

## **GRENADA 'S STATE INTRODUCTORY TO THE CEDAW REPORT**

**15<sup>TH</sup> February 2012:**

**Presented by: H.E. Stephen Fletcher. Ambassador to the Kingdoms of Belgium, Holland, Republic of France, Federal Republic of Germany, and the European Union .**

### **Introduction:**

Madame President, Members of this august committee, experts, members of the NGO Community, observers, all persons gather here today for this historic event for Grenada.

I say historic, because this is the first report which the State of Grenada is presenting its report, since expressing its commitment to the attainment gender equality when it signed the 'Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 17<sup>th</sup> July , 1980, and subsequently ratified the said the Convention on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1990.

Therefore the report which is before this Committee today covers the period 1990 – 2007, and captures the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> periodic reports.

Despite this NOT SO ADMIRABLE record, this act in and of itself do not reflect the State's overarching commitment to the fulfillment of its national, regional and international obligations with regards to the fulfillment of the various aspects of the CEDAW.

Further, my singular presence here reflects the serious challenge and indeed dichotomy faced by Grenada. A singular presence imposed upon the state by a combination of resource and administrative constraints.

As a Brussels based diplomat, requested to present this most important report, I crave your indulgence as I seek to outline the state of play with regards to Grenada's implementation of its commitment under the CEDAW.

I wish to express regrets and apologies over the absence of the second member of this delegation. Her absence is not a reflection of the status of women in the state sector but more so a reflection of what I alluded to earlier , i.e , a the late acquisition of much needed resources scare financial resources , and her inability to secure the necessary entry visa to Geneva. The latter was not obtain on time.

As a consequence of this experience, it might be opportune for this committee to reflect on how its' mechanisms for the presentation of such reports could be enhance / adapted in order to better enable small, resource constrained states in particular to fulfill their international obligations. I submit this idea for further consideration.

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Notwithstanding the above Government reiterates its commitment to the attainment of gender equality and the full realization of the human rights of women, within the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women as a major tool

While the country has experienced challenges at reaching its full obligations, including reporting obligations, this is not because of inaction in the process of working towards women's empowerment and gender equality. In fact, as the reports show, steady progress towards the advancement of women has been made in many areas.

The following provides more current data on key elements in the CEDAW

### **1. Law Reform**

A very robust law reform process is ongoing, including laws that directly relate to women's empowerment. The new laws and policies already in force are:

- Domestic Violence Act (2010)
- Child (Protection and Adoption) Act (2010)
- Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Protocol

Legislation being considered in 2012 are:

- Spousal Maintenance Bill
- Child Maintenance Bill
- Sexual Harassment Bill
- Amendments to the Sexual Offence Provisions in the Criminal Code

Amendments to the Sexual Offence Provisions in the Criminal Code are currently being considered. A draft has been prepared by the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and the Ministry of Social Development has offered a response for further changes to be made to the draft.

There is political will and State-level commitment for full implementation of the new Domestic Violence Act (2010) and other legislation on gender based violence, such as Sexual Violence.

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2. **Article 3: Development and Advancement of Women** ( within the context of discrimination) The National Policy on Ageing identifies that there is a disproportionate effect on the situation of women and men. For women, it is mainly economic as they are more likely to have:
- worked for lower wages
  - had more temporary contracts (informal economy)
  - had breaks in their career for child bearing and child rearing
  - less contributions into pension schemes
  - longer longevity

For men, the main issue was social support as they lacked family ties with their children (absentee fathers).

The policy positions adopted are:

1. the national policy on gender should address those causes of inequality affecting older persons.
2. investigate the possibility of instituting pension credits for mothers who stay at home to care for children.
3. ensure that the safety nets reach all who need them, including the cash transfer programmes for those below the poverty line.

### 3. **Acceleration of Equality between Men and Women**

There are 3 judges, 2 are women. 6 magistrates - 4 are women.

As of September 2011, there were 142 women and 846 men in the RGPF. The highest rank with women is Assistant Superintendent of Police. None of the Deputy or Assistant Commissioners are women

### 4. **Women in Political Leadership**

In January 2012, 18 % of the Houses of Parliament and 20% of the Cabinet was women. This is less than in the previous Parliament, mainly

due to the election process which resulted in fewer women in the Lower House (13%). The Political Party structure and democratic elections determine the composition of parliament. The Government recognises that more women must be encouraged and facilitated in entering party politics.

**70% of Permanent Secretaries and 45% of Heads of Government Departments are women.**

## **5. Article 12: Health**

**In 2011, the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that Grenada was among the three countries with the lowest maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in the world.**

**In addition, mother-to-child transmission of HIV has been zero.**

## **6. Violence against Women**

**Related law and Policies in force are;**

- ✓ **Domestic Violence Act (2010)**
- ✓ **Child ( Protection and Adoption ) Act ( 2010)**
- ✓ **Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Protoco which came into effect on 16 May 2010.**

Over the next three years, intense work will be undertaken with the support of project funded by UN Trust Fund and UNICEF. The main activities include:

- Training targeting specific social actors and mixed groups of stakeholders to advance the comprehensive and co-ordinated multidisciplinary state response to violence against women. Personnel in the health, policing, justice and social service Sectors will be trained. This begins with a Continuing Medical Education Conference on February 18, 2012 on the theme "Medical Care Response to Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence", followed by training of Police Officers from February 20, on Responding to Sexual Assault.
- Public Sensitisation and Education will lead to primary prevention and reduction of stigma against victims. It will also reduce tolerance for violence against women by exposing specific beliefs and practices

that promote inequality for public discourse and by educating the public about human rights and gender equality. The result will be greater gender equality.

- Enhancement of Psychosocial Services delivered by the State and by Civil Society partners that target victims and perpetrators. It will introduce programmes for early intervention (domestic violence) and persons at risk.

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- Co-ordination of a Data Collection Strategy to narrow data gap in administrative data on gender based violence, particularly domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Preparation for the Establishment of a Special Victims Unit to strengthen the response mechanisms by key stakeholders, in this case, the Royal Grenada Police force.

**A National Strategic Action Plan to End Gender based Violence is being prepared. The draft itemises strategies for implementation:**

- i. Social examination of gender based violence**
- ii. Capacity building of the lead agent – the Ministry of Social Development**
- iii. The multi-agency approach**
- iv. A communications strategy for public education and sensitisation about gender-based violence Community mobilisation and outreach**
- v. The education sector and educational programming**
- vi. Sensitisation, training and long term support of stakeholders**
- vii. Ensuring adequate legal responses by the legal sector**
- viii. Improving and providing adequate medical responses**

Another strategy is working in collaboration with stakeholders. Two NGOs will be co-implementing agencies, and partnerships are strengthened with the Police Force, Ministry of Health, St George's University and other entities.

## **7. Employment**

**The Minimum Wages Order has been revised by SRO 30 of 2011 and took effect in January 2012. It provides for increases to the**

**minimum wages of different classes of workers. This improvement has moved all workers to an income above the poverty line, set by the Country Poverty Assessment of 2007/08 at \$487 per month per person (the vulnerability line was set at \$608.50 per month). Domestic Workers' wages rose from \$400.00 to \$725 per month with a basic \$35 per day for those working less than 4 days per week.**

**The differences between the wages of males and females in the agricultural sector was removed. Further, minimum wages for caregivers of the elderly was introduced at \$700 per month.**

#### **8. National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (GEPAP)**

**This plan seeks to develop a comprehensive National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan, as an institutional framework that will assist the Government of Grenada in facilitating gender equality and women's empowerment. This policy will guide the formulation of initiatives that are gender-sensitive and developed through the strategic incorporation of a rights-based approach to human development.**

The process to be used to develop the GEPAP is participatory and data driven.

- training members of staff of the Division of Gender and Family Affairs and mechanism for implementation in the use of the GEPAP
- public sensitisation on the GEPAP.

Project Funding for this project will be provided by the United Nations Entity (UN Women)

#### **9. National Gender Machinery**

**The National Gender Machinery, located in the Ministry of Social Development, has a four point vision and plan focusing on achieving gender equality, eradicating gender-based violence, strengthening families and empowering women. This programme will have strong positive links between women's economic empowerment, skills development and a reduction in gender based violence. It will guide and be supported by policy reform, and lead to more effective implementation mechanisms and greater impact on the lives of individual women and girls across all segments of the population.**

**I wish to bring to the attention of this Committee the National Strategic Plan to End Gender based Violence. To reduce violence against women and girls through effective implementation of laws and national policies**

**Specific Objectives are inter alia:**

- ⇒ To provide an effective multi-disciplinary response that builds public confidence and serves as a deterrent to perpetrators and potential perpetrators of violence against women
- ⇒ To develop the capacity of major stakeholders in the application of the laws and policies
- ⇒ To engender a well-informed general public with knowledge of the relevant laws, national policies, rights and mechanisms
- ⇒ To reduce the cultural tolerance of violence against women
- ⇒ To maintain an effective stakeholder support network and communication

**List of strategies include**

- 1. Social examinations of gender based violence**
- 2. Capacity building of the lead agent- the Ministry of Social Development and related agencies**
- 3. The multi-agency approach**
- 4. Providing long term support to stakeholders**

**ADDITIONALLY , my delegation wishes to highlight the following ..GO TO NUMBER 3**

1. Population – Statistically equal between men and women

<b>Estimated number of women in Grenada, mid-year population categorised by "Stage of Life" (2009)</b>		
<b>Stage of Life</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Number</b>
Girl children	0-9	8 958
Adolescents	10-19	10 365
Young women	20-24	6 566
Adult women	25-59	22 637
Elderly women	60+	7 067
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>55 593</b>
<b>SOURCE:</b> <i>Central Statistical Office</i>		

Findings from the Population and Housing Census of 2011 are not yet released.

2. Corporal punishment – Fundamentally, Grenada subscribes to the principle that no punishment should be inhumane or degrading. Corporal punishment is a cultural practice that is gradually being eliminated. In schools and other institutions, the use of corporal is regulated and limited, as one way of reducing its use. In addition, public discussion on the issue of discipline emphasises the reduction of corporal punishment. It is expected that over time, as alternative forms of discipline and punishment become more widespread, the reliance on corporal punishment will be reduced. At this time, consideration is not being given to changing legislation.
3. **There is hesitation to use wide ranging legislation and affirmative action to enforce what can be achieved through cultural change and a gradual recognition of equal opportunities between males and females. E.g. women in political leadership. It is expected that by changes in the ideological basis for discrimination to beliefs supporting equality, more women will emerge in political leadership, as they have in public service leadership.**



#### 4. Percentage of women in political leadership (Feb 2012)

	Women	Total	Percentage
Lower House	2	15	13%
Upper House	3	13	23%
<b>Total</b>			
<b>Parliament</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20%</b>

5. Women with Disabilities – their quality of life is treated with by the Grenada National Council of the Disabled, an agency that has direct financial and other support from the Ministry of Social Development. The Criminal Code offers protection from sexual violence. Plans are in place to ensure that information materials to be produced in the near future include materials that are printed using Braille and therefore made accessible to the visually impaired.
6. With regards to Article 8 which deals with International Representation and Participation. It is worthy to note that Grenada has six (6) Permanent Representatives/Ambassadors'/High Commissioners of which four ( 4) or 67.0 percent are women.
7. Moreover, the importance that is attached to women representation can be seen in the key positions which these women hold. Ambassador Dessima Williams, Grenada's Ambassador to the UN, had the opportunity to lead the AOSIS over the last 3 years.
8. Additionally, of the 31 Permanent Secretaries and HoDs in the Public Service , 20 or 64.5 % are women.

#### Constraints and Challenges

- ✓ The inadequacy of national budgetary allocations for sufficient human and other resources for the fight against gender-based violence
- ✓ Acceptance of aspects of gender-based violence, social behavior, social change and shifting values, which have become cultural and social norms;

- ✓ The need for stronger political will on the part of Cabinet, parliament and civil society required for the recognition and identification of the problem, and the passage of relevant laws targeting the eradication of gender-based violence.
- ✓ The disjointed efforts of stakeholders, in tackling the problem.
- ✓ Poor attitudes of some frontline responders, which affect the delivery of customer/client oriented services.

It is opportune that a comprehensive gap analysis was already undertaken by Consultant Jacqueline Sealy-Burke, contained in the document entitled the **"Mapping of Existing Social Service Delivery Systems and Identifications of Gaps in Current Services"**. The following is determined:

Government's policy, legislative thrust, public interface and education on gender, does not always expressly indicate that addressing gender-based violence is linked to the promotion of women's equality and protection against discrimination, to holistically impact the progress required by the commitments to CEDAW, the Belem Do Paro, the MDGs, and the Commonwealth Plan of Action, etc.

There is insufficient and ad hoc public sensitization/education on women's and children's rights, in the context of gender-based violence, including their right to be heard and to report abuse to specified hotlines or otherwise. User friendly booklets on the rights of women and children should be widely circulated and hotlines advertised daily. There is no law review or reform commission or committee, which ensures that international and regional instruments signed by the government relevant to gender-based violence, are implemented, though passed into domestic legislation as required, or responds to developments in the society.

collection of aggregated statistics of reported and unreported cases of gender based violence. This is required, to best analyze the extent of the problem and develop the most effective programs to end it.

- The average victim reportedly cannot afford legal counsel to watch their interests, and do not get assistance to fill up domestic violence forms at magistrates' courts in outer parishes, or even have the money to go from the rural areas to the LACC in St. George's, for legal or psychological counsel. children are at risk, in a
- There is insufficient follow up and supervision of social work professionals and up to date administrative record keeping of data and statistics with respect to gender-based violence. There is a lag between the adoption of protocols, passage of laws and necessary

training of stakeholders. One-off training workshops for responders are inadequate.

- Persons trained through projects funded by donor agencies such as GNOW's Support Network project in counseling and responses to the problem, are not effectively utilized following the completion of the funding of a project cycle.

There is a lack of consistent and sustained public awareness and sensitization, which targets gender-based violence in society.

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### ***Opportunities***

- Grenada should therefore utilize the compliance with Treaty obligations as a strategic opportunity to educate the public and access donor funding.

### **Summary Conclusion.**

Much has been achieved but there is still much more to be accomplished. The road ahead is challenging but NOT Insurmountable.

The GoG take this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation and thanks for the generous assistance which it has received and continues to receive with respect

In closing, I wish to introduce, the rest of my delegation, H.E. Stephen Fletcher, Ambassador to the EU.

I look forward to productive exchanges.