

SIXTY-SECOND (62ND) MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Bahamas Intervention

26 January, 2022

Good afternoon,

Your excellencies, and the various authorities on this occasion -- Warm greetings from The Bahamas.

It was truly encouraging to learn of the many initiatives, programs and policies that are in place and that are being considered to advance the issue of climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction with a gender perspective.

It was also encouraging to hear the youth perspective on the issue of gender and climate change.

As has been echoed continually, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), like The Bahamas, are considered highly vulnerable to climate change.

Some studies have estimated that climate change is likely to cost The Bahamas between 6.6 percent of GDP by the year 2025, rising to 31.7 percent of GDP by 2100.

Like our colleagues here, work continues. Initiatives have been taken to address climate change. The Bahamas is State Party to a number of international frameworks to address climate change, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Sendai Framework For Disaster Risk Reduction, among others.

Collaborative work are in place (inclusive of public and private agencies) to assist with capacity building in all areas relevant to climate change, data collection, and appropriate legislation.

We were happy to hear about the work being done with respect to social reproduction, which speaks to the paid and unpaid care work of women. This is an important concept to be addressed in climate adaptation policies, as women are predominantly employed in the formal care economy. We know that the gender dynamics of care work highlight the double and triple burden of women, which are exacerbated in crisis situations.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 calls on State Parties to “recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through ... social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility”.

As was discussed at length during the morning session, the Digital technology in climate change situations empowers vulnerable groups, including our women and girls. The Government and private sectors in The Bahamas continue to promote the participation of women and girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), as a means of empowerment, including in the school system. In some instances, more girls than boys are involved in the non-traditional subjects. State and non-state agencies have devised Programmes and initiatives to encourage more of this.

The survival of the Caribbean under ... worsening environmental conditions demand radical alternatives. Coming together, in these forums provide the opportunity to learn of the strategies being put forward and strengthen our capacities. We must devise radical, gendered alternatives to survive the challenges of climate change.

Domestic violence and Intimate Partner violence is exacerbated in crisis situations. During the Pandemic lockdown in 2019, the Department of Gender and Family Affairs, in collaboration with the University of The Bahamas, conducted a survey, which confirmed that GBV increases during crisis. Strained communication between intimate partners or housing and financial issues, or unemployment are some of the issues that may contribute to violence.

Through initiatives with UN Women and UNFPA, the Department of Gender and Family Affairs, Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development, have collaborated to provide Referral pathways that are designed to help survivors locate assistance. Gender based violence, including intimate partner violence services should be considered in climate change and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

Thank you.