

Responses to Follow-up Questions: Consideration of Trinidad and Tobago's Combined Fourth to Seventh Periodic reports at the 64th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

- **Provide information on the percentage of the national budget allocated to:**
 - (a) **Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs)**
 - (b) **Ministry of Social Development**
- **Provide any data available on women's representation in decision making areas (eg. Judiciary, Academia)**
- **Provide data on the rate of secondary school dropouts due to teenage pregnancy**

The total budgetary allocation to Gender Affairs is as follows:

2013: \$1,032,243 (development programme and recurrent expenditure)

2014: \$6,846,000 (development programme and recurrent expenditure)

2015: \$2,642,516 (recurrent expenditure figures only)

2016: \$2,642,516 (recurrent expenditure figures only)

Women's representation on State Boards

There are 42 State Boards, of which information on the Boards of Directors was obtainable for 33. In total there are 242 board members, of which 164 are male and 78 are female. Women represent 32.3% of all Directors of these State Boards. There are 29 male chairpersons and 4 female chairpersons.

Of the 42 State Boards, information on the Senior Management Team was obtainable for 23. In total there are 158 senior managers, of which 89 are male and 68 are female. Women represent 43% of all senior managers of these State Boards. There are 19 male and 4 female Chief Executive Officers/ Managing Directors. Women represent 17.4% of all Chief Executive Officers/ Managing Directors of these State Boards.

Women's representation in Local Government

64 out of 130 Positions in Local Government are held by women (49%). 18 out of the 48 Aldermen are Women (38%).

Teenage Pregnancy

Total number of teenage pregnancies recorded between 2008 and 2015:

YEAR	TOTAL NO. OF PREGNANCIES
2008	1939
2009	1726
2010	1671
2011	1839
2012	1592
2013	2324
2014	1700
2015	2168
TOTAL	15231

Total number of teenage pregnancies between 2008 and 2015, disaggregated by age:

AGE	TOTAL NO. OF PREGNANCIES
UNDER 12 YEARS	35
13-16 YEARS	2645
17-19 YEARS	12551
TOTAL	15231

Total number of teenage abortions recorded between 2011 and 2015:

*Note: These were recorded at Hospitals and do not necessarily include abortions carried out in other circumstances. Statistics for such are unavailable, owing to the clandestine nature of such activity.

YEAR	TOTAL NO. OF ABORTIONS
2011	98
2012	122
2013	227
2014	198
2015	98
TOTAL	743

- **What concrete steps are being taken to include a definition of discrimination (direct and indirect) within the legislation? Provide a timeline for this.**
- **How many cases of child sexual violence have come to the courts and how are they being dealt with? How are the perpetrators being punished?**

At present no steps are taken to include this definition of discrimination.

Sanctions for sexual violence can be found in the Sexual Offences Act, 1986.

- **Human trafficking**

Further to previous information submitted to the Committee, in October and November 2015, the Ministry of National Security's Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) conducted a National Threat Assessment of Human Trafficking involving over fifty (50) stakeholders from government agencies, law enforcement, international agencies, NGOs and the media. This threat assessment formed the basis of a National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons which was prepared by the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons during the first quarter of 2016. This plan is being considered by Cabinet. The National Task Force comprises Ministers responsible for National Security, Education, Social Development, Foreign Affairs, Labour and the Office of the Attorney General.

Since the formation of the Counter Trafficking Unit in 2013 and to date, twenty-two (22) nationals have been charged for human trafficking and related offences and these matters are before the courts. Of these cases, one girl (internal trafficking) and one male child (foreign national) were identified as victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. One of the perpetrators was placed on TT\$ 2 million bail and has been unable to meet the bail requirement. He has thus been in remand since January 2016. The second perpetrator was not granted bail because he breached a previous bond and the court also considered that the victim was a child. The third perpetrator was granted TT\$ 180,000 bail. All trafficking offences are indictable offences.

The penalty upon conviction for trafficking in children is TT\$ 1 million fine and 20 years of imprisonment. For trafficking in adults, the penalty is TT\$ 500,000 and up to 25 years imprisonment.

With respect to accessibility of shelters for victims of human trafficking, it has been difficult to access appropriate housing and shelters for victims. The domestic violence shelters are not the best fit for foreign nationals and foreign-speaking nationals because of the cultural differences and habits and the language barrier. Victims of trafficking, because of the risk factor, do not have the same liberty to exit and leave these shelters as they are always escorted in and out of shelters by CTU Officers or by shelter staff. The staff of existing shelters that have direct interaction with victims of trafficking are also not adequately trained and sensitized to victim traumatic stress disorder and how to treat with foreign nationals. To date, Trinidad and Tobago has no specialised shelter for victims of human trafficking. For child victims, the Children's Authority is legally responsible for the shelters and social services afforded to child victims.

- **What means of accessing justice and safe return to country of origin are available to victims of human trafficking?**

Victims of trafficking who are foreign nationals are afforded the opportunity to contact their respective foreign missions in Trinidad and Tobago. The Ministry of National Security, through its Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU), and through diplomatic channels, will liaise with victims' home countries for repatriation and reintegration. In some cases, the CTU will liaise with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to assist with reintegration of the victims in their countries of origin. This is to ensure that victims are safely escorted through the departure and arrival airports by National Security officers and/or by officers attached to INTERPOL. Victims are also afforded the right to legal counsel and are informed of their rights.

- **What measures are there to make the counter trafficking unit fully operational re: collecting data and forming policy and action?**

According to the Trafficking in Persons Act Chapter 12:10, the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons establishes the policies. A National Plan of Action was developed during the first quarter of 2016. This plan of action is for the period 2016-2018 and comprises a comprehensive set of measures to address the four P's – Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership. These measures include the collection and analysis of data and trends. The National Task Force comprises Ministers responsible for National Security, Education, Social Development, Foreign Affairs, Labour and the Office of the Attorney General. The CTU has already begun to implement some of the measures.

- **Provide details of the case whereby a police officer was convicted for involvement in human trafficking. What was the nature of the sanction?**

There have been no human trafficking convictions to date. Since the establishment of the CTU in January 2013, twenty-two (22) Trinidad and Tobago nationals have been charged for human trafficking and related offences with thirty (30) victims identified. These matters are before the Magistrate's Court. Of these matters, two involve police officers – one officer was suspended with pay and the other officer was a retired serviceman who had not returned his police uniform and was subsequently charged for this offense. One of the police matters was committed to the High Court in the first quarter of 2016.

- **Provide a timeline for the adoption of the amendment of the Industrial Relations Act so that domestic workers can be included.**

The amendment of the Industrial Relations Act, Chapter 88:01 is part of the Government's Legislative Agenda, 2015-2016 for review and amendment. At present, the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MLSED) is finalizing the draft consultation report that will be circulated to stakeholders for comments and used as a basis for the preparation of a legislative policy document that will inform the drafting of legislation to revise the said Act.

- **Although women are in larger numbers in small business enterprises they get the smaller percentage in terms of loans, what data is available to show women get the equal amount or more than what is dispersed to men?**

The National Entrepreneurial Development Company Limited of Trinidad and Tobago (NEDCO), an agency of the Ministry has issued 39.86% of its loans to women (up to December 2015). It is to be noted that women also hold 48.34% of the accounts at NEDCO.

- **What measures have been taken with respect to sexual harassment at the work and the National Study which was said to have been undertaken on this issue?**

Over the period 2011-2013, the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MLSED) had undertaken preliminary work with respect to Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in Trinidad and Tobago. The National Study, however, was not undertaken as proposed. As work continues for the promotion of decent work for all in Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry recently held consultations of the development of Basic Terms and Conditions of Work Code/Legislation which will seek to provide a minimum floor of rights for all workers. Sexual harassment is being considered as part of the minimum floor of rights. It is to be noted that there a number of collective agreements registered with the Industrial Court which contain express provisions on sexual harassment in the workplace.

- **What measures/programmes exist which are aimed at vulnerable workers/ women which would aid in poverty reduction?**

The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MLSED) has a number of programmes which contribute to poverty reduction and which provide a relief to vulnerable groups, inclusive of women. In this regard, the following are noteworthy:

- The Co-operative Development Division of the Ministry has worked with women to establish a domestic workers' co-operative, the Service Workers Centre Co-operative Society Limited, which was registered in December 2013 under the Co-operative Societies Act, Chapter 81:03 of Trinidad and Tobago. The main objective of the Co-operative is to provide a mechanism for the economic empowerment of domestic employees, a large percentage of which is women in Trinidad and Tobago, while providing a platform for the recognition of the socio-economic contribution these workers make to the sustainable development of Trinidad and Tobago. Examples of other co-operatives which are largely focused on the empowerment of women are Femmes du Chalet Co-operative Society Limited, La Brea Village Agricultural and Marketing Co-operative Society Limited and Caribbean Agrarian Land and Investment Co-operative Society Limited. The latter two of the aforementioned co-operatives engage in value-added production and marketing of agricultural produce while the former is a Service co-

operative which provides daily meals and catering services mainly in the capital city, Port of Spain.

- The National Employment Service operates a One Stop Shop at the Ministry's satellite Offices for providing assistance to job-seekers. This decentralized service is particularly important for jobseekers who reside in rural communities.
- The Ministry has established a Domestic Workers register in an effort to enhance its protection of domestic workers.
- The Ministry actively engages in outreach activities to promote the awareness of workers' rights, inclusive of the Maternity Protection and Minimum Wage provisions. Various media are used – television, radio, social media, community activities. The Maternity Protection Act was amended in 2012 to provide for 14 weeks maternity leave, in keeping with the international labour standard.
- The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is an active member of the ILO and in this regard, the Ministry has incorporated the strategic objectives of the ILO Decent Work Agenda into its policies and programmes. Gender equality and non-discrimination are cross-cutting themes which are also promoted by the Ministry in consultations on policy development led by other Ministries and agencies.
- **Provide information on the following:**
 - (i) **SEED**
 - (ii) **Small Loan Programs**
 - (iii) **Community Development Fund**
- **What measures are in place to guarantee the integration of gender perspective in poverty alleviating programs?**
- **Provide information on the systematic evaluation of poverty reduction programs (importantly, data on the number of women in poverty who have benefitted from programs).**

The Community Development Fund is mandated to provide interventions at the community level specifically towards poverty alleviation. To this end, at risk, disadvantaged, indigent populations are targeted through the provision of grant funding towards community based projects designed to improve their quality of living. Organizational entities such as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are the mechanisms through which grant funding is dispersed for community interventions.

Whilst the interventions are not gender specific in its intent, due to the target population, projects for women's empowerment have been an integral aspect of the organization's programming. An average of 10% of applications for funding in a given year is received from women's organizations. Such applications tend to revolve around activities centred on skills acquisition, social interventions (gender violence, community outreach programmes, and child care),

capacity building and entrepreneurial development. However, after the technical review process, approximately 5% make it to the funding stage due to weak project proposals or proposals which do not fall within CDF's criteria for funding. For example, applications for individual funding or profit making ventures.

Several women's organizations received grant funding as follows over a five year period:

- **Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD)**
A capacity building initiative in which 20 women would receive certified training as part of a rapid response unit for the families of victims of gun violence.
- **Mathura Women's Group**
A capacity building and entrepreneurial development project in which 25 women would engage in skill acquisition towards the establishment of a production centre utilizing vegetables and fruits grown in the community.
- **Network of Rural Women**
A two day Workshop on Leadership (Women in Politics) in which 30 women participated.
- **Women In Fishing**
Through the granting of a Community Hero award, the award recipient utilized her funds towards fishing production for 5 women.
- **Community Heroes Award**
This is a bi-annual award in which community groups and individuals are nominated by communities for outstanding community service. Two were held in 2013 and 2015. Out of 31 awards given, 13 were women. They received funding in the amount of \$50,000 towards a project of their choice.
- **Sea Lots Action Group**
An agricultural project in which 10 single mothers engaged in short crop production.
A Grow Box Production project in which 21 women were trained in Grow Production out of which 10 went on to active production of short crops for community use and for sale. Funds derived from this project were utilized towards the setting up of a Home Work Centre.
- **Evans Vision and Sound Mission**
A training programme in Upholstery and Furniture Design for 20 female prison inmates.
- **Community Volunteers Programme**
Community Volunteers are persons who are paid a small stipend to offer support to the Programme Officers of the CDF. They are required to act as liaisons between communities and the CDF. Out of 30 Volunteers recruited, 15 were women.
- **Other Projects Funded in which Women and Girls Benefitted:**

Couva Children's Home: 15 girls under 14 years old and 9 boys
Raffa House Children's Home: 7 girls under 14 years and 10 boys
Wharf Trace Home Work Centre: 9 girls, 15-16 years old
Saigal Centre: 8 girls, 15-16 years old
Reactors Community Group - Tilapia Rearing - 3 women over 18 years
Felicity Agri and Aqua Group: 5 women over 18 years old
Deaf Empowerment Advancement Foundation: 10 women

- **How many primary schools teach a health and family life education curriculum?**
- **What is the return policy for girls who drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy?**
(i). Provide information on the return policy and the reality of the number of girls who return to school.

The Ministry of Education is unable to definitively quantify the number of schools since the HFLE curriculum is subsumed under the Social Studies Curriculum.

Girls are allowed back into school after they give birth and are enrolled in a school in the same Education District to allow them to complete their education.

The Ministry of Education does not currently possess statistics on the number of girls who return to school.