

DELEGATION REPORT



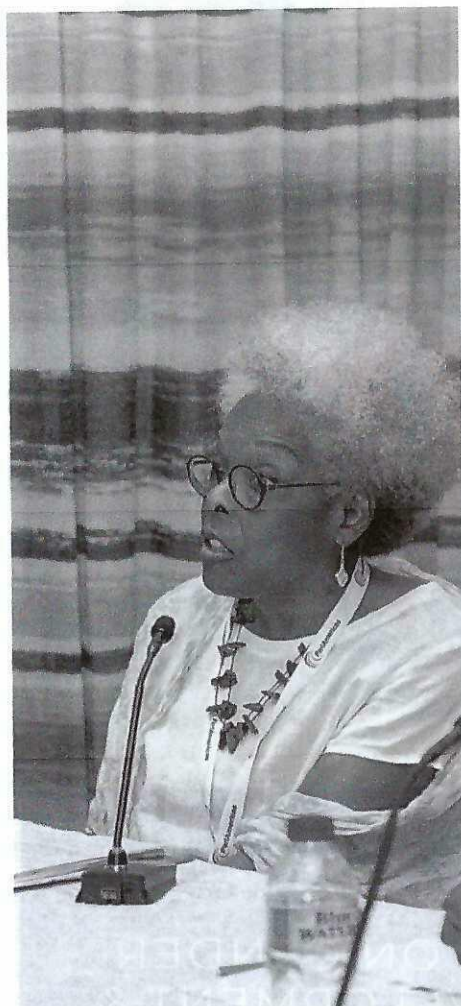
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON GENDER
EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT &
EXCHANGE AMONG CARIBBEAN WOMEN'S
PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

GROS ISLET, SAINT LUCIA
OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 2, 2023

Delegation Report on the Multi-stakeholder dialogue on Gender Equality and Sustainable Development & Exchange among Caribbean Women's Parliamentary Caucuses

"Sustainable development cannot be achieved if gender inequality is not addressed"

Hon. Alvina Reynolds, President of the Senate, St. Lucia



"When we speak of sustainable development, we mean a future where economic growth, social well-being, and environmental protection are all in balance. Gender equality is one of the cornerstones of this vision."

Honourable Claudius Francis (Saint Lucia), Speaker of the House of Assembly and Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors

DELEGATION

Sen. Laurel Lezama-Lee Sing

Ms. Anita Haynes, MP

Ms. Chantal La Roche,
Director, Legal Services



ABOUT PARLAMERICAS

ParlAmericas promotes parliamentary diplomacy in the Inter-American system and is comprised of 35 National Legislatures from North, Central and South America as well as the Caribbean.

ParlAmericas works to enhance the ability of legislators to fulfill their roles and responsibilities by facilitating exchanges of parliamentary best practices and by promoting cooperative political dialogue on regional issues.

Headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, ParlAmericas works towards strengthening democracy and governance, by organising consultations and building multi stakeholder partnerships with civil society and youth leaders.

The organisation mainstreams gender equality by advocating for women's political empowerment and the application of a gender lens in legislative work and fosters open parliaments by advancing the principles of transparency, accountability, citizen participation, ethics and probity.

Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Gender Equality and Sustainable Development



OPENING REMARKS

On Day 1, opening remarks were delivered by the following:



Tonni
Brodber

Representative, UN
Women Multi-Country
Office for the Caribbean

Alisha
Todd

Director General,
ParlAmericas



Hon.
Claudius
Francis

Speaker of the House of
Assembly, St. Lucia

Hon.
Alvina
Reynolds

President of the Senate,
St Lucia



KEYNOTE PANEL

THE COST OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) AND ITS IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

During the first panel discussion, moderated by Honourable Valerie Woods (Belize), Speaker of the House of Representatives, panellists Honourable Dr. Virginia Albert-Poyotte (Saint Lucia), Minister for the Public Service, Home Affairs, Labour and Gender Affairs, Roberta Clarke, Commissioner, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Tonni Brodber, Representative, UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean discussed the economic costs of violence for individuals (e.g., victims and their children), families, communities and society at-large.

The panel also outlined the range of direct costs of violence against women and girls, including costs on the healthcare, police, justice and social welfare systems, as well as costs of victim support services such as shelters, counselling and legal aid. The discussion also highlighted indirect costs related to violence against women and girls such as lost employment, wages and productivity, learning time lost and harm to the well-being of survivors and their children.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)



Violence Against Women and Girls is defined by the United Nations as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”

Gender-based violence (GBV), in its original meaning, is violence that is directed against a person, because of the roles they are expected to play in society. Originally, it reflected the violence perpetrated against women because of the expected gender roles women should play based on stereotypes and unhealthy ideologies. Violence against Women and Girls is one form of GBV.

While GBV and VAWG are often used interchangeably in literature and by advocates, the term GBV highlights the gender dimension of violence and the relationship between women's subordinate status in society and gender inequality, and women and girls' increased vulnerability to violence.

PANEL DISCUSSION

INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG)

The panel discussion on innovative initiatives to end violence against women and girls was led by Erin Brown, of Erin Brown Connects, a disability and inclusion advocate and consultant. During this panel Hon. Justice Peter Jamadar, Caribbean Court of Justice highlighted changes in the law over time as well as gaps in legal drafting language.

Also participating in this panel discussion were the Honourable Dessima Williams, President of the Senate of Grenada and Isiuwa Iyehen, Deputy Representative, UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean who provided insights into the National Study on the Economic Costs of Violence Against Women and Girls in Jamaica Report.



6.49%

In Jamaica, the estimated total costs of VAWG for a full coverage case was estimated at USD 1 billion or **6.49 per cent of the 2018 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.

70%

The costs of healthcare services related to VAWG were estimated at USD 25.1 million, which was equivalent to 0.2 per cent of the 2018 GDP. More specifically, the costs of healthcare services for physical violence against women were estimated at USD 18.1 million, which is **70 per cent of overall healthcare costs**.

**\$341
MILLION**

Estimated law enforcement and court costs related to VAWG were USD \$341 million in 2018. These costs include registration and administration costs and protection; probation and eviction orders issued; and long-term detention (prison).



PANEL DISCUSSION

GOOD PRACTICES FOR BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Moderated by Senator Lisa Jawahir (Saint Lucia), Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality, this panel explored good practices for building partnerships. The discussion highlighted the work of Red Root SVG and the Commonwealth Youth Council. Most notable was the presentation by Nadine Heywood,

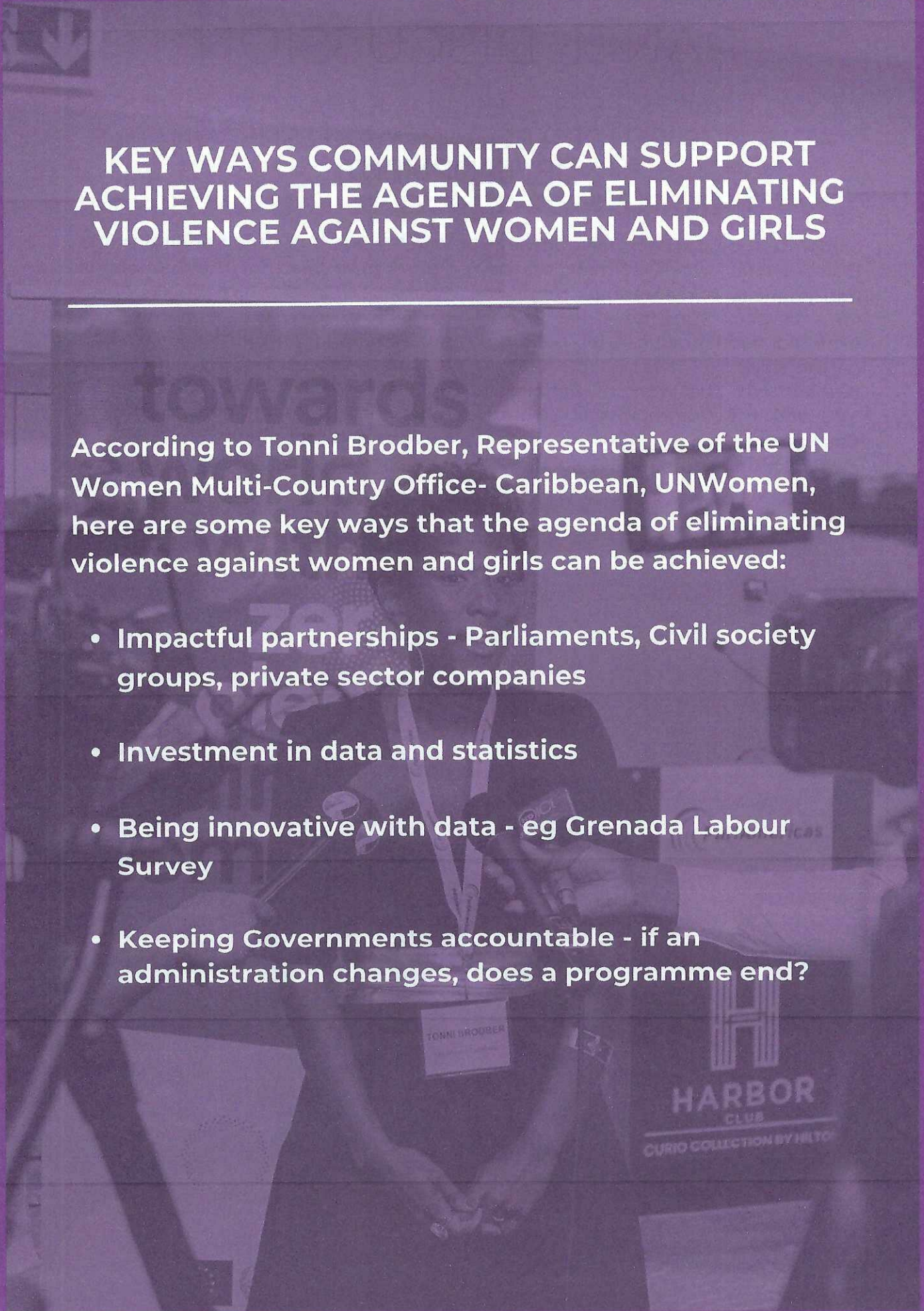
Vice President of Credit Solutions and Programme Lead for the Scotiabank Women Initiative which breaks down barriers to increase economic and professional opportunities for women to be successful by providing unbiased access to capital and tailored solutions and holistic advisory services and mentorship.



KEY WAYS COMMUNITY CAN SUPPORT ACHIEVING THE AGENDA OF ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

According to Tonni Brodber, Representative of the UN Women Multi-Country Office- Caribbean, UNWomen, here are some key ways that the agenda of eliminating violence against women and girls can be achieved:

- Impactful partnerships - Parliaments, Civil society groups, private sector companies
- Investment in data and statistics
- Being innovative with data - eg Grenada Labour Survey
- Keeping Governments accountable - if an administration changes, does a programme end?



INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

EXAMINING SIDS SPECIFIC ISSUES FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Facilitated by Letitia Nicholas, Monitoring and Reporting Analyst, UN Women Caribbean, this session kicked off with a riveting presentation by Dr. Rosina Wiltshire, gender and development specialist.

Participants were also updated on the SIDS Conference Gender Equality Forum by Asha Challenger, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN and Focal Point for the conference. The SIDS Conference Gender Equality Forum is a meeting bringing together leaders and experts from small island developing states to discuss gender equality and its impact on sustainable development. The forum is organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is taking place in Antigua and Barbuda in 2024.





PARALLEL SESSIONS

AVENUES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND ENDING VAWG WITHIN AND THROUGH PARLIAMENT

Participants were assigned to 2 groups, with one session for Parliamentarians and a parallel session for civil society participants.

Moderator for the session for Parliamentarians was Chantal La Roche, Director, Legal Services, Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, and panellists were Dwight Sibbles (Jamaica), MP, Hon. Alincia Williams Grant (Antigua and Barbuda), President of the Senate and Hon. Emma Hippolyte (Saint Lucia), MP and Minister of Commerce, Manufacturing, Business Development, Cooperatives and Consumer Affairs.

The objectives of this session were to:

1. Explore different avenues through which parliamentarians can advance gender equality and ending violence against women and girls in their parliamentary work (oversight, representation, legislation) and within parliament itself;
2. Exchange good practices in parliaments or employed by individual parliamentarians to contribute to gender equality and ending violence against women and girls; and
3. Share strategies, tools, and mechanisms that can support parliamentarians/parliaments in advancing work on these themes.

MP Sibbles shared the experience of the JSC on The Sexual Harassment Act (Jamaica), while Hon Williams-Grant explained her work with youth and public engagement on gender equality in parliament including the "President's 10" and Minister Hippolyte described the effectiveness of collaboration with civil society on the domestic violence legislation.

The background of the page is a faded, purple-tinted photograph of a roundtable exercise. Several individuals, mostly men in suits, are seated around a table. One man in the foreground is looking towards the right, while others are partially visible in the background. The overall tone is professional and academic.

ROUNDTABLE EXERCISE: APPLYING A GENDER LENS IN THE EXAMINATION OF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND CONSIDERING POSSIBLE RESPONSES THROUGH THE VARIOUS LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS

Participants were provided with various case studies, and then placed into groups to consider issues such as crime, finance and taxation, the environment and disabilities from a gender lens.

Each group was then challenged to develop solutions for the various problems identified in the case studies.

Exchange among Caribbean Women's Parliamentary Caucuses



ABOUT WOMEN'S CAUCUSES

Women's parliamentary caucuses gather together women members of parliament from across different party lines, with the purpose of providing peer support to foster gender equality legislative and policy agendas.

Women's caucuses can engage in a wide range of activities, including gathering data, conducting research, creating partnerships with allies within and outside the parliament, facilitating public discussions, raising awareness of key issues, promoting civic education, and learning from experiences in other countries, among others.



ROUNDTABLE SESSION

EXCHANGE AMONG CARIBBEAN WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

On day 3, representatives of women's parliamentary caucuses from the Caribbean gathered for an exchange focused on current priorities and good practices for caucus functioning. The meeting was co-organised by ParlAmericas, the UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean, and the Parliament of Saint Lucia, with the aim of strengthening networks among the women's caucuses in the Caribbean. Opening remarks were provided by Senator the Honourable Alvina Reynolds (Saint Lucia), President of the Senate and Alisha Todd, Director General of ParlAmericas.

The meeting was facilitated by Letitia Nicholas, Monitoring and Reporting Analyst of UN Women Caribbean. The agenda included an interactive roundtable session, whereby representatives of parliamentary caucuses shared their existing priorities and projects. Participants also exchanged on the opportunities for the current caucuses to provide guidance and support to other parliaments interested in establishing women's caucuses, and explored areas in which technical assistance from ParlAmericas and UN Women MCO-Caribbean can further support the ongoing work of women's caucuses across the region.





ROUNDTABLE SESSION: EXCHANGE AMONG CARIBBEAN WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

Honourable Dessima Williams (Grenada), President of the Senate and Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors:

"It is crucial that we continue to amplify the voices of women parliamentarians in our Caribbean region. We have seen that establishing and strengthening women's parliamentary caucuses can be an effective way to ensure that women's leadership emerges and is supportive of our countries' development. It is my hope that with opportunities to learn from one another, this leadership work will continue to make a positive impact on the parliamentary system and for our people."

RESOURCES ON WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

Guidelines for Women's Caucuses-Inter-Parliamentary Union:

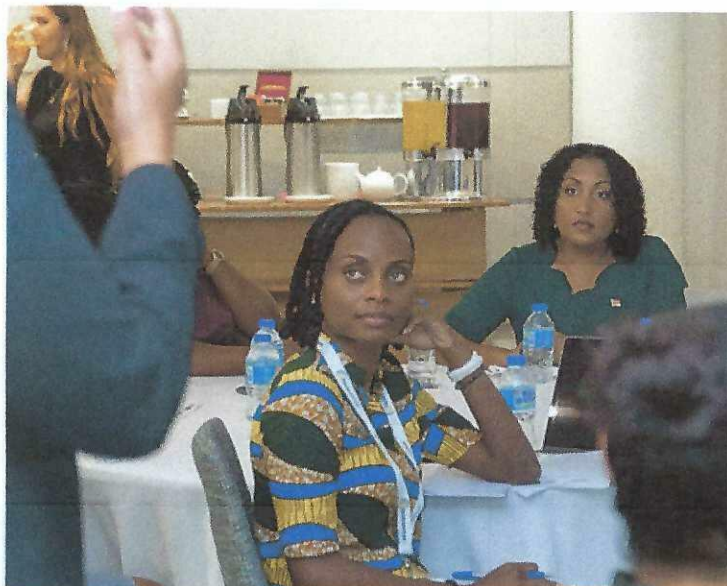
<http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/caucus-e.pdf>

Multi-party Caucuses for Gender Equality A Handbook for Parliamentarians in Latin America and the Caribbean, ParlAmericas:

<https://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/agora-documents/Multi-Party%20Caucuses%20for%20Gender%20Equality%20-%20A%20Handbook%20for%20Parliamentarians%20in%20Latin%20America%20and%20the%20Caribbean.pdf>



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and Sustainable Development & Exchange among Caribbean Women's
Parliamentary Caucuses



APPENDIX I

Joint statement: Stronger Together:
Propelling sustainable Development,
Gender Equality and an end to Violence
Against Women and Girls in the
Caribbean



APPENDIX I

THE
STATE
OF
NEW
YORK
IN SENATE
JANUARY 1891



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence
against women and girls

An initiative of the United Nations funded by the European Union



STRONGER TOGETHER: PROPELLING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, GENDER EQUALITY, AND AN END TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE CARIBBEAN

JOINT STATEMENT

We, parliamentarians, representatives of national gender machineries, civil society representatives, and experts from 17 Caribbean countries and territories, gathered in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, for a multi-stakeholder dialogue on October 31-November 1, 2023, to consider the ways in which we can collaboratively advance the intrinsically interconnected objectives of inclusive and sustainable development, gender equality, and an end to violence against women and girls.

We recognise:

1. That our region is committed to addressing our unique priorities as articulated in the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy, the Bridgetown Initiative, and the SAMOA Pathway, all of which reaffirm that SIDS remain a special case for sustainable development, within the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, and further reflected in Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (the Belém do Para Convention) and its Follow-up Mechanism (MESECVI).
2. That, despite progress towards gender equality – evidenced by the increase in women’s participation in the labour force, reduced gender gaps in schools, the creation and amendment of laws to protect women and the improvement of women’s representation in politics – gender inequality continues to be prevalent, reflected in disproportionate balances of unpaid care work, high rates of intimate partner violence and gender-based violence, especially violence against women and girls, the digital gender gap, unequal access to the labour market, substantial gender wage gap, other barriers to women’s economic empowerment, impunity for those who commit crimes against women and girls, and inadequate legal protection.¹
3. That violence against women and girls is one of the most insidious and devastating forms of gender inequality and occurs at high levels: statistics reveal that 46% of women in the Caribbean region have experienced at least one form of violence in their lifetime,² representing an abject violation of human rights and freedoms that can result in immediate and long-term physical, psycho-social, economic, and/or health consequences, including the loss of life.
4. That work towards ending gender inequality and violence against women and girls is also work towards sustainable development, and vice versa, given the ways in which inequalities hinder human, social, and economic development across the region. Further, gender inequality has costs that prevent resources from being allocated to other developmental issues: globally, violence against women and girls has an estimated cost of US \$1.5 trillion.^{3 4}
5. That addressing these complex realities in an inclusive, comprehensive, and sustainable manner requires strategic and coordinated action by actors in all spheres and sectors of society and requires genuine and durable partnership with government, private sector, civil society, and the media.

¹ [SDG Fact Sheet Latin America and the Caribbean](#), UN Women

² [Caribbean Women Count Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Data Hub](#), UN Women Caribbean

³ According to the UN Women Caribbean [National Study on the Economic Costs of Violence Against Women and Girls in Jamaica Report](#), this cost is attributable to resource allocation to healthcare, police, justice and social welfare systems, and victim support services, as well as costs from unemployment, declines in wages and productivity, learning time lost, and harm to the well-being of VAWG survivors and their children.

⁴ [The Economic Cost of Violence Against Women](#), UN Women (2016)

We, as stakeholders in defining and shaping the trajectory of the Caribbean region's development, therefore commit to:

1. Promoting the collection of data disaggregated by sex, race, ethnicity, disability, age, socioeconomic status, and geographic zone (rural-urban) on the various forms of gender-based violence, especially violence against women and girls, and gender analysis, dissemination, and use, to address the data gaps on this phenomenon and other related developmental issues, in order to guide the development of programs and interventions that are appropriately tailored to meet the needs of communities and countries.
2. Designing and implementing effective and inclusive actions in our own realms, as well as in partnership with other actors, to address sustainable development issues, gender inequality, and violence against women and girls that draw on our knowledge of existing good, innovative, and evidence-based responses in place in the region and around the world, including Health and Family Life Education (HFLE).
3. Utilizing our various platforms, networks, positions, and communication channels to strengthen public knowledge and raise consciousness on gender equality and violence against women and girls and amplify the calls for collaboration, unity, participation, and investment to address inequalities and promote sustainable development.
4. Advocating for and contributing our expertise and voices to the development of inclusive national positions, as well as amplifying Indigenous voices and the voices of other vulnerable and marginalized groups, at the 4th SIDS Conference and other international fora on sustainable development issues in order to accomplish the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A.) Pathway, highlighting in particular how gender equality and women's empowerment can be a catalyst to deliver on commitments related to: debt; access to sustainable finance; oceans and the blue economy; gender-responsive climate action, including comprehensive responses to economic and non-economic losses and damage, and just transitions; citizen security; and gender data and statistics.
5. Calling for adequate allocations of resources, gender responsive budgeting, and increased accessibility of financing to ensure the effective implementation of commitments and actions related to gender equality, ending violence against women and girls, and sustainable development.