Lawyers in the Provisions of CEDAW

25. The Commonwealth Secretariat Colloquium 1996 (including all judges from the OECS Court of Appeal) under the Family Law and Domestic Violence Project, sought to bring existing local legislation in compliance with certain aspects of CEDAW. Judges and magistrates were trained under this project. The OECS also provided opportunities for lawyers, including lawyers in Antigua, to receive training.

National Strategic Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence (2013)

26. The Committee suggested that gender issues be integrated into the Government's five-year plan (Remark 264). The State Party is currently working on a Five-Year Development Plan and fully intends to take gender issues on board. Despite delays in the implementation of the Committee's suggestion, it is worthy of note that the State Party, under the auspices of the Directorate of Gender Affairs (DOGA), commissioned a specific five-plan to end gender-based violence. This plan, entitled, National Strategic Action Plan

to End Gender-based Violence, was passed by Cabinet in 2013. It is also a comprehensive policy document that came into being to fulfil the mandates of CEDAW, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belem do Para), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals to improve the status of women and end all forms of discrimination against them (DOGA, 2014). The discussion that follows is taken largely from this critical document. The Plan outlines what has been accomplished so far in attacking the thorny issue of gender-based violence and points to useful activities and processes that ought to be undertaken as soon as possible to end such violence.

CDB Country Gender Assessment – Antigua and Barbuda (2014)

27. The Caribbean Development Bank, a regional financial institution, embarked in 2008 on a Gender Equality Policy and Operational Strategy (GEPOS) whereby it would undertake an assessment of the status of gender equality in its borrowing member countries. The first assessment for Antigua and Barbuda was completed in 2014. This comprehensive document looked at the issue of gender equality in critical spheres of life.

Article 3: The advancement of women

The National Machinery for Women

28. The Directorate of Gender Affairs (DOGA) is the national machinery responsible for monitoring the implementation of national, regional and international agreements on women's empowerment and equity. The State Party is committed to implementing the following (among others):

- The CIM Plan of Action
- ICPD
- The Beijing Declaration and Plan for Action
- CEDAW and its Optional Protocol
- The Convention of Belem do Para
- The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

29. In October 1980, by means of an Executive Decision of Cabinet, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda sought to actively address the needs and concerns of women by establishing what was then known as 'The Women's Desk.' In 1985, the organization was upgraded to the Directorate of Women's Affairs. In its remarks on the Report of Antigua and Barbuda (CEDAW A/52/38/Rev.1 of 1997), the Committee "recommended that the Directorate of Women's Affairs be elevated to a higher rank and thus upgraded and strengthened" (Remark 263). In keeping with this recommendation, the Directorate of Women's Affairs was restructured and renamed "the Directorate of Gender Affairs". However, this designation does not constitute a separate ministry as perhaps was anticipated by the Committee. To date, a separate ministry designed to handle women's affairs or gender affairs specifically has not materialized for a very cogent reason: a small island state such as Antigua and Barbuda cannot afford the cost of establishing new ministries. For several decades, the number of ministries has remained at 17. The current thinking is that the number of ministries is too large and thus, ought to be amalgamated further.

30. At present, DOGA falls within the Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development, which is headed by one of the two, elected, female members of Parliament. As the main governmental machinery for gender affairs, DOGA is also primarily responsible for spearheading, implementing and monitoring the development of women in Antigua and Barbuda through education and training, advocacy, personal development and empowerment. To this end, the Directorate conducts research and data

collection; organizes seminars and conferences that promote gender awareness and the need for legal reform in areas that may discriminate against women.

31. In addition, DOGA consults with a number of local community groups, women's groups, NGOs and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). These include: Antigua and Barbuda Planned Parenthood Association (APPA); The Legal Aid & Advice Centre; Professional Organization of Women (POWA); Women Against Rape (WAR), Intersect, Together We Must, The Antigua & Barbuda International Women's Club and the Antigua & Barbuda Girl Guides Association. DOGA has collaborated with a number of regional and international agencies in developing projects and programmes that positively impact the lives of women in Antigua and Barbuda. Chief among these are CIWIL, UN Women, the UN Trust Fund and UNFPA.

32. The Country Poverty Assessment Report for Antigua and Barbuda commissioned in 2007 by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) mentioned that DOGA, "is not provided with the resources to undertake the types of interventions that are needed" (Kairi, 2007:186). In 2013, DOGA's budget was 0.07% of the total budget of the Ministry under which it operates. However, in 2014/2015, the budget allocation improved considerably. Despite challenges of budgeting and staffing, DOGA continues to be proactive in introducing new programmes and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and the full participation of women in the social, economic and political life of the country. DOGA is grateful to the regional and international bodies mentioned above for the assistance it gets in funding several of its programmes and consultancies.

Selected Programmes Designed to Advance the Status of Women

33. The Directorate of Gender Affairs, in collaboration with other agencies and organizations, has spearheaded several significant programs and initiatives that focus on the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence. These include:

The Sexual Offences Unit

34. A specialized unit, named the Sexual Offences Unit, was established in 2008 as a unit within the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda. The Unit dealt with all cases of sexual offences throughout the nation including those against children – both male and female. The aim of the unit was to give assistance in the management of investigations and the collection of forensic and other evidence to assist in the prosecution of the cases. The Unit was managed by seven officers who were specially trained in investigating sexual offences. Of critical importance was the collection of forensic evidence so that prosecutions could go forward and hopefully, more offenders brought to justice. A number of doctors, nurses and social welfare officers were also trained to assist the police in the management of the cases. In 2010, 20 nurses were trained to become Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE). Their training emphasized the necessity for them to deal with clients in a gender-sensitive manner. Since its establishment, the Unit had made an extremely valuable contribution in improving the conviction rate of sexual offences cases. Officers at the Unit also worked closely with the Directorate of Gender Affairs in providing support and assistance to victims of sexual offences. The Unit was later removed from its physical location at the Langford's Police Station and incorporated into a more general Police body known as the "Serious Crimes Unit", founded in 2014.

High Level Task Force on Sexual Violence and Assault

35. As mentioned in the introduction, in an effort to highlight the necessity to eliminate all form of violence against women, a High Level Task Force on Sexual Violence and Assault was commissioned by the State.

The Sexual Assault Referral Programme

36. In 2010, a Sexual Assault Referral Programme was established at DOGA to ensure that victims of sexual violence receive adequate care and services. DOGA works closely with the police to make the process of reporting, treatment, and rehabilitation as stress-free

and comprehensive as possible. This programme will be incorporated into the activities of the planned crisis centre.

The 24 hour Crisis Hotline

37. DOGA continues to operate a 24hours a day, seven days a week telephone hotline that responds immediately to the needs of its callers.

The Crisis Centre

38. DOGA has operated an informal 24hours Crisis Centre service on and off for a number of years in no permanent place. Private houses are used from time to time to house victims of gender-based and sexual violence. Recently, the United Nations Fund has supported the government through a grant for the establishment of a fully resourced crisis centre. Plans are ongoing to establish the space and begin the training of the personnel who will work at the Crisis Centre, which is expected to begin operating in 2016. This Centre will incorporate the Sexual Assault Referral Programme.

UN Trust Fund Project - 2015

39. The UN Trust Fund financed a project on behalf of DOGA to fulfil Outcome 4 of the Requirements of the UN Trust Fund Project to Eliminate Violence against Women.

40. Although in the early stages of implementation, a number of programmes have already been initiated under the project. DOGA has held workshops and town hall meetings to raise awareness of gender issues, particularly violence against women. It has also created educational print, audio and video materials and the rebranding of the logo of DOGA. The Directorate of Gender Affairs has also embarked on a number of behavioural change strategies and programmes and has partnered with a number of groups and individuals to foster change.

Review of Legislation and Policies on Gender-based and Sexual Violence

41. In 2015, DOGA also commissioned a review of all legislation and policies pertaining to gender-based and sexual violence. A workshop was held to present the findings to a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including among others, the Citizens' Welfare Department, the Police, the legal fraternity and various CSOs. This comprehensive document was published in early 2016. The author not only discussed the relevant statutes and policies of Antigua and Barbuda, but also made very cogent comparisons with those of other Caribbean countries, pointing the way to possible reforms and amendments that Antigua and Barbuda could adopt.

42. The document also presented statistics on incidences of domestic and sexual violence in the country as background to the analyses that followed. Some of the findings on gender-based and sexual violence will be discussed here. The most recent statistics, collected by DOGA, are for the years 2013 and 2014.

43. According to the author, "The DOGA reported that incidents of violence against women were on a steady decline over the seven (7) year period 2003-2010, with some fluctuations. In the two year period 2008 and 2009 alone, the division saw more than 30 survivors of rape, and the cases of domestic violence surpassed 200; of the sexual violence cases reported to the RPFAB from 2003-2010 however, there was a ratio of 25 crimes reported to 1 reaching the court process (Directorate of Gender Affairs, 2010). The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda (RPFAB) and DOGA's current statistics underscore the pervasiveness of GBSV in the country and further, persisting challenges in reported incidents leading to arrests and prosecutions" (Huggins, 2016:2).

44. In 2013, DOGA dealt with five cases of rape of women. (It must be noted here that Police statistics are generally higher as not all cases reported to the police go to DOGA as well). DOGA also saw 172 cases of adult domestic violence. Of that number, 129 were women and 43 were men. Of the 172 cases, 109 experienced physical abuse; 172: psychological/emotional abuse; 89: economic abuse; 172: verbal abuse and 58: sexual abuse. 132 or 76.7% of the perpetrators were men.

45. In 2014, the numbers of cases of rape reporting to DOGA were six: three women and three men. With respect to adult domestic violence, reports to DOGA increased significantly. Of the 201 cases, 124 were women and 77 were men - a marked increase in male reporting over the previous year.

46. Of the 201 reported cases of domestic violence, 36 experienced physical abuse, 74: psychological/emotional abuse; 52: economic abuse; 60: verbal abuse and 17: sexual abuse. (Note: the sex of the perpetrators was not available for all offences).

47. There are no laws in the nation that allow men to chastise women, including their wives, (physically or verbally) without repercussions. However, there are still some instances where victims have expressed that their reports are not taken seriously. However, in recent times such attitudes are changing as gender sensitive training is now a part of agencies such as the Police's "Serious Crimes Unit" and the Sexual Assault Referral Programme, which deal with gender-based, and sexual violence crimes. Additionally, the new domestic violence legislation makes it mandatory for police officers to respond to all reports cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

The Creation of an Electronic Database

48. The creation of an Electronic Database is one of the programmes that has come on-stream as a result of the UN Trust Fund Project. In 2015, DOGA created a national database to track all reported cases of gender-based and sexual violence in the nation in a bid to improve the collection of administrative data. It is the central location of all information pertaining to gender-based and sexual violence acts collected from partners namely, the Police, the Citizens' Welfare Division, the Mount St. John's Medical Centre and CSOs such as WAR and private medical practitioners. The database allows DOGA and its partners to follow the progress of each case from its beginning to its resolution. It operates on several levels of access to the information.

49. Only key designated administrators have access to the identity of clients so that confidentiality is assured. As such, there are different levels of access and referrals that can be done through the system between agencies. The database is governed by a deployment plan, user manual, protocols and guidelines.

Article 4: Acceleration of equality – adoption of special measures

50. The Committee suggested that "the Government of Antigua and Barbuda utilize article 4 of the Convention in accelerating de facto equality for women." (Remark 265). The Committee also recommended that "the Government of Antigua and Barbuda encourage greater participation of women in politics by introducing temporary special measures." (Ibid 266). To date, no specific laws have been put in place that address the latter recommendation concerning women's participation in the political life of the nation, but as will be discussed below, a number of policies and programmes have been instituted which strive to bring about a more favourable outcome for women in politics. The work of the Directorate of Gender Affairs (DOGA) – the main machinery for implementing government policy on gender issues – has been exemplary in this regard.

51. It was mentioned in the previous report that in Antigua and Barbuda, women have the same rights as men to vote in all elections and to present themselves as candidates for the highest political office. Although there are no legal barriers to stop them, their membership in Parliament remains at a low level even as they continue to support male candidates for membership.

Campaign to increase Women's Participation in Politics

52. In 2000, the Directorate of Women's Affairs embarked on a vigorous campaign to promote women's participation in politics. Several seminars, workshops and public media programmes were held to encourage women to aspire to the highest political offices. Meetings were held with the leaders of the two major political parties urging them to seriously consider placing women on their slate of candidates. POWA – the Professional

Organization of Women in Antigua and Barbuda, also played an active role also in this campaign. It is heartening to report that these efforts paid off. At the General Election in 2004, women played a much more prominent role in the electoral processes, with tangible results. (These will be discussed later in the section on women in political life).

Women's Political Participation: Training in Governance and Democracy

53. In 2002, the Directorate of Gender Affairs also coordinated a project aimed at increasing women's involvement in leadership positions in the country. The project, styled "*Women's Political Participation: Training in Governance and Democracy*" was sponsored by the Organization of American States (OAS) and implemented in Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis and Guyana. The training was unique in that it was able to cut across social barriers. Training and educational material (including some published materials noted in the Bibliography) were made available to grass roots aspirants as well as to the more highly educated aspirants. Women were united with a view to increasing their numbers in the upper echelons of government and politics.

CIWIL

54. The Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWIL) instituted in 2006, must be commended for the great work it has done and continues to do in addressing gender inequalities in power and decision-making across the Caribbean. CIWIL received funding from external donors for an initial 5-year period. While the activities of CIWIL were not accompanied by any affirmative action legislation in Antigua and Barbuda, they served to promote the increased participation of women in politics. In collaboration with DOGA, CIWIL organized a Breakfast Meeting in March 2009, in honour of the five female candidates who were to contest seats in the General Election slated to take place later in the month. Only one of the five candidates won her seat, but the exposure and interest generated by CIWIL's activities have gone a long way in highlighting the need for women to participate more fully in the leadership and decision-making arms of government. CIWIL served and continues to serve the cause of women by building networks of solidarity among them.

Together We Must

55. This is another organization that has emerged from the activities of CIWIL. In 2009, a workshop was organised by CIWIL which brought a wide range of Governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as specific women's groups to discuss the status of women in Antigua and Barbuda. At the end of the workshop the participants resolved to create an organization and a manifesto called, "**Together We Must**". The stated aim of the manifesto is to, "bring together the various demands of women in Antigua and Barbuda to ensure that these are integrated into national policies programmes and practices".

56. It is owned by a broad constituency of women and most importantly, "it recognises the vital need for the equal participation of women in politics and decision-making." The organization has a website where it encourages persons to participate in on-going discussions on women's issues. It is committed to taking positive collective action to end gender violence and other practices in Antigua and Barbuda that discriminate against women.

Article 5: Elimination of gender roles and stereotyping

57. It can be asserted with some degree of certainty that the school is one of the socializing agents that can help eliminate stereotypes of the social, economic and cultural roles of women and men. In Antigua and Barbuda, from pre-school to tertiary level, the majority of educational institutions – both public and private – are co-educational. The teaching staff is mixed at all levels of the system except at the pre-school level where the staff is 100% female.

58. The CDB Country Gender Assessment for Antigua and Barbuda noted that, "efforts have been made in Antigua and Barbuda for curricula to support the changing nature of

gender labour roles, and further, to enable access for females to pursue courses in male-dominated fields and vice-versa” (CDB, 2014:3). Although considerable progress has been made, there remains a measure of gender stereotyping in the subjects taught in secondary schools and at the tertiary level institutions in the nation. There are no barriers preventing girls from studying technical subjects such as electronics and woodworking, but cultural norms still, to some extent, determine the choices that students make regarding what subjects to study. Educators are well aware of this vexing problem and measures have been taken to reduce such gender stereotyping. At the secondary school level, girls are being actively encouraged to pursue subjects such as Technical Drawing and Agriculture. Similarly, more boys are electing to study Home Economics, although the area of Clothing and Textiles is still almost exclusively the domain of girls.

59. At the tertiary level, females are entering higher institutions of learning in greater numbers than males. This disparity in favour of females is escalating even in some technical institutions. For instance, the Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology (ABIIT) offers associate degree and diploma programmes in fields such as Computer Technology, Finance, Graphic Design and Business Administration. In the academic year 2008-2009, 66% of the student body was female. The general enrolment dropped in subsequent years, but in 2011-2012, female enrolment was still higher than that of males - 59.5%.

60. As in the past, females continue to dominate the teaching profession. At the Antigua State College (ASC) in 2011-2012, of the 220 teachers undergoing training at the ASC, only 21 were male - a ratio of 90.5% female to 9.5% male. But, along similar lines of gender disparity, in the Engineering Department, males continue to outnumber females to a high degree. In the 1999-2000 academic year, this department was virtually 100% male. In recent years, there has been some very slight improvement in the great gender disparity. In 2011-2012, the department had a 90.2% male enrolment figure. However, currently, in 2015, there were only nine female students among the 110 male students, thereby increasing the percentage of male enrolment to 91.2%. In the field of aircraft engineering, of the 19 males only 3 or 15.7% were female. Thus, gender stereotypes of what are considered to be male professions or female professions are still strongly evident at the ASC.

61. To a relatively small degree, there are still some Christian religious beliefs (Christianity is the dominant religion in Antigua and Barbuda) that tend to place barriers on improving the status of women. Additionally, some men still insist that their wives ought to be subordinate to them through the Biblical injunction that wives should submit to their husbands. But more and more, instead of focusing on the issue of wifely submission, church leaders are pointing out that the Bible enjoins husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the Church - a far more positive approach to the achievement of a status of equality. By and large, the leadership in Christian churches is still dominated by men but today women are gaining more and more recognition as leaders. And, too, there are now a number of churches established women who are firmly in charge of their congregations.

62. In divorce cases, there is still a marked tendency to give the custody of children to women, although joint custody is very often granted. In addition, under the Maintenance of and Access to Children Act of 2008, the court now recognises that every parent (including unmarried fathers) is entitled to have access to his or her child once he or she is maintaining that child. Another crucial provision of this act pertains to the collection of maintenance fees, a thorny problem for many mothers. The court now allows for an “attachment order” to be placed on the income or pension of a defaulter.

63. The Breadwinner Model is still subscribed to and referenced although in a 1994 study, Ward-Osborne found that 58% of all households were headed by women. (Ward-Osborne, 1994). However, census figures give a different picture. In the 1991 census, only 42% of the households were said by respondents to have female heads. Similarly, the figures from the 2011 census indicate that of the 29,713 persons who claimed to be heads of households, 13,081 or 44.02% were women. The real figures could possibly be higher than the census figures. A woman, in the presence of a census enumerator, might verbally defer to the authority of a male as head, when indeed she may be the main breadwinner or even the sole breadwinner. (It is likely that Ward-Osborne conducted her research in a manner

which elicited more frank responses from women than the responses they gave to census enumerators).

64. Outside of the home, there still are certain kinds of work that are considered as “men’s work” or “women’s work”. However, women are not forbidden by law or restricted from doing certain kinds of work. They are represented in the Police Force, the Defence Force and Security Services. The construction sector is still largely dominated by males although there are no laws restricting women from working in these type of industries.

Family Education that Ensures a Proper Understanding of the Roles of Men and Women in Raising Children

65. The State Party recognises the crucial role that healthy, happy families play in society. One of the primary goals and objectives of the Education Act of 2008 is, “to promote the importance of family and community” (Division 1c). To this end, Family Life Education has become an integral part of the curriculum in the majority of government-run (and some private schools) in Antigua and Barbuda at the primary level. This issue will be dealt in some detail under Article 10(h). It is necessary to note here that CARICOM has written a curriculum on Health and Family Life Education which is used in the schools in the nation. A section of the curriculum deals with interpersonal relationships in the family.

66. Both in the home and in the wider society, girls and boys are still being socialized into assuming specific gender roles. Gender stereotyping in the distribution of domestic tasks remains a cause for concern. Girls and women still do most of the cooking and cleaning. Boys and young men tend to be allowed to stay out of the house for longer periods and with less supervision than girls and women. Similarly, the major responsibility for the care of the children falls on the female members of households. But such practices are changing rapidly as these issues are discussed quite frequently in the media, especially in programmes designed and run by young women and men.

Article 6: Elimination of trafficking and prostitution of women

Trafficking of Women

67. In 2010, the State passed, the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act. According to the Act, the consent of the trafficked person is irrelevant whether that person is an adult or a child. The Act also established a committee known as “the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Committee”, tasked with the functions of coordinating the implementation of the Trafficking Act. The Act instituted a number of maximum penalties for various offences. However, in 2014, a High Court Justice declared some of these penalties unconstitutional as they gave excessive powers to magistrates – powers they did not have under the constitution. They were amended in 2015.

68. As noted in a publication of DOGA “Review of Legislation and Policies on Gender-based and Sexual Violence, Antigua and Barbuda” (Huggins, 2015), the Act recognizes that the overwhelming majority of persons who are trafficked are female. Yet, following the terminology of laws in Antigua and Barbuda, “the victim or subject of human trafficking is referred to in the male person” (Huggins, p.31). Therefore, there will be efforts to ensure gender-sensitive legislative drafting.

69. The Trafficking in Persons Prevention Committee came into being in 2010 and continues to function up to the present. One of the crucial functions of the Committee is to set up a place of refuge for the victims and this place should be officially published in the Government Gazette. Due to the small size of the country, DOGA (in collaboration with private hoteliers and landlords) has dealt with a number of cases of trafficking and has provided safe havens for the persons trafficked.

70. According to DOGA, very few cases of trafficking were brought to their attention before the law came into being. In the period 2010-2015, a total of 43 persons were reported to DOGA as having been trafficked - all of them women. Up to the end of 2015, only one person had been charged (in 2011) with trafficking and that case was dismissed.

Table 1
Number of Women Trafficked - Selected Years

| <i>Year</i> | <i>2010</i> | <i>2011</i> | <i>2012</i> | <i>2013</i> | <i>2014</i> | <i>2015</i> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Numbers | 3 | 22 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 10 |

Source: Directorate of Gender Affairs, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

Prostitution

71. As noted in the previous report, prostitution is illegal in Antigua and Barbuda. The law against prostitution as it stands makes it difficult for persons engaged in the trade to be apprehended as they literally have to be “caught in the act” with evidence of money exchanged. The government is monitoring closely the fact that the majority of women engaged in prostitution are foreign Caribbean nationals. A number of cases have been brought to the attention of the Directorate of Gender Affairs which agency has provided counselling and advocacy over the years.

72. Worthy of note, also, is the work of a CSO, named, “Health, Hope and HIV Network”. Its motto is, “Creating Positive Change.” It was established in 1999 and registered as a charity in 2002. This organization found that a high percentage of the female prostitutes travel throughout the Caribbean islands, never permanently residing in any territory besides their country of origin. Thus, over the years, this organization has focused on the female immigrant population (including the Spanish-speaking population), but is open to men as well. It offers counselling services and testing for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. In 2014, the organization through the government, received grants from PEPFAR and the PANCAP/GIS/EPOS project: “Improving Access to HIV Services of Mobile and Migrant Populations in the Caribbean”. Through poster campaigns and other media sources, its work became well known in the migrant communities.

Public Opinion on Prostitution

73. On Thursday 5th October 2006, the Ecclesiastical Community and the Government held a symposium on the issue of prostitution in Antigua and Barbuda. In general, public opinion deplored the practice, but to date, there have been no changes in the laws, which address the issue of prostitution.

Article 7: Women in political and public life

Political life

74. It is pertinent to note here that in the 2004 General Election, the two major political parties put up a total of four female candidates to run for membership in Parliament, an improvement over the one token candidate that was nominated to run in the past. One female won a seat, the first female ever to do so, collecting the greatest number of votes ever won by any candidate in the history of the nation. She was given the ministerial portfolio of Minister of Labour, Public Administration and Empowerment. This Minister won her seat again in the subsequent General Election of 2009 and became the Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Gender Affairs for the period 2009- 2014. It can safely be asserted that, as a consequence of her position in Cabinet (the executive branch of government), issues affecting women were given greater prominence and attention. For instance, a very important law designed to enhance the welfare of children and overcome some gender-related problems regarding child support – the Maintenance of and Access to Children Act - was passed in 2008. Another notable achievement was the commissioning by the State Party of a High Level Task Force on Sexual Violence and Assault, which completed its assessment of the health, judicial and social services sectors in Antigua and Barbuda in 2009.

75. In the last General Election of 2014, although that particular female lost her seat, two other women won seats for the first time. Thus, currently, of the 17 elected members of Parliament, two are now women - constituting 11.7% of that body. (One of the two female,

elected members comes from the ruling party and holds the portfolio of Minister of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development). Although this figure of 11.7% female representation is far from the ideal, which should be at least 50%, it is an improvement over the one female elected representative in the previous General Election of 2009.

76. Over the years, women have always fared better in terms of representation in Upper House – the Senate. Currently, in 2015, of the 17 nominated Senators, 8 or 47% are female, the highest number to date. This is a great advance over the previous average of only four females in the Senate. In the last twenty-five years or so, the President of the Senate has been female, as is the current President. Although the current Speaker of the House is male, in the past, women have held this important post consecutively for over twenty years.

77. It must be noted, however, that women in Antigua and Barbuda still seem more inclined to give their allegiance to the male candidates by actively campaigning, attending political meetings and voting on their behalf. Much progress has been made in changing this state of affairs, but much more needs to be done.

Public Life

The Civil Service

78. The Civil Service continues to be the main employer of labour in Antigua and Barbuda. Statistics show that the number of women in the public service continues to increase. In 1980, women and men were nearly equal in terms of their employment in this sector of the labour force, but by 1989 women outnumbered men two to one. In that year, 64.8% of the total established positions were held by females. Today, the percentage of women in the Civil Service is roughly 63%.

79. In 1989, of the 90 persons in the highest paid categories only six or 7% were female. Similarly in 1990, of the 89 division heads in the various ministries of Government, Statutory Corporations, Heads of Missions or Consulates, 18 or 20% were female. However, over the last two decades, the representation of women in the upper echelons of the Civil Service has improved steadily. In 1992, of the 14 positions of Permanent Secretary or its equivalent, only five or 36% were held by females. Currently, in 2015, of 20 such positions, 14 or 70% are held by women. But when we look at the number of Permanent Secretaries in conjunction with seven other Division Heads, the number of top Civil Servants increases to 27. (The category of “Division Head” can include heads of special projects and the like). Of that number, 13 or 48% are women.

80. Today, not many professions are still considered as men’s work or women’s work with the notable exceptions of nursing for females and construction work for males. Interestingly, in the field of medicine, there is no longer a pronounced bias in favour of males. The regional University of the West Indies currently graduates more female doctors than male doctors. Of the approximately 256 doctors who are registered to practice in Antigua and Barbuda in 2015, approximately 110 or 43% are female. (It must be noted that some of the doctors are specialists in various fields of medicine who visit the country from time to time). Currently, the Chief Medical Officer in the Ministry of Health is female, as was her predecessor.

The Legal Profession

81. For the last two decades or more, enrolment figures in the Faculty of Law at the University of the West Indies indicate that there are more females students enrolled in the faculty than males. This preponderance of females being trained as lawyers is now reflected in the numbers practising in Antigua and Barbuda and elsewhere in the Caribbean. This was not always the case. In 1980, the ratio of male to female lawyers was 25:8; in 1985, it was 26:6 and in 1994, it was 23:15. Currently, in 2015, of the 130 registered lawyers in private practice, 72 or 55% are female. As Table 2, below indicates, in terms of the employment of lawyers in the public service, women far outnumber men. Of the 25 lawyers employed by government in 2015, 16 or 64% are female.

Table 2
Number of Female Lawyers Employed in the Public Service, 2015

| <i>Department</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Ministry Headquarters | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Legal Aid and Advice Centre | - | 3 | 3 |
| High Court | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Magistrates' Court | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Industrial Court | 1 | - | 1 |
| Land Registry | - | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 9 | 16 | 25 |

Source: The Bar Association, Antigua and Barbuda, unpublished Statistics: 2015

82. Today, there are two female judges out of a total of seven in the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. This constitutes a significant advance over previous years. In 1980 there were none. In 2002, Antigua and Barbuda appointed its first female Attorney General (a member of the Cabinet) who served in that capacity for approximately two (2) years. The current president of the Bar Association is female. The Chief Magistrate is also female.

The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda (RPFAB)

83. An important arm of the government comprises the law enforcement agencies, notably the police. Females have been part of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda for some years but, as is the case in many countries of the world, their percentage involvement in the force is low. There are established positions in the force for a certain number of females and a certain number of males. However, not all of the positions are filled. One reason for this is that the RPFAB has traditionally found it difficult to attract local young women and men.

84. Over the years, recruits have come from other Caribbean territories, notably St. Vincent. The number of women in the RPFAB has been increasing slowly over the last few decades. But it took thirty-five years for their representation in the Force to double, as the figures below indicate.

Table 3
Percentage of Females in the Police Force: Selected Years

| <i>Year</i> | <i>1980</i> | <i>1985</i> | <i>1994</i> | <i>2015</i> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| % | 9.2 | 10.6 | 13.2 | 21.0 |

Source: The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda

85. The representation of females in the higher ranks of the force has been understandably low given the paucity of their numbers. However, there is another practice that was discriminatory. There were limits put on how high a female could go in the force. A female officer could only aspire to the rank of Superintendent. This discriminatory practice has since changed, and, as stated in one of their brochures, women can now attain the rank of Commissioner of Police.

86. In 1980, there was no higher-ranking female than one Inspector. By 1994, their numbers had risen to two Inspectors, with another two females attaining the rank of Assistant Superintendent. In 2003, there were five females in the rank of Inspector and above: three Inspectors; one Assistant Superintendent; one Assistant Commissioner. However, it was not until 2004, that a female became the first Commissioner of Police. Currently, in 2015, the number of females in the force is 123, a mere 21% of the total membership of 583. However, the number of females in the higher ranks has declined significantly. Currently, only two females hold the rank of Inspector and above – one an

Inspector and one an Assistant Superintendent. No explanation has been offered for this decline.

87. Women are also underrepresented in the Fire Department of the RPFAB. In 2015, of the 168 officers in this department, only 24 or 14% were female. This is not surprising as fire fighting continues to be regarded as a male profession. All over the world, we still tend to speak of “firemen” even when women are on the job.

The Teaching Profession

88. In Antigua and Barbuda, the teaching profession is one dominated by women. It is true that women have pre-eminence as principals or heads of schools. However, despite the fact that in the 2013/2014 school year, 91% of all primary school teachers were female, men still seem to be favoured when it comes to promotion. There are more male heads of primary schools than is warranted by their numbers in the profession. This was noted in the latest publication of the *Antigua and Barbuda Education Statistical Digest* by the Ministry of Education.

Table 4

Number of Teachers in Selected Educational Institutions by Sex and Leadership Position: 2011-2012

| <i>Level</i> | <i>Status</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Primary | | 57 | 339 | 396 (Gov't only) |
| | Heads | 5 | 26 | 31 |
| Secondary | | 114 | 174 | 228 (Gov't & Private) |
| | Heads | 4 | 8 | 12 |
| ASC | | 44 | 48 | 92 |
| | Head | 1 | - | 1 |
| ABHTI | | 6 | 8 | 14 |
| | Head | 1 | - | 1 |
| UWI (Antigua) | | 8 | 12 | 20 |
| | Head | 1 | - | 1 |

Source: Unpublished Statistics, Ministry of Education and UWI, Antigua and Barbuda

89. As can be seen from Table 4, in the academic year 2011-2012, women outnumbered men as heads in all educational institutions except those at the tertiary level namely, Antigua State College (ASC), ABHTI and UWI Open Campus whose heads were male. In the past, however, the heads of ASC and UWI Open Campus have been female at one time or another. Currently, in 2015, the heads of all the aforementioned tertiary institutions are male.

Business and Commerce

90. It is not possible to discuss here the level of women’s participation in all the various types of business activities and organizations. However, it must be noted that most of the businesses owned and operated by women are in the informal sector. Women dominate in micro-businesses such as the vending of souvenirs and clothing, the roadside sale of foods and the sale of agricultural produce in the market. Their activities in the informal sector tend to be under-reported and largely undervalued in national economic statistics and surveys. Women also predominate in the Tourism sector, working mainly as lower paid waiters, housekeepers, cleaners and the like. (Statistics of employment in this sector, disaggregated by sex, were not available). Work in tourism tends to be seasonal. Many hotels open for approximately six months of the year only, during the colder months of the countries with a temperate climate. It must be admitted that the seasonal nature of the work adversely affects the ability of women to provide for their families.

91. The focus in this section will be on the banking sector, and in particular, on the Antigua Commercial Bank, the largest commercial bank in Antigua and Barbuda and the first indigenous bank. By and large, women continue to predominate as tellers and clerks in banking institutions. As can be inferred from Table 5 below, despite their strong representation in the lower echelons of banking operations, women fail to be promoted to the higher echelons in numbers commensurate with their presence lower down in the hierarchy.

Table 5
Staff of Selected Commercial Banks in Antigua and Barbuda by Sex and Level of Employment: 2003

| Name of Bank | Employees | | | Supervisors | | | Middle Managers | | | Senior Executives/Managers | | |
|----------------------|-----------|----|------------|-------------|----|-----------|-----------------|---|----------|----------------------------|---|-----------|
| | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T |
| A&B Invest. Bank | 20 | 60 | 86 | 8 | 24 | 32 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 11 |
| Bank of Antigua | 2 | 43 | 63 | 9 | 21 | 30 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 3 | - | 3 |
| Antigua Com. Bank | 46 | 78 | 124 | 10 | 6 | 16 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| 1st Carib Int. Bank* | 16 | 47 | 63 | 5 | 20 | 25 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Royal Bank of Can. | 6 | 32 | 38 | - | 10 | 10 | - | 5 | 5 | - | 3 | 3 |

Source: Statistics from Commercial Banks, Antigua and Barbuda (Compiled by Osoba, 2004)

*This bank was the former Barclays Bank which underwent a merger in 2002

92. More recent, detailed statistics on levels of employment are available for the Antigua Commercial Bank. (ACB). As Table 6 below shows, although women constitute 74.4% of the total number of employees, they are only 50% of the highest-ranking category – Senior Executives /Managers. The current head of the bank is female. She is the first female to head the bank in its 60 years of existence. However, ACB was the first bank to have a female chair of its 10- member Board of Directors. She was voted into this position by the shareholders in 1999 and served for three years. To date, she is the only female to have chaired the Board of Directors. In 2015, of the 10 members of the Board of Directors, five or 50% are female.

Table 6
Staff of Antigua Commercial Bank by Sex and Rank: 2015

| Rank of Employees | Male | % | Female | % | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Clerical staff | 21 | 25.6 | 61 | 74.4 | 82 |
| Supervisors | 2 | 28.6 | 5 | 71.4 | 7 |
| Middle Man. | 2 | 28.6 | 5 | 71.4 | 7 |
| Senior Execs/ Managers | 5 | 50.0 | 5 | 50.0 | 10 |
| Total | 30 | 28.3 | 76 | 71.7 | 106 |

Source: Antigua Commercial Bank, Unpublished Statistics: 2015

Civil Society Groups (CSOs)

93. Since the submission of the Report of the State Party to CEDAW in 1995, a number of civil society groups and organizations which focus on advocacy for women's rights and the elimination of discrimination against women have been inaugurated. Space does not permit an examination of all such CSOs. The work of the more significant ones will be discussed below.

POWA

94. POWA actively encouraged and supported the candidacy of several women in the General Election of 2003. In addition, this organization became known as a force to be

reckoned with in defending the rights of women and girls. Its members are well-known public figures who continue to speak out on issues that affect women's health, welfare and political status.

WAR

95. In the early years of the 21st century, a series of unsolved rapes of women rocked the country. WAR was founded in 2006 in response to this. The group organized candlelit vigils, lobbied the government and the Police Force to pursue the cases with greater vigour to bring the perpetrators to justice.

96. Although their effects did not necessarily lead to a higher rate of conviction, the issue of a woman's right to be protected from harm regardless of how she dresses, looks or where she goes, was hotly debated in the media for many months. WAR continues to be a strong advocate of women's rights.

Intersect

97. A recent, most promising development in the advocacy for feminist research and action is the founding of Intersect in 2014. This organization is different in that it has not shied away from discussing culturally sensitive issues such as the rights of gays, lesbians and transgendered persons. The organization started on online as a safe space where oppressed and marginalized persons could speak out.

Article 8: Women's participation in the work of international organizations

98. Some regret must be expressed that women are still very much underrepresented in the work of international organizations. Currently, Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations is male. His predecessor was female. In 2015, of the 33 ambassadorial positions, women held only 5 or 15%. The situation is somewhat better in respect of appointments as Heads of Overseas Missions and Consulates. Of the six such positions, women head 2 or 33.3%.

Article 9: Retention of nationality of women

99. Provisions in the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda indicate that the nation is fully compliant with Article 9 of the Convention. Chapter VIII, Section 114 of the Constitution makes provision for dual citizenship hence there is no infringement on the rights of non-citizens who marry nationals. The law grants non-national women the opportunity to become nationals upon marriage; as husbands change their nationality, the national status of their wives remains unaffected. In addition, the Antigua and Barbuda Citizenship Act grants equal rights to men and women to acquire or change their nationality.

100. According to Chapter VIII Section 112(b) of the Constitution, a person can claim Citizenship by descent through the provision for "...every person born outside Antigua if either of his parents or any one of his grandparents was born therein or was registered or naturalized while resident in Antigua." This is permissible irrespective of the gender of parent, be it the mother or father, thus granting citizenship either through paternal or maternal descent. However, where the adoption of a non-citizen child is concerned, in cases of joint citizenship, Part II (Section 4) of the Citizenship Act endorses the child to become a citizen from the date of the adoption order, if the male adopter is a citizen. Thereafter, the law is silent on whether the same rights are extended to the female adopter.

101. All children in Antigua and Barbuda are required to have passports. In situations of single parents, the consent of the mother is required. Wives and husbands are allowed to obtain passports and travel without the consent of either spouse.

102. Immigration requirements, in conformity with the constitution, offer men and women the same rights to obtain residency. Nevertheless, discretionary labour procedures

grant non-national spouses, be they male or female, employment status irrespective of whether or not they have met the stipulated residency requirements.

Article 10: Education

Access to Education

103. A new Education Act was passed in 2008. However, in respect of the issue of compulsory attendance in school, it upheld the provisions made in the earlier act. Under Section (43) (1) of the Education Act, No. 7 of 1973 it is compulsory for all children between five and sixteen years to attend school. Section (7) of the Education Act sets in place a non-discriminatory educational policy which is articulated as follows: "...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.

104. Section 44 stipulates that is the duty of parents/guardians of every child of compulsory school age to ensure that their child receives efficient, full-time education suitable to his or her age, ability, and aptitude. Section 50(1) further prescribes that "...a parent of a child of compulsory school age who neglects or refuses to cause the child to attend school is, unless the child is legally excused from attendance, guilty of an offence and on summary conviction is liable to a fine not exceeding fifty dollars."

105. It must be reiterated that the laws of Antigua and Barbuda provide equal access to both sexes to education at all levels. The system of education in the nation is organized for students to progress through the following levels: preschool-to primary-to secondary-to tertiary. Primary education has been free and universal for over a century and secondary education attained this status in 2013.

Literacy Rates and Dropout Rates

106. It is estimated that in 2011, the country has a functional literacy rate of 99% where the rate is defined as persons 15 years and over who have had at least five years of schooling. Women are estimated to have a 99.4% literacy rate and men 94.4%. This disparity between the sexes in terms of the literacy rate is not surprising as, today fewer females drop out of school than males.

Pre-school Education or Early Childhood Education

107. It is estimated that approximately 70% of the population of the 0-5 age group are enrolled in some sort of pre-primary institution. Indeed, according to recent statistics published by the Ministry of Education in its latest Education Statistical Digest, 77.0% of female and 75.9% of male children who enter kindergarten, have had some pre-school experience (Ministry of Education, 2015: 2). The number of day-care centres and pre-schools has grown tremendously over the last few decades, catering for children ranging in age from a few weeks to age four or five. From a small number of about 12 or so pre-schools and nurseries in the early 1980's, there are now 92 such institutions today. Most of these institutions are privately owned and operated by women. The pre-schools also offer employment opportunities for women as the staff – teachers and aides – of these establishments are 100% female. The tremendous growth in child-care and pre-school education outside the home, has allowed many more women to enter the labour force, thus giving more women some measure economic independence.

108. In February 2008, the first government owned pre-school was opened in a low-income area. By the end of 2014, the number of such government owned and operated institutions had increased to eight. This governmental initiative has certainly helped some poor families, as the cost to parents of such a service is minimal.

Primary Education

109. Statistics show that, naturally, slightly more boys are born than girls in any given population. The slight difference between male and female births in any population remains fairly constant (barring female infanticide). This trend is reflected in primary school enrolment figures for Antigua and Barbuda over the years. However, the disparity in enrolment in favour of males appears to be higher than is warranted by the slightly larger numbers of males born versus females. This disparity in male and female enrolment in **favour of males** at the primary level (over the years) can be seen in the statistics in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Gender Disparity in Enrolment in Primary Schools for Selected Years

| <i>Year</i> | <i>1994/1995</i> | <i>1999/2000</i> | <i>2010/2011</i> | <i>2011/2012</i> | <i>2014/2015</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Disparity | 6.8% | 4.0% | 4.6% | 3.6% | 2.7% |

Primary Source: Ministry of Education Statistics, (Compiled by Osoba, 2015)

110. The statistics show that the disparity is decreasing. If indeed there was some discrimination against girls, this decreasing trend in primary school enrolment shows that such discrimination is disappearing.

Secondary Education

111. When we examine enrolment figures at the secondary level, the disparity between the sexes is reversed in favour of females. In its latest Education Statistical Digest, the Ministry of Education noted that, “Census data point to females being the greater beneficiaries of increasing demand for and access to secondary education” (Ministry of Education, 2015:100). Up until the 2013- 2014 school year when Universal Secondary Education (USE) was fully implemented, the disparity between male and female enrolment in secondary schools was much greater than it is today.

112. In the school year 2011-2012, male enrolment was 3,920 or 48% compared to that of females which was 3987 or 51.8%, a significant gender imbalance of 3.6% in favour of females. But this represents a significant decline from where it was in the past. In the 1999-2000 school year it was as great as 13.4%. However, in the past school year, 2014-2015, this disparity had dropped considerably to 0.4%. There were 3912 females (50.2%) compared to 3812 males (49.8%) enrolled in secondary schools, just 127 more females than males. It is clear the USE has indeed benefitted males greatly.

Tertiary Education

113. There are five main tertiary institutions in Antigua and Barbuda – the Antigua State College (ASC), the University of the West Indies, Open Campus, Antigua and Barbuda (formerly the UWI School of Continuing Studies), the Antigua and Barbuda Hotel Training Institute (ABHTI), the Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology (ABIIT) and the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE). The latter will be discussed in some detail in a later section on, “Opportunities for Continuing Education”.

The Antigua State College (ASC)

114. At the Antigua State College, women continue to outnumber men in the numbers enrolled in all departments except engineering. The 1999-2000 enrolment at the College was 866 students: 579 females and 287 males, a ratio of 67% to 33% in favour of females. By 2011-2012, the ratio of female to male enrolment has increased tremendously: 75% female to 25% male. As noted earlier on, a gender-bias still persists in some of the programmes students elect to take. Males continue to dominate in the Engineering Department. Similarly, females continue to dominate in the Teacher Training Department and the Department of Business at ever-increasing rates.

115. In respect of the Department of Teaching Training, in 1993-1994, the department was 71.2% female; by 1999-2000, it had become 82.1% female. In 2011-2012, of the 220

teachers undergoing training at the ASC, only 21 were male = a ratio of 90.5% female to 9.5% male.

116. The Department of Business (formerly the Commerce Department with an emphasis on secretarial work), is still predominantly female although the emphasis has shifted from typing and shorthand to computer training, entrepreneurship and more business related courses. In 1999-2000, 80.3% of the students were female; in 2011-2012, the percentage of females remained fairly constant at 81%.

Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute (ABHTI)

117. Over the years at The Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute (formerly the Hotel Training Centre) there have been more females than males enrolled in all its programmes such as 'Hospitality Management'; 'Food and Beverage'; 'Reception and Sales' and 'Culinary Arts'.

- In the year 2008-2009, of a total enrolment of 90 students, 62 or 69% were female.
- In the year 2010-2011, of a total enrolment of 110 students, 79 or 72% were female.
- In the year 2011-2012, the enrolment increased significantly to 141 students. Of that number, 103 or 73% were female.

Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology (ABITT)

118. Even at the more technically oriented ABITT which offers degree and diploma programmes in fields such as Computer Science, Computer Technology, Graphic Design and Business Administration among others, female enrolment is higher than that of males. In the 2008-2009 academic year, there were approximately 453 students on roll of whom approximately 300 or 66% were female. In 2011-2012, the total enrolment dropped to approximately 371, of whom 221 or 59.5% was female. (These figures are approximations because enrolment varies from trimester to trimester within a given academic year).

The University of the West Indies, Open Campus, Antigua

119. The University of the West Indies, Open Campus, Antigua (formerly the UWI School of Continuing Studies) attracts mainly mature students with an average age of 35 years. For several decades, the vast majority of all students enrolled in degree programmes and in local, continuing education programmes are female. In 2015, in the programmes at the higher academic level, women constituted approximately 83% of students and 73% of those enrolled in the lower level programmes. It is interesting to note that a higher proportion of females than males attempt the more challenging programmes.

Elimination of Stereotypes of the Role of Men and Women in Educational Material etc.

120. The Ministry of Education conducts annual reviews of the textbooks and other educational materials used to ensure that biases of sexual stereotyping are not reflected in the texts. Every three years, where material is deemed inappropriate or out-of-date the textbooks are replaced by more appropriate ones. It is noteworthy to mention here that advertisements (for example those on Billboards) that are used to sensitize the public about HIV/AIDS are gender-sensitive. The ads focus on both men and women as having equal responsibility in the matter of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Access to the Same Scholarships and Other Educational Benefits

The Board of Education Textbook Assistance Scheme

121. Government provides all of the standard textbooks utilized by children in all the primary and secondary schools, both public and private.

The National Scholarship Scheme

122. No discrimination exists in the distribution of scholarships and grants. The State Party has a National Scholarship Committee which meets annually to award scholarships and grants to citizens of Antigua and Barbuda. In 2015, of the 109 scholarships awarded, 64 or 58% were to females.

The School Uniform Grant Programme (2004)

123. In 2004, the Government started an initiative that gave every school child enrolled in a primary or secondary school, two free school uniforms every year as long as that child remained in school. This initiative has been a tremendous help to parents, especially female, single parents who often bear the brunt of providing clothing for their children.

The School Meals Programme (2007)

124. As part of its commitment to affordable and accessible education for all students in Antigua and Barbuda, the Government initiated a School Meals Programme in September 2007 and is equally accessible for boys and girls.

Opportunities for Continuing Education

125. Continuing education opportunities for both young and old form part of the education system in Antigua and Barbuda. Some females drop out of secondary school because of pregnancy. However, there is no law in the educational system that forces them to do so, but for reasons mainly of public disapproval, some girls elect to leave school. It must be noted that the number of girls who drop out of school because of pregnancy is decreasing. While relaxing social norms may account for this positive change it is not a direct indication of a significant decrease in the stigmatisation of expectant teenage mothers.

126. From the discussions that follow, it will become evident that women, more so than men, tend to take advantage of opportunities for continuing their education. Various institutions and organizations such as the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE), the Youth Skills Training Programme and The Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Centre (GARD) and the National Development Foundation (NDF), provide opportunities (without any gender discrimination or bias) for upgrading and/or learning new skills. Two of these institutions will be discussed below.

ABICE

127. ABICE is a post-secondary/tertiary educational institute with a Technical/Vocational emphasis established in 2005. Students can study for the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ) awarded by the Caribbean Examinations Council –CXC. The majority of the students enrolled in this institution are male. This may be due to the fact that the well-known stereotype of technical/vocational education being more suitable for males is still widely held.

GARD

128. The Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Center (GARD) is an NGO that has been in existence for over twenty years. Its focus has been mainly on training and guiding young farmers of both sexes. It has since expanded its services to include among others, mentoring of young persons and advice on how to start a small business. More recently, it has turned its attention to youth at risk: specifically those out of school, out of work and living below the poverty line. GARD reported that in the period 2009-2015, it trained 955 persons in its various programmes, particularly within its youth empowerment programme. Of that figure, 617 or 64.6 % were females.

Sitting Out-of-School Examinations

129. Some persons, usually employed persons, elect to study on their own for various examinations without entering any formal institute of learning. Alternately, they may attend

classes in a number of subjects offered by private tutors. CXC allows anyone, of any age to sit for their Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate examinations (CSEC) and their Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE). In 2013, 69.4% of candidates writing these examinations were female. In 2014, that proportion had risen to 72.4%. In 2015, it decreased to 68.2%.

Opportunities to Participate in Sports and Physical Education

130. Cultural norms do not discriminate against female participation in physical activities. There are no laws barring them from such activities. Women and girls have equal opportunities to participate in sports and physical education. Indeed sports such as football (soccer) and cricket which traditionally have been regarded as male sports are open to participation by women and girls. Such participation continues to increase over the years. Today, some sports clubs such as those for cricket and football also have female teams. Similarly, netball, a traditionally 'female' sport, now boasts some mixed teams of females and males. It must be said, though, that generally speaking, male team sports tend to attract more financial resources than female teams.

Access to Specific Education Information (Including Information on Family Planning)

131. Since the last report, the State Party has made significant strides in the area of Family Life Education, including education on family planning. Two such initiatives will be discussed here.

The National Policy on Health and Family Life Education (HFLE)

132. In 2010, the Ministry of Education published a comprehensive policy document namely, "*National Policy on Health and Family Life Education*". It follows closely the guidelines which were agreed on by the CARICOM Standing Committee of Ministers of Health and Education in 1994 which later established the CARICOM Multi-Agency Health and Family Life Education Project.

National Report of Antigua and Barbuda: Situational Analysis of Sexuality Education, 2010

133. In 2010, UNICEF/UWI engaged a consultant to undertake a survey on sexuality and sexual health education in the country. Antigua and Barbuda was part of a nine-nation survey. The stated aim of the project was to examine the status of sexuality and sexual health education in Antigua and Barbuda with a view to ensuring, "that children and young people are suitably equipped with the knowledge, skills and values to make responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships." The research focused on the views of critical stakeholders namely, the students, HFLE teachers and guidance counsellors, principals, parents, Government agencies and NGOS – those persons and organizations most involved in the process of disseminating information on sexuality and sexual health.

134. The research discovered that HFLE was indeed widely taught in schools in the nation, particularly at the primary level. Age-appropriate material designed by CARICOM, was the principal teaching tool. Family Planning, mainly on the subject of abstinence and the use of the male condom, was introduced in the secondary level material. Interestingly, only boys were taught how to use a condom which indicates some measure of gender discrimination. It must also be noted that the government of Antigua and Barbuda plans to implement a comprehensive sex education programme into the school system.

135. In addition, various agencies including Planned Parenthood, DOGA, the Child and Family Guidance Centre and GARD conduct life education programmes for teenagers and adults. It must be pointed out here that under DOGA's programmes, there is no discrimination as to which gender is taught specific methods of contraception. Females as well as males are taught the proper use of condoms.

Article 11: Elimination of discrimination in employment

The right to work

136. The nation of Antigua and Barbuda has very sound labour laws that seek to ensure the safety and well-being of workers in all aspects of their employment. The Constitution and the Labour Code give women the same right to work as men. For instance, Cap 4(1) of the Labour Code of Antigua and Barbuda states,

“No employer shall discriminate with respect to any person's hire, tenure, wages, hours, or any other condition of work, by reason of race, colour, creed, sex, age or political beliefs.”

137. Thus, women cannot be discriminated against in terms of their access to employment. However, the following statement in the Labour Code is seen by some experts to be a possible loophole in the law that may be used by employers to discriminate against women (especially pregnant women). It states:

“Provided, however, that this shall not be construed as forbidding the taking of personnel actions genuinely related to that person's ability to discharge the duties of the employment in question.”

138. In focus group discussions on the issue of discrimination against women in their access to employment, women have cited cases where employees do warn women not to get pregnant on the job. To date, these cases are anecdotal as none have come before the courts, neither have any studies been done on this subject. It is also possible that in some instances, if a man and a woman apply for the same job, with the same qualifications, an employer might choose to give the job to the male. As the supposed “breadwinner,” he may be presumed to need the job more than the woman. This way of thinking used to be a quite common but gender stereotypes such as this are dying out.

The right to the same employment opportunities and the right to free choice of profession, promotion and job security

139. There is no law that discriminates against women engaging in paid employment outside of the home. Similarly, women are free to choose to enter any profession or occupation, although there are some areas of work where there is hardly a female presence, for instance, in the construction and fishing industries. With regard to the latter, although women do not usually go out to sea with fishing crews, a number of them as wives or partners may be responsible for sales and distribution. It may be argued, however, that such views are indeed discriminatory. It is useful to note here that in recent years, women are being employed in ever-increasing numbers as security officers – once the exclusive preserve of males. Many of them have to work night shifts, the same as men. What can be seen as deference to the feminine gender is that women tend to work at places and sites that may be less prone to security breaches or criminal attacks; places such as schools in particular.

140. Based on cultural norms and practices, there is a tendency for men to be promoted up the ranks of their profession more quickly than women in the same profession. This is clearly discriminatory as there is a growing tendency for females to achieve higher levels of education than males. Again, this discrimination is based on cultural norms, which tend to give deference to men in terms of their supposed status as the main breadwinners in their families. There is no obvious discrimination between the sexes in terms of job security. However, although no specific cases have come before the courts, there have been stories of women being fired because they become pregnant out of wedlock. Such anecdotes are usually related to women working in church organizations.

The right to equal pay

141. The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code CAP. 27, E 8 (1) ensures that there is equal pay for equal work in both the public and private sectors of the economy. The law states: -

“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.”

142. Again, anecdotally, there are reports of employers in the private sector breaching this provision in the law. But, again, no complaints of such have been made to the courts. The concept of equal pay goes far beyond that of equal pay for equal work. There are socio-economic factors that account for women being paid less than men as a group. Women make significantly less than their male counterparts across sectors within the job market because they dominate the care economy and informal industries which are both undervalued and significantly less paid compared to other industries. Furthermore, although more women are being educated at the tertiary level, this does not translate to them acquiring executive-level positions at the same rates as men. Several agents of socialization, that include the school, the church and mass media, are some contributing factors responsible for the dissemination of stereotypes that result in women remaining in fields that are less paid. The feminization of poverty and unconscious biases are other factors that contribute to women being less paid on a whole. These factors need to be considered and addressed if we are to strive for the economic equality of the sexes.

The right to social security

143. Under the Social Security Act (Cap. 408), both working men and women contribute to the Scheme and enjoy the benefits of the Scheme on an equal footing. In 2013, the Scheme was revised to increase the contributions of both employers and employees. However, women rights advocates have pointed out that no provision is made in the Act to recognize and take into account women’s unpaid domestic work. Thus, unless a woman has been in paid employment for at least six months, she cannot enjoy any social security benefits. Many women have worked all their lives looking after the members of their households, but when they become old, they are not entitled to any benefits. The CDB Country Gender Assessment for Antigua and Barbuda has made the very cogent recommendation that the state will be considering:

“Social security reform should advance a more gender-responsive framework which accounts for the roles and responsibilities, contributions and participation of women and men to paid and unpaid work, formal and informal economies. Establishing a National Social Protection Floor, consistent with ILO Recommendation No.202 (2012) will work to ensure that all members of society enjoy at least a basic level of social security, and will advance existing social benefit frameworks in healthcare and all other areas, in recognition of market challenges and changes.” (CDB: 2014:25)

The right to protection of health and safety in working conditions

144. The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code protects the health and safety of all workers in every workplace through very detailed, very comprehensive provisions. It is not possible to mention all of the provisions here, but a few crucial ones will be highlighted. Division (D10) enjoins all workplaces to have a clean, well-ventilated environment; one that has adequate lighting, a reasonable temperature, adequate sanitary facilities, clean drinking water and is not overcrowded. Among other provisions in (D11) are the following:

- “(1) Adequate measures shall be taken for the prevention of fire therein and for adequate means of escape for persons employed therein;
- (2) All machinery used therein shall be operated and maintained in such a manner as to be safe for all employees;
- (3) All walls, partitions, floors, stairs, passages and gangways shall be of sound construction and properly maintained.”

145. It is hard to find a job in Antigua and Barbuda that is considered particularly harmful. Perhaps the most hazardous practice that occurs in the agricultural industry is the spraying of crops with pesticides and chemicals. The Ministry of Agriculture runs workshops from time to time to teach farmers the correct use of such products. Female farmers or farm workers would be eligible for such training. Given such training, it is safe

to assume that if women work on farms with substances that are harmful to their health especially during pregnancy, they would be aware of the dangers and avoid being contaminated.

146. It must be noted here that there is some indication that sexual harassment occurs quite frequently in the workplace. However, there is no specific law that speak to this issue.

Article 12: access to adequate health care (1 and 2)

General Health of Women

147. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has pursued a policy of providing health care to all of its citizens. This care ranges from preventative intervention to routine medical care. There are twenty-six satellite health centres in each community and eight main centres at strategic locations throughout the nation. These primary health centres and sub-centres are open to all members of the public, irrespective of gender, class or creed. (They are also open to migrants, although they have to pay subsidized fees for the services offered). Public health care, including immunizations and reproductive care, is available to women and children at the prenatal and post-natal clinics which are organized at the respective health centres. In addition, the Government runs the “Mount St. John Medical Centre” (MSJMC) – a modern 185-bed general hospital opened in 2009. This medical facility replaced the older Holberton Hospital. The Government also has a psychiatric facility known as the Clarevue Psychiatric Hospital and the Fiennes Institute, a geriatric home. Health services are also provided by several, private in-patient clinics and a number of private physicians and dentists. Mention must be made also of the Medical Benefits Scheme which provides free medication for a prescribed, quite extensive list of diseases. To be eligible for such, a person must have contributed to the Scheme for a minimum of six months. However, care is taken to ensure that the elderly and the disabled have access to the Scheme even if they have never contributed to the Scheme.

148. The health of the nation’s women continues to be good as is clear from the indicators presented below.

The Health of Women: Selected Indicators

Maternal Mortality

149. Over the last several decades, there have been few or no deaths to women in childbirth as the statistics quoted below indicate. All babies in the nation are born in hospitals and virtually all women (even pregnant teenagers) attend pre-natal and anti-natal clinics free of charge. The government supplements the diet of nursing mothers with folic acid and other vitamins. Nursing mothers are also given supplemental food items for themselves and babies.

Table 8

Maternal Deaths – Selected Years

| 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1992 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Source: Health Information Division, Ministry of Health

Major Causes of Death in Women

150. Over the years, the two leading causes of death in women are malignant neoplasm and heart disease. In some years, deaths from heart disease overtake malignant neoplasm and vice-versa. The next leading cause of death is diabetes mellitus. These diseases (among several others) are treated free of charge under the Medical Benefits Scheme. Death from HIV/AIDS was the 6th leading cause of death among women in 2009. It was the 7th leading cause of female deaths in 2010. In 2011, it had jumped to 3rd place, but in 2012, it had declined to 6th place. The treatment of HIV/AIDS is also highly subsidized by

government for all persons, without any discrimination. HIV/AIDS will be discussed in more detail later on in this report.

Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health

Teenage Pregnancy

151. The CEDAW Committee was deeply concerned about the high level of teenage pregnancy (Remark 259). It is heartening to note that teenage pregnancies have been decreasing steadily over the years. The findings of a study on teenage pregnancy rates for Antigua and Barbuda (Martin, Doyle and Raphael, 2008) indicate that teenage pregnancy rates have fallen consistently over the last four decades or so. In addition, the authors of the HFLE Policy document claim that, over the period 1969-1973, live births to teenagers accounted for 29% of the total number of births and by the period 1999-2003, they accounted for 16% only of all live births. These rates are some of the lowest in the region (Ministry of Education, 2010: 14). According to the HFLE document, more recent statistics indicate that teenage maternity rates continued to fall, “with approximately 13% of live births being to teenagers in 2009, which included 2% to females of school age” (Ibid.14).

Table 9 (a)

Number of Teenage Pregnancies: Selected Years

| <i>Year</i> | <i>1997</i> | <i>1998</i> | <i>1999</i> | <i>2000</i> | <i>2001</i> | <i>2002</i> | <i>2003</i> | <i>2004</i> | <i>2005</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total | 201 | 220 | 212 | 238 | 279 | 215 | 263 | 232 | 181 |

Source: Holberton Hospital, Ministry of Health, Antigua and Barbuda

Table 9 (b)

Number of Teenage Pregnancies: Selected Years

| <i>Year</i> | <i>2009</i> | <i>2010</i> | <i>2011</i> | <i>2012</i> | <i>2013</i> | <i>2014</i> | <i>2015</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total | 98 | 86 | 97 | 87 | 102 | 90 | 108 |

Source: Mount St. John Medical Centre, Ministry of Health, Antigua and Barbuda

152. Mount St. John Medical Centre (MSJMC), opened in 2008, collects statistics on births to mothers 18 years and under. (No girl less than 13 years old has given birth in recent years). Over a seven-year period, 2009-2015, the number of births to teenagers has fluctuated from a low of 87 births in 2012 to a high of 108 births in 2015 with an average of 95 births year (Refer to Tables 9a and 9b above).

153. Most of the births to teenagers occur at age 18; on average 41 births per year in that age group. In the same seven-year period (2009-2015), the age group 16 years and under had on average 24 births, four births occurred to girls aged 13 years. Statistics for the last sixteen years, show clearly that the number of births to teenagers has decreased over the period 1999-2015. In 1999, there were 212 births to girls aged 18 and under. By 2009, that number had more than halved to 98. Currently, in 2015, the number of births to mothers under 18 is 108.

154. No research has been done to ascertain the reasons for this decline but increasing enrolment of both girls and boys in secondary schools might be one reason for delaying behaviour that might lead to pregnancy. The HFLE document mentioned the fact that the authors of the study on teenage pregnancy rates speculate that the fall in rates may have to do with “economic, social, educational and medicinal changes over the time period” (Ibid: 14).

155. Notwithstanding the decline in the rate of teenage pregnancy, it must be acknowledged that each and every teenage pregnancy is a potential threat of a girl child not completing her education. Generally, students are allowed to continue school, which is a clear indication that cultural norms that force pregnant girls to abandon their schooling have shifted somewhat. In addition to this, in recognizing the importance of addressing teenage

pregnancy that state party is working on implementing comprehensive sexual health education in schools along with other strategies to address this issue.

The Illegal Status of Abortions

156. In Remark 258, the Committee expressed concern “about the continuing illegality of abortion, which would lead to unsafe abortions”. Abortion is still illegal in Antigua and Barbuda. Antigua and Barbuda is a small nation, and though there are no statistics available on numbers of abortions, it is well known that they can be performed safely and privately in some doctors’ offices. To date, no one has ever been prosecuted for having an abortion or effecting an abortion.

Family Planning

157. It is useful to note here that a married woman can have access to family planning services without the authorization of her husband.

158. The Committee noted with concern “the lack of family planning education programmes and the fact that contraceptives were not covered by medical benefits schemes”. A number of NGOs such as the Antigua and Barbuda Planned Parenthood Association (ABPPA), the Caribbean Family Association (CFPA), and the Collaborative Committee for the Promotion of Emotional Health in Children (CCOPE) are a few NGOs that do offer family planning education and counselling services on reproductive health. The work of these organizations will be discussed very briefly here.

ABPPA

159. The Antigua and Barbuda Planned Parenthood Association (ABPPA) continues to operate its clinic where counselling is available to all, including teenagers. The ABPPA offers counselling services at no cost and a wide range of contraceptives for both males and females are available including injectable contraceptives for women and the female condom. It was noted in the Initial Report that there are no local laws that prevent persons under the age of 18 years from seeking contraceptive information and contraceptive devices of choice. In a study, “New Acceptors of Contraceptives” done by Nunes et al. in 2006 based on the records of the ABPPA, the authors found that for the first six months of 2006, 17% of the new clients were teenagers. (Nunes et al, 2006).

160. Though not entirely free, contraceptives are now available at highly subsidized rates at all the government-run primary health care clinics and pharmacies. The Medical Benefits Scheme owns and operates the pharmacies. After consultation with nurses at the clinics, a wide range of contraceptives are offered: from the usual male condom to the female condom and injectables. Indeed, anyone who enters a pharmacy run by the Medical Benefits Scheme, can take free condoms which are placed strategically on the counters of many, if not all of the pharmacies.

CFPA

161. The Caribbean Family Planning Association has an office in Antigua. Advice and counselling by competent staff are readily available to all. Over the years, this body produced a number of poster advertisements on HIV/AIDS and other STIs aimed specifically at young people.

CCOPE

162. The Collaborative Committee for the Promotion of Emotional Health in Children is an NGO that focuses on the health and emotional well-being of children, particularly those of young teenage mothers. It receives some financial support from government. CCOPE runs a Child and Family Guidance Centre which offers counselling services to children. However, it also runs a National Parenting Resource Centre for the parents of the children who attend its counselling sessions. In 2013, there were approximately 40 children and 30 parents (mostly female) who regularly attend the Centre.

163. Apart from counselling, the Centre gives limited financial aid to mothers to purchase essential baby supplies. The Centre also runs remedial reading classes every Saturday to approximately 30 parents. If teenage mothers desire to return to school, they are encouraged and helped to do so.

Perinatal Mortality Rate (per 1000 live births)

164. In Remark 260, the Committee expressed concern about the high rate of perinatal mortality (PMR). The rates quoted in the previous report were for the years 1987 to 1992 (See Table 10 below). The PMR on average for those years was 30.6 per 1000 live births with a high of 43.75 in 1988 and a low of 22.6 in 1989.

Table 10

Perinatal Death Rate – Selected Years

| <i>Year</i> | <i>1987</i> | <i>1988</i> | <i>1989</i> | <i>1990</i> | <i>1991</i> | <i>1992</i> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Rate | 26.80 | 43.75 | 22.60 | 31.06 | 31.74 | 27.59 |

Source: Health Education Division, Ministry of Health, Antigua and Barbuda

165. More recent statistics are available only for perinatal deaths, not for the death rate (See Table 11 below).

Table 11

Perinatal Deaths -- Selected Years

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 2006 | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| 2007 | 3 | 10 | 13 |
| 2008 | 12 | 7 | 19 |
| 2009 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 2010 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| 2011 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| 2012 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 2013 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| 2014 | 4 | 3 | 7 |

Source. Health Information Division, Ministry of Health, Antigua and Barbuda

HIV/AIDS and Drug Addiction among Women

HIV/AIDS

166. In Remark 261, the Committee noted the lack of special measures for women with HIV/AIDS, as well as the absence of measures to address drug addiction among women. Much has been done since the last reporting period to enhance the status of persons with HIV/AIDS. The AIDS Secretariat has been very active in encouraging persons infected with the disease to register with their office. Statistics collected by the Secretariat are presented below in Tables 12(a) and 12(b).

167. The AIDS Secretariat has collected statistics on HIV/AIDS infections since 1985. Their statistics do not necessarily paint a true picture of the actual number of cases, as reporting is not compulsory and some persons go abroad for treatment. In 2015, the number decreased somewhat to 48, of which 27 or 52.0% were females. The cumulative number of cases recorded from 1985 up to 2015 is 1090 persons, of which 493 or 46% are female. The figures indicate that, over time, fewer women have contracted the virus than men. However, the AIDS Secretariat reported that in the younger age categories, females surpassed males in the number of infected cases. They noted that, in 2003, in the age group, 25-29, women outnumbered men in a ratio of 35:28. In the age group 15-19, the ratio was even higher, 15:1. But it is encouraging to note that since then, the numbers of new cases is decreasing

and the disparity between females and males in the younger age categories is also decreasing.

Table 12 (b)

HIV/AIDS Cases by Sex and Age Groups – Selected Years

| Age Groups | Year 2012 | | Year 2013 | | Year 2014 | | Totals |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | |
| 15-19 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| 20-24 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 24 |
| 25-29 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 14 |
| 30-34 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 17 |
| 35-39 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 14 |
| Totals | 17 | 16 | 12 | 7 | 12 | 15 | 79 |

Source: AIDS Secretariat, 2014, Government of Antigua and Barbuda

168. The State can report with some sense of achievement, the strides it has made in the area of mother-to-child transmission. Since 2008, no child had been born with HIV/AIDS, until 2012 when one case occurred. This excellent statistic can be attributed to the fact that mother-child transmission has been virtually eliminated through careful pre-natal screening of all mothers in the primary healthcare system.

Women addicted to drugs

169. To date, no special measures have been taken to single out persons on the basis of their gender. Although there has been no study of drug addiction among women, two major studies have been done among schoolchildren by the National Drug Council of Antigua and Barbuda (2005) and the SAPD – the Substance Abuse Prevention Division of the Ministry of Health (2013). Previous to these surveys on drug abuse among youths, the Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy (ONDCP) in 2002, had set in motion a five-year Anti-Drug Plan. It must be admitted, though, that there is a need to focus specifically on women who have problems with drugs as children whose mothers are addicted, generally do not receive the kind of care they deserve.

170. In respect of the rehabilitation for drug addicts, in 1998, a state-of-the-art rehabilitation centre called “Crossroads” was opened in Antigua, sponsored by Eric Clapton, the world famous guitarist. Local substance abusers are given scholarships to attend the facility, free of charge if they cannot afford to pay anything. Table 13 below shows admission data for locals who have received treatment there over the last seven years. As the figures show, far more males have been admitted than females.

Table 13

Crossroads Centre Antigua – Local Admissions by Sex, 2008 -2015

| Year | Male | Female | % Female | Total |
|--------------|------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| 2008 | 33 | 3 | 8.3 | 36 |
| 2009 | 23 | 4 | 14.8 | 27 |
| 2010 | 26 | 4 | 13.3 | 30 |
| 2011 | 24 | 7 | 22.5 | 31 |
| 2012 | 20 | 4 | 16.6 | 24 |
| 2013 | 19 | 4 | 17.4 | 23 |
| 2014 | 21 | 8 | 27.5 | 29 |
| 2015 | 21 | 6 | 22.2 | 27 |
| Total | 187 | 40 | 17.6 | 227 |

Source: Crossroads Centre, Antigua, 2015

Article 13: Family benefits, finance and recreational activities

The right to family benefits

171. The Country Poverty Assessment Report (2007)) estimated that 52.8% of the population of females in Antigua and Barbuda was living below the poverty line and a corresponding 47.25% of men. In the most recent census of 2011, of the population 15 years and over who could be regarded as being part of the workforce, 960 persons claimed to be unable to work because of some disability. Of that number, 520 or 54% were women.

172. A major social problem that is emerging in the country is the increasing number of elderly women who are destitute. The Fiennes Institute exists as a free, residential, government-run institute for those needing permanent home care, particularly the elderly. However, this institution does not have enough rooms to cater for the numbers who are eligible for admission. Staff at the Mount St. John Medical Centre claim that within the last few years, several elderly women have been admitted to hospital, suffering from lack of care. The State Party has been acutely aware of this problem and some programmes have been put in place to alleviate in some measure the distress of the poor, the elderly and the disabled.

GRACE

173. In 1999, the Cabinet of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda approved a programme initiated by DOGA whereby needy persons, particularly women who were living alone with little or no income, could have their electricity and water bills paid by the state.

The Senior Citizens' Utility Subsidy

174. Adults are given vouchers worth \$100 E.C. per month which are redeemable at the Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) for payment towards utilities bills for electricity and/or water. This subsidy applies to all eligible individuals irrespective of gender or marital status.

The People's Benefit Programme

175. The People's Benefit Programme was started in 2009 to provide some relief to certain categories of persons, namely: children, aged 0-18 years; the economically disadvantaged defined as "any unemployed citizen whose household income is less than \$800 E.C. per month" and persons with disabilities who are unemployed.

176. Currently, in 2015, approximately 2,625 persons are receiving relief: 2,580 in Antigua and 45 in Barbuda. In Antigua, females represent 80.7% of the total receiving relief, and 57.7 % of the total in Barbuda. In Antigua, 78 children are receiving relief and 3 in Barbuda. Most of the children receiving relief are disabled, and approximately 89% of the disabled children are female. In the general category of "the disabled", 628 or 56.5% of the 1,111 receiving relief are female. In the category, "economically disadvantaged", of the 1391 persons receiving relief, 927 or 66.6% are female.

177. Women are not discriminated against in their access to social safety net programmes. What is obvious from the foregoing statistics is that women are in the majority of the poor who need help in meeting their basic needs.

The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit

178. As pointed out in the previous consolidated report, there are no laws that discriminate against a woman's ability to access bank loans, mortgages or any other form of financial credit on the basis of her gender. However, the authors of the CDB Country Gender Assessment document note that, "Women have limited access to and control over the means of production in Antigua and Barbuda, in particular, land and credit" (CDB 2014:2). The fact that fewer women are granted loans and mortgages comes about mainly because women generally have less property than men to use as collateral for the loan.

179. The State passed the Small Business Development Act (2007) to provide assistance to existing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and to encourage persons to develop this sector. Loans of not more than \$ EC 100,000 would be guaranteed by the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank (ABDB), a government statutory body. Many entrepreneurs of both sexes find the eligibility requirements for acquiring loans quite stringent and many SMEs find it difficult to meet them.

180. Recently, a financial institution called, "AXCEL Finance" began operating in many OECS countries including Antigua and Barbuda. This company offers micro-credit and financial services to SMEs. What is most relevant to the issue of access by women to such credit is that this micro-financing initiative excludes businesses in the informal sector where most female-owned business operate.

The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life

181. Women and girls in Antigua and Barbuda can participate in recreational activities and in all aspects of cultural life, though not fully in some areas. As in most societies where Christianity is the dominant religion, in Antigua and Barbuda, there is a tendency for more women to attend church than men. But the leadership in most denominations is still dominated by males. A few churches still exist which expressly forbid women from holding leadership positions.

Cultural activities

182. Women are free to engage cultural activities on an equal footing with men. They are not forbidden either by law or custom from doing so. It is generally recognized that some religious organizations frown on the participation of their members in cultural activities such as carnival. However, this prohibition where it exists, applies equally to men and women. It must be noted that cases of sexual harassment and sexual assaults on women increase during the carnival celebrations. These issues of gender profiling and gender-based violence during carnival have come to the fore in more recent times as women rights advocates, in collaboration with DOGA, seek to sensitize the public about these harmful practices.

Article 14: Rural women

183. Both Antigua and Barbuda are small islands so the distinction between urban and rural is not as marked as in larger territories. Having said this, one has to qualify the statement by noting that vis-a-vis Antigua, Barbuda can be regarded as somewhat 'rural' in that access to business and banking facilities, for example, are not as easy as in Antigua. However, most of the population of Barbuda lives in the small town of Codrington. The Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) engaged in a commendable action in 1971 by establishing a branch in Barbuda, thereby making banking transactions more accessible to the Barbudan population.

184. Access to primary health care is relatively easy for women in Antigua who live outside of the city of St. John's in that at least one of the 26, government-run clinics and pharmacies are located in each parish or large rural community. Barbuda also has a government-run primary care facility and a hospital. The major health problem in Barbuda is that these two facilities are not equipped to care for cases of serious illness. Seriously ill persons have to be transported to Antigua by air or by ferry.

185. It is widely recognized that the availability of adequate means of transportation is one of the major issues facing rural women in Antigua and Barbuda. Intra-island transportation in both islands is expensive. Private companies and individuals largely run the public transportation system. The notable exception is the transporting of school children that is done by buses owned and operated by the government. Students pay highly subsidized fares.

186. Air and sea transport between Barbuda and Antigua is also very expensive, thus interactions between the populations of the two islands are limited. Barbuda also lacks

adequate infrastructure at the ferry and cargo port. The State Party is very much aware of this and plans are in progress to rectify the situation.

Article 15: Equality before the law

General

187. The equality of women with men in the eye of the law is guaranteed by article 14 of the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda. On the basis of this constitutional principle, the entire domestic legislation of the country guarantees the equality of women. However, laws dealing with individual rights usually do not explicitly state that women have equal rights with men. This is valid in the field of civil law as well. In Antigua and Barbuda, women (equally with men) have at their disposal all the statutory legal means for the defence of their subjective rights.

Right to Enter into Contracts etc. and Equal Treatment of Women in Court

188. According to the laws of Antigua and Barbuda, a person, regardless of sex has full capacity once he or she attains the age of 18. Therefore, a woman who is aged 18 or above is no longer a minor and can enter into contracts and administer property in her own name. In Antigua and Barbuda therefore, women have equal rights with men to enter into contracts on property in their own name and/or to administer property.

189. A person is, under present law, also not compellable (i.e. cannot be made) to give evidence against his or her spouse under any circumstances. At common law a person is not competent (i.e. not allowed) to give evidence for or against his or her spouse except in limited circumstances.

Equality in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals

190. Women in Antigua and Barbuda enjoy the same rights as men to be appointed to the Judiciary. Assessment of suitability for judicial appointment is based on a candidate's qualification, knowledge of the law, judicial temperament and propriety in conduct. The gender of the candidate is not one of the assessment criteria. Women therefore have the same rights as men to appear before court as claimants or plaintiffs, as counsels for the defence in clients' suits or as their attorneys.

191. The entire legislation and judicial practice are based on the principle of equality of the sexes. In judicial practice, there are no cases of discriminatory court decisions taken to the detriment of women because of their sex. Similarly, under the Jury Act, there are no restrictions on women serving as jurors. Thus, women are entitled to serve on juries and many of them do serve.

Freedom to choose their residence and domicile

192. The laws of Antigua and Barbuda guarantee women the same rights as men to liberty of movement and freedom to choose residence. Women therefore have equal rights with men in relation to freedom of movement and choice of residence and domicile.

Article 16: equality in marriage and family relations

The same right to enter marriage

193. As discussed in the previous report, both men and women in Antigua and Barbuda are free to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage once they have reached the age of 18. Under the Marriage Ordinance, the age of maturity was reduced from age 21 to age 18. Any male or female desiring to be married at a younger age must have the consent of a parent or guardian. Child marriages contracted under the age of 15 are not legal.

Same rights and responsibilities in marriage and at its dissolution

194. As discussed in the previous report, if the marriage is to be dissolved, the same grounds apply equally to men and women. On dissolution of marriage, the woman has an equal right to apply to the court for property acquired during the marriage. She can also apply for maintenance for herself and any children they might have had. The Matrimonial Causes Act sets out the grounds on which a husband or wife may ask the Court for a decree of divorce. These are adultery; desertion without cause for at least three years; cruelty; incurable or unsound mind and has been continuously under care and treatment for at least five years.

195. Non-marital unions (common-law unions and visiting unions) are to be found at every level in society, but particularly in the lower socio-economic strata. The law provides that couples who have lived together continuously for 5 years or more can bring proceedings to court in respect to their title and rights to property. Children of common-law unions or children who are born out of wedlock are entitled by law to inherit equally as children born in a marital union.

Same rights and responsibilities as parents

196. The laws pertaining to the issue of parental guidance and responsibilities are stated clearly in the new Maintenance of and Access to Children Act, 2008. It treats both parents equally as it does not differentiate between a male parent and a female parent.

Same rights to decide on number and spacing of children

197. There are no laws in Antigua and Barbuda that speak to the issue of the number and spacing of children. The State Party is not aware of any practices that force a woman to have more or less children than she desires.

Same rights and responsibilities regarding guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children

198. Women have equal rights and responsibilities with men with regard to guardianship, trusteeship and adoption of children. Unmarried women can adopt children, but the process of adoption is easier for married women.

Same rights to choose family name, profession and occupation

199. A woman in Antigua and Barbuda can decide to retain her "maiden name" on marriage. She does not have to assume her husband's name although the majority of women choose to do so. Some women elect to add their husband's name to theirs, thereby creating a double-barrelled surname. Similarly, women are free, as men are, to choose their occupation or profession as they see fit.

Same rights to ownership of property etc.

200. There are no legal barriers to women owning property in their own right. Under the law, women inherit property equally with men.

Adoption of a minimal age of marriage and compulsory registration of marriage

201. By law, the minimum age at which a female may enter into marriage without parental consent is 18 years. All marriages in Antigua and Barbuda must be registered. The Marriage Act also states that a marriage should be solemnized with the publication of banns and with the authority of a license or magistrate's certificate.

202. The labour laws in Antigua and Barbuda make provision for 13 weeks of maternity leave for women (married or unmarried) with full pay from their employers. The laws apply to employment in the private sector as well. Generally speaking, the majority of women are granted the 13 weeks prescribed by law with little or no difficulty. No woman can be dismissed on the grounds of being pregnant. However, some women have complained that they are told by their private sector employers to avoid getting pregnant on the job. In the absence of any studies on this, one cannot say with certainty that there is widespread

discrimination against women because they are pregnant or may get pregnant. It is useful to note that there are no provisions in law for paternal leave. Men are not entitled to any leave when their children are born. This has a significant impact on family dynamics as childrearing is seen primarily as a woman's responsibility. It is a stereotype that places unfair burdens on women recovering from childbirth and it denies men the opportunity to spend quality time with their newly expanded families.

Child-Care

203. The nation does have a network of child-care facilities. The government has instituted legal measures regulating the establishment and function of such facilities under the Education Act of 2008. Each and every child-care facility and pre-school has to register with the government and follow the established protocols. The government so far has established eight child-care facilities with plans to establish more to assist poor families. There is also new legislations, policies and national protocols to address child care and protection issues.

Foster Care

204. According to Section 12 of the Juvenile Act, children who are in need of alternative care can be placed in the care and custody of a fit person. A National Child Protection Policy was developed in 2009 which recognised the need to establish a fostering service within a proposed Childcare and Protection Agency. Currently, the Citizens' Welfare Division (CWD) of the Ministry of Social Transformation continues to be responsible for the placement and management of children in foster care.

Adoption

205. In respect of adoption, the OECS Family Law and Domestic Violence Reform Initiative has drafted a model legislation which the state party adopted to address the issue of adoption.

Time for Breast-feeding

206. The Labour Code of Antigua and Barbuda gives thirteen weeks of paid maternity leave to all women irrespective of their mode of employment. Nursing breaks for breast-feeding are not required by law. Some women express their milk and leave it for the persons minding their babies to feed from a bottle. For the majority of women, no feeding takes place at work, although arrangements are sometimes made with individual employers to give mothers time off to go home to feed their babies.

Unionization

207. There are two major labour unions –The Antigua and Barbuda Trades and Labour Union (ABTLU) and the Antigua and Barbuda Workers' Union (ABWU) which serve to protect the rights of all unionized workers both in the public and private sectors. Most employees in large businesses and corporations are unionized, including the teaching profession and the tourism sector where the majority of the employees are women. The hierarchy of both labour unions is still largely male dominated. For instance, in the ABTLU, the older of the two unions, of the 21 current members of the executive, only 8 or 38% are female. The highest-ranking female is the 2nd Vice-President. The current General Secretary is also female.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

208. It cannot be denied that cultural norms do accept a level of sexual harassment as "normal" and "just the way men behave." From all reports, inappropriate sexual advances in the workplace still occur quite frequently. Women, rather than men, are usually the recipients of such unwanted advances. It is to be regretted that to date, the country has not introduced any measures to address sexual harassment and violence against women in the workplace. The lack of specific laws dealing with sexual harassment is one of the major

areas of concern that continue to be addressed by DOGA and other CSOs. The State Party is committed to dealing with this painful issue as soon as possible.

Concluding comments and reform priorities

209. The State wishes to reiterate its commitment to fulfilling the mandate of CEDAW to end all forms of discrimination against women. Since the last reporting period in 1995, the social and cultural climate has shifted considerably in favour of women taking their rightful place in society. A more positive attitude of appreciation for a woman's right to equality with men in all spheres of life is being fostered through the media, and other public fora.

210. Antigua and Barbuda has many laws that speak to equal rights for women. However, a stricter enforcement of such laws and a system of monitoring their violations is needed. Of critical importance is the establishment of a national gender policy and a specific body to monitor the implementation of CEDAW as was recommended by the Committee. Additionally, legal steps are needed to increase women's role in decision-making and leadership.

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