

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN



Report of the technical meeting to examine the economic autonomy of women in the Caribbean



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**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean**

Technical meeting to examine the economic
autonomy of women in the Caribbean
26 July 2016
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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**REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL MEETING
TO EXAMINE THE ECONOMIC AUTONOMY OF WOMEN
IN THE CARIBBEAN**

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A. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Caribbean countries continue to be challenged by the impact of inequality across class and gender. Women experience the highest incidence of poverty and unemployment in Caribbean societies, and a lack of economic empowerment due to lower wages and the associated reduced benefits compared to men for similar work.
2. The Decent Work Agenda of the International Labour Organization which fosters an integrated and gender-mainstreamed approach should be entrenched in labour policies if we are to promote more inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Development-oriented policies that support productive activities and decent job creation for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, as well as equal pay for work of equal value, should be seen as integral to the Decent Work Agenda.
3. Strengthening entrepreneurship to promote decent work is also critical to growth and sustainable development. Entrepreneurship in the subregion is characterized by gender inequality of access and opportunity. Furthermore, female entrepreneurs are more likely to be found operating in the informal economy, facing challenges such as lack of access to credit and other financial services. Given that access to capital remains one of the crucial barriers to the growth and development of women-owned businesses in the Caribbean, it is recommended that new sources of financing be identified and access to these sources be facilitated for female entrepreneurs.
4. Many women start businesses often without social protection, to meet their immediate needs for self-employment and to ward off poverty. Urgent attention needs to be paid to the provision of social protection and social safety nets if we are to assure women's economic autonomy.
5. Partnerships between banking institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are important for promoting support for women entrepreneurs. NGOs can facilitate forums between interested entrepreneurs and banks to identify the needs for entrepreneurial development, while also providing information on other financial services such as insurance policies and investments. There can also be collaboration in providing training and support to ensure that women are better equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in the world of business.
6. Education reform is critical for women's economic autonomy. While women in the Caribbean achieve higher levels of educational qualifications than their male counterparts, they still account for higher unemployment levels.
7. The institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in the Caribbean remain under resourced, not only in terms of human and financial resources, but also in terms of technical capacity. Governance challenges range from weak capacity to produce and report data, to weaknesses in project management and an inability to effectively implement gender mainstreaming strategies. There is need to strengthen institutional capacities and introduce necessary policy reforms to advance gender equality and the economic empowerment of women in order to achieve sustainable development in the subregion.
8. Government ministers with responsibility for the economy should accompany ministers with direct responsibility for women's affairs to high level meetings on gender. This will help to promote gender mainstreaming of government policies and decisions.

9. There is a lack of research on women's entrepreneurship, and more work in this area is required to help identify the gaps where they exist, and inform the appropriate interventions in response.

10. The gender discourse needs to be refocused on the issue of girls, though not at the expense of the boys. Investment in girls, especially in areas such as their health and wellbeing, is highly recommended because Caribbean society needs healthy and well-adjusted girls becoming women, if it is to move forward with the empowerment of women.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date

11. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean convened a half-day Technical Meeting to examine the economic autonomy of women in the Caribbean on 26 July 2016 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

2. Attendance

12. The meeting brought together senior officials from the national machineries with responsibility for programmes supporting women's advancement and the promotion of gender equity in countries of the wider Caribbean. The following CDCC member States were represented: The Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. The following organizations and agencies also participated: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), International Labour Organization (ILO), The Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women, Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios sobre el Desarrollo, Uruguay (CIEDUR) and the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies (UWI).

3. Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Economic empowerment of women in the Caribbean
3. Panel discussion on "Facilitating the economic autonomy of women in the Caribbean"
4. Closing remarks

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of meeting

13. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean welcomed all participants and informed them that the Technical meeting was to precede the Caribbean Preparatory Meeting scheduled for later that day. She explained that these meetings were organized to help focus the Caribbean's preparation for the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women to be held in Montevideo, Uruguay in October of this year.

14. She stated that the economic autonomy of women was of special interest to ECLAC, as it fits with the region's current focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the importance of gender mainstreaming that is integral to that process. The economic autonomy of women was also relevant to research work being undertaken by ECLAC including a proposal to address the debt challenges faced by many Member States in the Caribbean subregion. She noted that economic growth in the post-crisis period remained flat, further exacerbating circumstances of high unemployment and growing poverty levels. These challenges have had significant impact on some of the more vulnerable groups in society, women central among them.

15. She also stressed that ECLAC has underscored the importance of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and will actively pursue ways to build resilience through adaptation and mitigation projects. Attention will also be given to promoting greater investment in green industries in the subregion. This is an area that ECLAC believes will address the physical and social vulnerability of the populations in the Caribbean, with particular emphasis on women since they represent a major portion of the agricultural sector.

16. With the rise in non-communicable diseases, she indicated ECLAC's intent to collaborate with Caribbean organizations to address health issues relevant to women particularly as they age. This has implications for the economic security of elderly women, considering, in particular, that many of them have been employed in the informal sector without the benefit of social safety nets such as pensions or health insurance.

17. The Director ended her remarks by underscoring how pleased she was that this forum offered an opportunity to solicit the ideas and perspectives of Member States and regional organizations to enrich the discourse on women's economic autonomy and empowerment.

2. Agenda item 2: Economic empowerment of women in the Caribbean

18. The Social Affairs Officer in the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean delivered a presentation on women's economic empowerment within the context of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. She emphasized that the SDG framework must be utilized to accelerate gender equality and economic empowerment of women and girls, while also promoting sustainable development for all.

19. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is made up of 17 goals and 169 targets with a view to advancing the three dimensions of sustainable development- the economic, social and environmental. While gender is often regarded as a cross-cutting issue, many of the SDGs have emphasized the importance of women's equality and empowerment as both an objective and part of the solution for achieving sustainable development. Even though SDG 5 is the stand-alone gender goal, which is dedicated to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the overall 2030 Agenda represents a significant step forward since it recognizes that women's empowerment is a prerequisite for ending poverty. It is also the first time that areas such as the valuing of unpaid care and domestic work are included in a global development framework.

20. Economic empowerment occurs when both women and men can participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that not only recognize but value their contributions. This would mean equal access to economic and other opportunities; the power to make and influence decisions; and the ability to advance and succeed economically. However, the ECLAC Social Affairs Officer acknowledged that inequalities still exist and are prevalent in the Caribbean. Indeed, countries of this region have some of the highest rates of inequality in the world. She noted that the Caribbean continues to be challenged by inequalities across class and gender, with women

experiencing high incidence of poverty and unemployment. Women also experience a lack of economic empowerment due to lower wages and associated benefits compared to men. This impacts their access to social security and other social protection benefits. Women's employment in the Caribbean subregion was found to be concentrated mostly in the services sector. Women earned lower wages than men even though they worked longer hours. Indeed, women were reported to be earning between 10 to 15 per cent less than their male colleagues with equivalent educational qualifications.

21. The Social Affairs Officer recalled a recent ECLAC report on Beijing +20 which noted that while an increase in the labour force participation rates of women in some countries such as Barbados and Saint Lucia was recorded, the overall regional averages continued to show sharp gender differentials in favour of males, despite the fact that in most countries females comprise over 50 per cent of the population.

22. She therefore recommended that the decent work agenda that integrates gender-mainstreaming be included in work policies. In this regard, she pointed to SDG 8 which calls for the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Target 8.3 calls for the promotion of development-oriented policies that support productive activities and decent job creation; and Target 8.5 calls for full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities; and equal pay for work of equal value.

23. She highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship in promoting decent work and stimulating growth in the subregion, while noting the disparities in access and opportunity for male and female entrepreneurs. For many women, the catalyst for entrepreneurship was the absence of wage jobs; while others were motivated by the desire to be independent and have control over their economic resources. She also noted that women entrepreneurs were more likely to work alone, faced with numerous challenges such as lack of access to credit and other financial services. The need for new sources of financing was therefore stressed, since access to capital remained one of the crucial barriers to the growth and development of women-owned businesses. In this regard, she mentioned a new project by the Commonwealth Secretariat called crowdfunding as a potential new form of financing for women entrepreneurs in the Caribbean. This initiative, launched in Guyana, aimed to raise USD 1 million in grant funding through a global rewards-based crowdfunding campaign using the internet. To date, 50 Caribbean women entrepreneurs from about 10 participating Caribbean countries have received grants of between USD 10 000 and USD 25 000 through the initiative.

24. She concluded her presentation by reiterating other challenges that have plagued the journey to women's economic autonomy and empowerment over the years. A major challenge stemmed from a lack of institutional and governance capabilities such as weak statistical capacity in terms of data collection and dissemination; weaknesses in project management; and insufficient capacity to implement gender mainstreaming strategies. The institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women remain under-resourced, not only in terms of human and financial resources - but also in terms of technical capacity. She recommended the strengthening of institutional capacities and the introduction of necessary policy reforms to support the attainment of gender equality and the economic empowerment of women in the quest for sustainable development.

Discussion

25. The lack of assets and collateral was identified as a barrier faced by women entrepreneurs in securing funding for business ventures. It was recommended that Member States explore more

options for extending greater financial support to women to promote their economic empowerment and autonomy.

26. The meeting discussed options to extend financial support to women entrepreneurs. Collaboration between banking institutions and NGOs was one avenue for promoting support for women entrepreneurs. NGOs can facilitate discussion forums between interested entrepreneurs and banks to identify the needs for entrepreneurial development, while also providing information on other financial services such as insurance and investments. It was recommended that in cases where an entrepreneur lacks sufficient assets to guarantee a loan, banks could be encouraged to consider using the actual start-up business as collateral.

27. The meeting took note of state-established institutions that engage in micro lending, such as the Jamaica Social Investment Fund that provides microfinance for small and medium enterprises in Jamaica and the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited in Trinidad and Tobago that provides lending at different levels based on one's commitment to pay without the demands of collateral.

28. The crowd-funding initiative by the Commonwealth Secretariat was welcomed as a potentially innovative method to source financing for small enterprises. It has been effective in raising small sums of money from a large number of people via Internet or social media for funding projects or businesses, without the attendant conditionalities that are typically applicable to regular loans and services provided by lending institutions. It was also suggested that Member States consider encouraging investors interested in the Caribbean to use the crowd-funding initiative.

29. Cooperative schemes such as the "sou-sou", an informal savings system based on trust and typically interest-free, was recommended as another type of financial arrangement that should be promoted. Such financing arrangements are better suited for single women or persons with little collateral, and should be encouraged.

30. The meeting took note of the fact that women tend to be risk averse and content to remain in business in order to secure just enough financial resources to meet their family needs. It was suggested that research be conducted to explore the possible linkages between the household headship status of women and their risk attitude in the business sector.

31. Delegations also acknowledged the substantial lack of research on women's entrepreneurship in the Caribbean subregion. More work is needed to help identify where gaps exist and to inform the interventions that should be developed in response. The publication "The Political Economy of Gender in the Twenty-first Century Caribbean" by Professor Eudine Barriteau was highlighted as a useful resource on women and entrepreneurship in Barbados, Jamaica and Saint Lucia.

32. The meeting stressed the importance of assessing the multi-dimensional barriers to women's economic empowerment. The contexts within which some of these barriers occur are related to patriarchal structures and ideals which include household responsibilities and home-care systems.

33. Delegations agreed that there was need for a paradigm shift in the educational opportunities made available to both females and males in the Caribbean subregion, to prevent an over-emphasis in any one area of study. It was noted that some areas have been traditionally male dominated and remain out of reach for women, and this needs to change.

34. The meeting acknowledged the lack of trained or skilled female workers in areas like construction in a number of countries in the subregion, which has resulted in the recruitment of foreign labour to address labour shortages. It was recommended that social compacts in education be explored with all key stakeholders including governments, academic institutions, private sector and industries, to ensure greater collaboration among all parties. This could facilitate the identification of priority areas of training that are reflective of the industry's needs at a given time and ensure that the education system is responsive to national needs. The need for more training and support to ensure that women are better equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to prepare them for the world of business was underscored

35. The work that was undertaken by CARICOM to develop a Labour Market Information System in the subregion was highlighted as essential in identifying key gaps in the labour market to facilitate the proper matching of job skills to job demand.

36. The Government of Grenada has been offering Caribbean Vocational Qualification training and certification in non-traditional areas as a means to build capacity in key areas of need, such as construction and hospitality. The specific programmes offered were determined through a needs assessment of the labour market, and successfully trained students were placed in establishments that required their specific skillsets.

37. There are other national institutions or agencies engaged in providing Technical and Vocational Education and Training, such as the HEART Trust/ NTA (National Training Academy) in Jamaica and the NTA in Trinidad and Tobago. There is also the availability of certification courses on technical and vocational courses through regional institutions such as the University of the West Indies.

3. Agenda item 3: Panel discussion on “Facilitating the economic autonomy of women in the Caribbean”

38. The Deputy Representative of UN-Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean delivered a presentation entitled “Gender equality within the framework of the SDGs, and the attainment of economic autonomy of women”. She described women's economic autonomy as women's capacity to generate income and personal financial resources, based on access to paid work under conditions of equality with men. Intersections of gender, race, class, ethnicity and age also had to be taken into consideration as these further determined women's access and in some cases created further barriers to economic autonomy.

39. She noted that the status of women's economic autonomy in the Caribbean has been mirrored by the situation of high debt in the subregion. The Caribbean has lagged not only in terms of absolute growth, but also relative to other developing countries, falling well behind growth rates in East Asia and Africa in every decade since 1970, as well as behind the least developed countries since 1980.

40. Education and education reform were also deemed critical in advancing women's economic autonomy, since despite the fact that women outperform men at both the secondary and tertiary levels of education, women still faced higher unemployment levels. The female labour force participation rate was lower than the male labour force participation rate for most Caribbean countries. This may be because women's businesses are found mostly in the informal economy and thus may not have been in the statistics captured in the labour force market. Furthermore, regardless of higher educational attainment and increased employability, women represented the majority of the poor.

41. The representative of UN-Women suggested that the absence of protection and social safety nets was an area that needed urgent attention. Many of the countries in the Caribbean subregion were experiencing a demographic transition and an aging population, with women having longer life expectancy than men, demanding the need for an increase in social security funds to provide for old-age, disability, and survivor benefits in addition to sickness, maternity and employment injury benefits.

42. She concluded by stating that the SDGs provided a prime opportunity for Member States to promote women's economic autonomy, as it was premised on existing commitments to gender equality, such as those contained in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. UN-Women's work on women's economic autonomy through the SDGs has been in the form of different projects related to the promotion of positive masculinities; ending violence against women; addressing negative stereotypes; and sharing the responsibility of care.

43. The Specialist- Sustainable Enterprise Development and Job Creation, from the International Labour Organization (ILO) in his presentation "Women entrepreneurship and economic empowerment", explained that women's economic empowerment was premised on their ability to bring about positive changes in their lives and community by participating in economic activities. Women must have fair and equal access to resources (skills and finances), as well as the ability to control those resources and profits from their economic activities.

44. The notion of women becoming entrepreneurs was one way for them to be economically empowered which the ILO representative felt was critical for overall economic development and sustainability. He stated that given the current challenge of unemployment following the global financial crisis, it was imperative that women be allowed to participate constructively in the economic activities of their countries or region. Thus, formal entrepreneurial development was important in strategies that allow for the productive potential that women can bring to the labour market.

45. The labour market situation in the Caribbean subregion show that while there has been some improvement, the amount of women in top positions as managers was far from where it should be, for both the private and public sectors. Women entrepreneurs in the Caribbean subregion are concentrated in a few sectors: professional, scientific and technical activities (21 per cent); manufacturing (18 per cent); administrative and support services (18 per cent); and ICT (11 per cent). Almost 50 per cent of women entrepreneurs were already exporting, 80 per cent of whom export to two or more countries; however this did not take into consideration those working in traditional or subsistence sectors. Women entrepreneurs still considered lack of access to financing as the first barrier to the growth of their business; however it was stressed that there were multiple dimensions to this, in particular the access to human, social and physical capital. These resources are important and often serve as precursors to gaining full access to capital.

46. He informed the participants about the current programme for women's entrepreneurship being implemented by ILO. The Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) programme provides gender sensitive business management training and support to women entrepreneurs as well as work with other service providers and associations to better meet the needs of women entrepreneurs. The WED programme's main objective is to unleash the economic potential of women's enterprises to contribute to employment creation, gender equality, economic growth, and poverty reduction within the framework of the Decent Work Agenda of the right to have a job and the right to decent social protection (pensions, health and micro-insurance schemes).

47. Some of the lessons learnt from implementing the WED programme that will also be applicable to the Caribbean subregion were that to effectively support the business success of women entrepreneurs at the microenterprise level, interventions should address more barriers to women's entrepreneurship beyond limited access to finance and business skills. A two pronged approach of combining business training and addressing more barriers to women's entrepreneurship beyond limited access to finance was seen as key to women's empowerment and overall sustained business growth. In the Caribbean subregion, there were tremendous opportunities for women's entrepreneurship to develop due to the promotion of green economies in the agricultural sectors as well as the advancement of women's cooperatives in the care economy.

48. The final presentation on the "Gender gap in job opportunities and pay" by a Researcher from the Institute for Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies, sought to provide a situational analysis of the gender inequalities in the labour market of the Caribbean subregion. According to the presenter, the literature on gender wage gaps and labour force participation in the Caribbean suggested that women are economically disadvantaged in the opportunities for work as well as in their pay for work. The primary reason for this is the fact that there are inequalities in gender power relations between women and men. Empowering women would therefore require a radical reorientation of the economy and a challenge to the circulating gender ideologies that confine women to narrow sectors, and a devaluation of their skills.

49. He quoted Barriteau (2001), on the glorification of the struggles of Caribbean women deeming them as superwomen or miracle workers as they have to make physical and material sacrifices. This "myth of the miracle worker" obscures how gender relations are constructed to exploit the capacity of women to cope. Furthermore, he stated that these arguments ignored the growing evidence of the structural and ideological factors which hinder Caribbean women's achievement of social and political advancement.

50. He acknowledged that there has been significant progress with women in leadership and women taking lead in their lives and areas of employment in the Caribbean subregion, mainly due to increased feminist and women's movements. However, sex stereotyping that leads to occupational sex segregation and unprotected labour sectors that discourage women and consequently hinder their participation in the economy still exist. The presenter stressed that this reality was a useful reminder to the middle-class centered organizations that form executive women's associations that do important work to break the 'glass ceiling' that for too long deny women access into the higher positions of the corporate and political institutions. While it can be appreciated that women do not need to subscribe to the same economic ambitions and areas of interest as men, it must be understood that when they do participate in the same sectors with them, they are treated and paid unequally. This is a problem that Member States in their development work and state planning must address.

Discussion

51. The meeting delegation agreed that there are very few opportunities for women to understudy successful women politicians, which highlights how the political electorate and society think about women and their roles. The political electorate should understand that there is the need for more women to participate and want to participate in the political arena.

52. Women should be accountable and prepare themselves to be a part of the next generation of leaders in the political arena. The training course on transformational leadership by the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership was highly recommended for potential women parliamentarians. It is based on methodology developed by United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

who realized that despite all their work on HIV/AIDS, nothing was changing because people had not changed their perceptions of people who had HIV/AIDS. In this same vein, UN-Women realized that people had not changed their perceptions of women and men in politics in this subregion.

53. UN-Women works in collaboration with ParlAmericas (the network of the national legislatures of Member States of the Organization of American States) who serves as an independent forum for parliamentarians of the Americas committed to cooperative political dialogue and participation in the inter-American system. Work has been done to develop toolkits on gender responsive implementation of the SDGs whereby once countries request training they will be accommodated. In June of this year, a few parliamentarians from the Caribbean were trained on intersectionality; the SDGs and on issues that should be considered when Bills are being passed in government. To date, countries such as Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago have requested and received such trainings.

54. Policymakers should assess the reasons for the high drop-out rates for both females and males. The trends show that female and male students drop out of the school system for different reasons which should be addressed in gender sensitive programmes.

55. The meeting acknowledged that the Caribbean has one of the highest prevalence rates of adolescent pregnancy in the world and there is a lack of enabling systems and support networks (economical, emotional, and psychological) to facilitate their return to the school systems. The right to education is still a right, regardless of social situations.

56. The representative from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines informed the meeting that his Government formalized a Teen Mothers' Programme whereby teenage mothers are given the opportunity to return to secondary school. The programme boasts of a 90 per cent success rate as most students who were enlisted have completed secondary school and in some cases went on to tertiary studies and gainful employment.

57. The representative from Trinidad and Tobago highlighted the country's labour force participation rates which showed limited secondary school entry level jobs in the economy. This situation has created what can be termed as a "hyper drive to certification" as there is an influx of persons in the tertiary education sector. What has also been seen is that young men can enter lower entry jobs with fewer qualifications than women and this, results in more women seeking tertiary education. University access thus becomes an unemployment buffer for young women in the system that requires higher qualifications to get the same jobs as men.

58. The meeting noted that financial institutions are still quite hesitant to finance projects related to green economies, because they are not sensitive to the climate change issues. This area is still very new and these institutions are not willing to take the risk to invest in this area.

59. The Decent Work Agenda should take into account the psychosocial wellbeing of women, particularly their interpersonal relationships within the realms of both work and home. There are many women who have decent work in terms of conditions and salary, but once they are in the private domain of their households, they may not necessarily control their income. They may also encounter physical and/or emotional abuse.

60. The notion of women as miracle workers that has been passed on from generation to generation has to end if women are to be economically empowered. Women are expected to deliver in the workplace and perform at the same level of men who have wives to help them at home.

The public/private dimension needs to be looked at if the potential of women in the workplace has to be met.

61. There has been a lot of focus on women without perhaps recognizing that they were firstly girls. If the necessary investment and right engagement are not made to target girls, the opportunity will be missed to shape and ultimately empower women. The issue of girls needs to be refocused, and brought back to the center of gender conversations, however not at the expense of the boys.

62. Investment in girls, especially in areas such as their health and wellbeing are highly recommended because if society does not have healthy and well-adjusted girls becoming women, it will never move forward for the empowerment of women.

63. The meeting acknowledged that one of the greatest challenges is the fact that many Member States have not seen the importance of these meetings and therefore do not send ministers to participate. These types of meetings are attended by department heads and permanent secretaries and most of the times the messages and recommendations do not reach to ministers and cabinet for policy proposals to be implemented.

64. ECLAC has made significant efforts to encourage Ministers to participate in the Regional Conference on Women. It was further recommended that ministers responsible for the economy should also be invited in addition to those with the direct responsibility for women's affairs so that they can be sensitized to gender mainstreaming policies and decisions.

65. The delegation agreed that the role of the national machineries must be enhanced as there must be some institutional framework that works to support the change in strategies and policies to advance the economic empowerment of women. Ministers need to be part of the institutional infrastructure that exists to advance the concerns of women for there to be change in the gender discourse.

66. Succession planning especially within Women's NGOs is critical to economic autonomy. Strong NGOs are completely disappearing because the influential advocates or personalities in these organizations either retire or leave; with no one being trained to replace them or carry on their work.

67. The common trend in the Caribbean is that certain NGOs get a lot of support when one political party is in power and this has an effect on women's economic autonomy as some NGOs lose all impact. There must be the promotion of working for a shared vision that is an economically autonomous Caribbean.

4. Closing remarks

68. The Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit, subregional headquarters for the Caribbean gave a vote of thanks, expressing appreciation to the participants for their substantial contributions and recommendations to the technical meeting. He ended by emphasizing that the main take home message for Member States was to find productive ways to use the SDGs as a framework to promote women's economic autonomy. Women as a group within the Caribbean subregion must have the necessary institutions and support mechanisms to facilitate their economic autonomy and empowerment; while policies should be developed and implemented to eliminate some of the barriers that they face.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. Member States

THE BAHAMAS

Representative:

- Melvelyn Symonette, Senior Assistant Secretary , Ministry of Social Services and Community Development

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Representative:

- Bernarda Bernard, Chargée d'Affaires (a.i.), Embassy of the Dominican Republic in Trinidad and Tobago

GRENADA

Representative:

- Jicinta Alexis, Gender Analyst, Ministry of Social Development and Housing

JAMAICA

Representative:

- Mary Alison McLean, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport

SAINT LUCIA

Representative:

- Hon. Gale Rigobert, Minister of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Representative:

- Hon. Frederick Stephenson, Minister of National Mobilization, Social Development, Gender Affairs, Family Matters, Persons with Disabilities and Youth

Delegation member:

- Polly Olliver, Coordinator, Gender Affairs Division, Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Gender Affairs, Family Matters, Persons with Disabilities and Youth

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Representative:

- Jacqueline Johnson, Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs

Delegation members:

- Antoinette Jack-Martin, Director Gender Affairs (Ag.), Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs
- Gaietry Pargass, Legal Consultant, Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs
- Owen Hender, Senior Policy Specialist, Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs

- La Shell Reid, Project Execution Officer, Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs
- Diane Prashad, Associate Professional, Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs
- Danielle Mc Clashie, Associate Professional, Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs

B. United Nations programmes and funds

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- Isele Robinson Cooper, Programme Officer, UNDP Trinidad and Tobago

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

- Sheila Roseau, Director, UNFPA Subregional Office for the Caribbean
- Aurora Noguera-Ramkissoon, UNFPA Subregional Office for the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago Branch Office

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

- Lara Blanco, Deputy Regional Director for Latin America Caribbean, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Tonni Ann Brodber, Deputy Representative, UN-Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean

C. United Nations specialized agencies

International Labour Organization (ILO)

- Kelvin Sergeant, Specialist, Sustainable Enterprise Development and Job Creation, ILO subregional office for the Caribbean

D. Non-governmental organizations

- Hazel Brown, Coordinator, The Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women
- Alma Espino, Economist, Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios sobre el Desarrollo, Uruguay (CIEDUR)

E. Other institutions

University of the West Indies (UWI)

- Renée Cozier, Researcher, Institute for Gender and Development Studies, UWI St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago
- Amilcar Sanatan, Researcher, Institute for Gender and Development Studies, UWI St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago
- Rachel Taylor, Researcher, Institute for Gender and Development Studies, UWI St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

F. Expert

- Line Bareiro, Regional Specialist on Women's rights

G. Secretariat

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

- Pamela Villalobos Koeniger, Social Affairs Officer, Division of Gender Affairs
- Ana Ferigra Stefanović, Programme Officer, Division of Gender Affairs
- Nicole Bidegain, Social Affairs Officer, Division of Gender Affairs

ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

- Diane Quarless, Director
- Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Sheila Stuart, Social Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Candice Gonzales, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Sinovia Moonie, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Veera Deokiesingh-Fraser, Public Information Assistant, Strategic Planning and Outreach Unit
- Tanisha Ash, Research Assistant (On-the-Job Trainee), Statistics and Social Development Unit

Annex II**PROGRAMME****Technical meeting to examine the economic autonomy of women in the Caribbean
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago**

0830 hrs - 0900 hrs	Registration of participants
0900 hrs - 0905 hrs	Security briefing
0905 hrs - 0915 hrs	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diane Quarless, Director, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean
0915 hrs - 1030 hrs	Economic empowerment of women in the Caribbean <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheila Stuart, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean • Discussion
1030 hrs - 1045 hrs	<i>Coffee Break</i>
1045 hrs - 1230 hrs	Panel Discussion on “Facilitating the economic autonomy of women in the Caribbean” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gender equality, within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the attainment of economic autonomy by women</i> Tonni Ann Brodber, Deputy Representative, UN Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean • <i>Women entrepreneurship and economic empowerment</i> Kelvin Sergeant, Specialist, Sustainable Enterprise Development and Job Creation, International Labour Organization • <i>Gender gap in job opportunities and pay</i> Amilcar Sanatan, Researcher, Institute for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, St. Augustine Campus <p>Discussion</p>
1230 hrs - 1300 hrs	Conclusions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Document symbol

Document title

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Programme

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Draft paper on “The Economic Empowerment of Women in the Caribbean Subregion: An Essential Element in Attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”



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