



**Twenty-Fifth Anniversary
of the Fourth World Conference on Women
and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration
and Platform for Action (1995)**

National Report

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Report of Trinidad and Tobago on the Implementation of Beijing Platform for Action 2014 to 2019



Picture of posters linking Trinidad and Tobago's National Framework, Vision 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, at the Eric Williams Financial Complex in the capital city, Port of Spain.

Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs)
Beijing + 25 Report
October 2019

Table of Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
INTRODUCTION	10
SECTION ONE:	12
PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS	12
1. Achievements, Challenges and Set-backs.....	12
2. Top Five Priorities for Accelerating Progress	16
3. Measures to Prevent Discrimination and Promote Rights; Women & Girls	19
4. Impact of humanitarian Crises on BPfA Implementation?.....	24
5. Top Five Priorities for Accelerating Progress	25
SECTION TWO:	26
PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN	26
6. Actions to Advance Gender Equality: Paid Work and Employment.....	26
7. Actions to Recognize, Reduce and Redistribute Unpaid Care	27
8. Impact of Austerity/Fiscal Consolidation Measures.....	31
9. Actions to Reduce/Eradicate Poverty	31
10. Actions to Improve Access to Social Protection.....	33
11. Actions to Improve Health Outcomes for Women & Girls	35
12. Actions to Improve Education Outcomes & Skills.....	38
13. Forms of Violence Prioritized for Action.	41
14. Actions Prioritized on Violence: Last Five Years	42
15. Strategies Used to Prevent Violence: Last Five Years.	46
16. Actions to Prevent Violence Facilitated by Technology	48
17. Actions to Address the Portrayal of Women and Girls in Media	48
18. Action to Address Violence against Specific Groups of Women.....	49
19. Actions & Measures to Promote Participation.....	49
20. Actions to Increase Expression & Participation in Media & ICTs.....	50
21. The National Budget & the Promotion of Gender Equality	51
22. Tracking Donor Country Official Development Assistance.....	52
23. National Strategy for Gender Equality?.....	52
24. Country Action Plan on CEDAW Recommendations	53

Report of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on Beijing +25

25. National Human Rights Institutional Arrangement	54
26. Actions to Build & Sustain Peace and Security	54
27. Actions to Increase Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution	54
28. Judicial & Non-Judicial Accountability re: Conflicts.....	54
29. Actions to Eliminate Discrimination against the Girl Child.....	55
30. Actions to Integrate Gender into Environmental Policies.	57
31. Actions to Integrate Gender into Climate Resilience & Mitigation	58
SECTION THREE:	59
NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES	59
32. National Machinery for Gender Equality	59
33. The Head of National Machinery & SDG Implementation.....	59
34. Formal Mechanisms: Participation &Implementation.....	60
35. Gender Equality & the National Strategy for SDG implementation	61
SECTION FOUR:	61
DATA AND STATISTICS	61
36. Gender Statistics at the National Level:.....	61
37. Priorities for Strengthening National Gender Statistics.....	61
38. National Indicators for Monitoring Progress on the SDGs.....	62
39. Data Collection & Compilation on SDGs.....	62
40. Routine Disaggregations Provided by Major Surveys.....	63

LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ACTT	Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago
ADB	Agricultural Development Bank of Trinidad and Tobago
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
BDU	Business Development Unit
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CAD	Child Affairs Division
CANROP	Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEPEP	Community-Based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme
CIM/OAS	Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States
CIWIL	Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership
CMOH	Office of the County Medical Officer of Health
CRA	Child Rights Ambassadors
CRDV	Central Registry for Domestic Violence
CTU	Counter Trafficking Unit
DHWFD	Division of Health Wellness and Family Development
DME	Defining Masculine Excellence
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ELDAMO	Elderly & Differently-abled Mobile Transport Programme
EMA	Environmental Management Authority
EOC	Equal Opportunity Commission
GAD	Gender Affairs Division
GAPP	Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GISL	Government Information Services Limited
GoRTT	Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
HRD	Human Resource Development
HSP	Health Sector Plan
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IGDS	Institute for Gender and Development Studies- University of the West Indies
IGOVTT	National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

Report of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on Beijing +25

IRAC's	Industrial Relations Advisory Committee's
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
MALF	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries
MCDCA	Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts
MESECVI	Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention
MISP	Minimum Initial Service Package
MNS	Ministry of National Security
MoH	Ministry of Health
MOLSED	Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development
MOPD	Ministry of Planning and Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSDFS	Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
MTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NCPP	National Crime Prevention Programme
NCSD	National Council for Sustainable Development
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDS	National Development Strategy
NEP	National Environmental Policy
NES	National Employment Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NIBTT	National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago
NIS	National Insurance Scheme
NPGD	National Policy on Gender and Development
NRWPTT	Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad and Tobago
NSAP	National Strategic Action Plan
NSDP	National Social Development Programme
NSP	National Strategic Plan
NTA	National Training Agency
NRWPTT	Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad and Tobago
NUDE	National Union of Domestic Employees
OAS	Organization of American States
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OJTP	On-The-Job Training Programme
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OPM (GCA)	Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs)
ORTT	Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PfA	Platform for Action
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PSAs	Public Service Announcements
PTSC	Public Transport Service Corporation
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
QPCC	Queen's Park Counselling Clinic
REACH	Realization for Economic Achievement
RHAs	Regional Health Authorities

Report of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on Beijing +25

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEED	Sowing Entrepreneurial Empowerment Development
SIP	Perinatal Information System
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
TLIs	Tertiary Level Institutions
TTD	Trinidad and Tobago Dollar
TTiWiL	Trinidad and Tobago Institute for Women in Leadership
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTT	University of Trinidad and Tobago
UWI	University of the West Indies
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WHO	World Health Organization
WINAD	Women's Institute for Alternative Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trinidad and Tobago is committed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) (1995) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other critical agreements that together form the normative framework for gender equality and the advancement of women and girls. This report provides a review and appraisal for the period 2014–2019 of progress on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the outcome of the twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000). This report is presented in four (4) Sections as follows:

SECTION ONE:

FOCUSES ON ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, SETBACKS EXPERIENCED AND PRIORITIES

Some of the most important *achievements* for Trinidad and Tobago in support of the BPfA include the enactment and implementation of legislation aimed at strengthening the protection of children and girls in particular. These include the Miscellaneous Provisions (Marriage) Act, 2017 which abolished child marriages and the suite of Children's legislation proclaimed in 2015 and 2017 (Children Act 2012, Children's Authority Act, 2000, and the Family and Children Division Act, 2016). In addition, there has been progress in the area of policy development, in particular, the National Policy on Gender and Development, which was laid as a Green Paper in the Parliament, the National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment and the Education Policy Paper 2017-2022.

Some of the *challenges* experienced in the implementation of the BPfA include reduced financial resources due to minor contraction in the economy; limited national research on gender and development issues and the absence of extensive sex-disaggregated data to support planning and development to meet the needs of vulnerable Groups. Despite these, the Government continues to mitigate the impact challenges by introducing and improving programmes to meet the needs of both the vulnerable groups of the society and the population at large.

The following were the *priority areas* for accelerating the progress for women and girls over the review period:

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice;
- Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls;
- Eliminating violence against women and girls;
- Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health; and Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes.

SECTION TWO:

FOCUSES ON PROGRESS ACROSS THE TWELVE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE BPfA

Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Trinidad and Tobago provides a range of programmes and services to support and empower persons. For example the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries provides accessible financial services and credit to agro-producers; grants and rebates to farmers; and conducts research and development to support the needs of the sector.

Trinidad and Tobago is among countries in the Caribbean and Americas region where women are exceeding the gender parity position of 30 per cent of representatives at senior decision making levels in the country. Currently, several key portfolios in Government are held by women, including Ministries of Trade and Industry, Labour and Small Enterprise Development and Planning and Development to name a few.

To promote decent work, the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MoLSED) launched a National Domestic Workers Register in 2012 with a public sensitization campaign in 2015 and continuing, to educate the public on the rights and responsibilities of workers and their employers. This field is dominated by women. Additionally, the Policy on minimum wage paid to employees has increased twice over the past four years; 2015 and 2019.

Education in Trinidad and Tobago is free from early childhood to tertiary level (undergraduate) levels. Additionally the government also provides various technical vocational programs for young persons who wish to pursue these disciplines. Women continue to have equal access to education at all levels of society and have exceeded the men at some levels.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services provides various programmes and services geared toward the assistance and protection of the vulnerable and marginalized groups in society. Government is implementing a Social Mitigation Plan to support persons impacted socially by changes in the economic conditions. For example, the Government, in 2020, announced its plans to meet the cost of day care services for those single parent headed households which are unable to meet the cost of those services.

The National Employment Service (NES) of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Enterprise Development registers those seeking employments and matches them with employment opportunities in various sectors. The NES, also provides counselling and advisory services to job-seekers. During the period under review the NES expanded its services to facilitate access to sustainable employment opportunities and created its online registration system for employers and job-seekers throughout its network of offices across Trinidad and Tobago. The Ministry is currently working towards the development of a Labour Migration Policy.

Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services addresses the social challenges of poverty, social inequality and social exclusion through rehabilitative and skill enhancement initiatives and grants geared toward the assistance and protection of the vulnerable and marginalized groups in society including: women, children, persons with disabilities, elderly, poor/indigent, socially displaced, ex-prisoners, deportees and persons living with HIV/AIDS. In March 2018, the Ministry implemented a Standard Means Test to support the administration of welfare and other forms of grants offered to citizens.

The Community Education Programme under the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts exposes the economically disadvantaged citizens to skills training in order to enhance existing skills or learn new-skills in support of home-based production of goods and services. This Domestic Support/Skills Training Projects is aimed at increasing household income.

The Government has within the last five (5) years, authorized a number of changes to the structure and scope of the Legal Aid and Advisory Authority (LAAA), in order to strengthening access to legal services by women and other citizens who cannot afford such services.

The Ministry of Health has increased its offer free primary health care services, including specialized clinics, mental health and wellness clinics, and emergency procedures. In 2016, the Directorate of Women's Health was established and charged with the responsibility of implementing policies that specifically target and bring about improvement to women's healthcare issues. Additionally, the Mental Health services is being decentralised to ensure greater focus on prevention and treatment and create greater accessibility in communities. Trinidad and Tobago also introduced the Perinatal

Information System (SIP) to replace the obsolete antenatal record to allow for real time generation of maternal and neonatal statistics at various levels within the health system.

The Government's National Policy on Tertiary Education, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Lifelong Learning is expanding to strengthen technical and vocational education and training as part of a seamless system to allow for alternative pathways to further and higher education. TVET initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago include Retraining Programme, Multi-Sector Skills Training Programme (MuST), Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

In Trinidad and Tobago the protection of women and girls remains Government's top priority. The Government continues to pursue legislative review and reform as well as policy and programme development and implementation aimed at empowering and protecting women and girls. The Government is in the final review stages of the Domestic Violence Act 1999, in order to strengthen the protection for victims of Domestic Violence. The Government has also established an interagency Committee to manage the strategies to reduce/eliminate domestic violence. Additionally, in 2015, the country introduced a new child protection system managed by the Children's Authority in collaboration with the Child Protection Unit of the Police Service.

The Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) under the purview of the Ministry of National Security provides safe spaces, counselling and other services for trafficked persons.

Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

In Trinidad and Tobago there are no legal constraints to women entering the political arena. However there may be perceived constraints as it relates to burden of care for family placed on women in society. Women in Trinidad and Tobago have made significant strides in the area of power and decision making. Women have held high level decision making positions for example the President of Trinidad and Tobago, the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate are women.

The Gender Affairs Division is the national focal point for Gender and Development in Trinidad and Tobago. Gender is cross cutting and the budget extends to all stakeholder agencies of government as well as those NGOs which support gender and is funded by other governmental agencies. The allocation to the Gender Affairs Division, OPM in fiscal 2019 – TT \$7.5 million and fiscal 2020 - TT\$11.5 million.

Additionally, the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGD): A Green Paper seeks to promote gender equality and equity, social justice and sustainable development. The NPGD establishes guidelines for addressing issues across various thematic areas such as Labour and Employment; Domestic and Family Life; Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection; and Climate Change and Natural Resource Management, among others. This document is being used as the official Government Policy.

While there is no human rights institution, the International law on Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs has the mandate to ensure adherence to all human rights principles. The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago guarantees equal rights of men and women. Gender and development including the protection of human rights is guided by several international mandates including CEDAW, Beijing, Belem de Para and the SDG's.

Peaceful and inclusive societies

Trinidad and Tobago comes from a region where there is no significant impact from by situations of armed conflict. However, Trinidad and Tobago is represented on the Commonwealth Network of Women Mediators. This Network leverages on the expertise of women mediators to enhance the success and longevity of peace agreements brokered in conflict-stricken Commonwealth regions particularly those affected by violent extremism. Trinidad and Tobago has a suite of legislation to combat illicit arms trafficking and to combat the production, use of and trafficking in illicit drugs. The combined purpose of these acts is to find, investigate and prosecute the sources of terrorist funding, money laundering and related illicit activities such as human trafficking.

Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

The National Environmental Plan (NEP) is aimed at providing a rational, practical and comprehensive framework for environmental management in Trinidad and Tobago. Work in the area of environmental issues including climate change and mitigation continues unabated. This work is well supported by civil society organization. The NEP mainstreams gender equality in the environment.

SECTION THREE FOCUSES ON NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

The Gender Affairs Division in the Office of the Prime Minister is the national focal point for gender and development in Trinidad and Tobago with the mandate to support and promote gender equality and equity in all policies, programmes and plans of government and private sector. As the focal point for gender and development the Division commenced the expansion of its operations with the establishment of a Gender Focal Point System in major public, private and civil society organisations in the country with the sole purpose of mainstreaming gender.

SECTION FOUR FOCUSES ON DATA

In Trinidad and Tobago the Central Statistical Office of the Ministry of Planning and Development collects and compiles a wide range of statistics, reports and geographic information about the country. The Office of the Prime Ministry has outlined the priority data requirements for sex-disaggregated data to be collected by this agency, in a variety of areas over the next five years, with a view to strengthening the national gender statistics.

INTRODUCTION

Trinidad and Tobago is committed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other critical agreements that together form the normative framework for gender equality and the advancement of women and girls. This report provides a review and appraisal for the period 2014–2019 of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the outcome of the twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000). This report is presented in four (4) sections, namely:

- Section One highlights the achievements, challenges, setbacks experienced and priorities;
- Section Two focuses on the twelve critical areas of concern which are discussed under six clusters;
- Section Three focuses on national institutions and processes; and
- Section Four focuses on data.

GEOGRAPHY

Trinidad and Tobago is a twin island state situated at the Southern-most tip of the Caribbean Archipelago, between latitude 10° North of the equator and longitude 60° to 62° West. The islands are located 11 km east off the Coast of Venezuela and the South American Continent, at the closest point, with a combined area of 5,128 km². The mid-year population estimates for 2018 revealed that total population of Trinidad and Tobago stands at 1,359,193. In terms of sex distribution, the population is estimated to comprise 50.2 percent or 681,946 males and 49.8 percent or 677,247 females. With respect to age distribution, an estimated 679,907 persons fall between ages 25 and 59. Young persons aged 24 and under; the second largest age group, total 497,443 persons and account for 36.6 percent of the population, whilst 181,843 persons fall within the retirement age of 60 years and over represent 13.4 percent of the total population¹. Trinidad and Tobago is noted for its ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. The 2011 Population census revealed that approximately 35.4% of the population is of East Indian descent, 34.2% of African descent, 22.8% is of mixed descent, 0.6% Caucasian, 0.1% Syrian/Lebanese, 0.1% Indigenous, 0.3% Chinese, 0.1 Portuguese, 0.2% other ethnic groups and 6.2% not stated.

JUDICIAL, POLITICAL, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

Trinidad and Tobago is a multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious society, and in the political sphere, women have access to participate in decision making processes regardless of race, religion or socio-economic background. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to establishing mechanisms to accelerate the achievement of gender equality in political participation and representation at all levels of the electoral process and women's full participation on the basis of equality with men in all areas of public life including: governmental bodies; the judiciary; trade unions; the private sector; political parties; employers' organizations; research and academic institutions; and national corporations. Women currently hold many non-traditional portfolios. Her Excellency Paula-Mae Weekes, O.R.T.T. (Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago) is the 6th and current President of Trinidad and Tobago. She took office on 19 March 2018 and became the first woman to hold the office of President.

The legislative power of Trinidad and Tobago resides in a bicameral Parliament, which is comprised of the Upper House called the Senate and a Lower House called the House of Representatives. The Constitution establishes a Supreme Court of Judicature for Trinidad and Tobago consisting of a High Court of Justice and a Court of Appeal. The British Privy Council is the Highest Court of Appeal of

¹ **Trinidad and Tobago Review of the Economy 2018 "Turnaround"**-Ministry of Finance.
<https://www.finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Review-Of-The-Economy-2018.pdf>

Trinidad and Tobago. A Chief Justice has overall responsibility for the administration of Justice and heads an independent judiciary. The Judiciary comprises the higher judiciary (the Supreme Court of Judicature) and the lower judiciary (the Magistracy).

The Trinidad and Tobago economy has shown remarkable resilience in this turbulent international environment. The GDP Prices for Trinidad and Tobago stood at 154,722.9TT\$ Millions as at September 2017². The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita stood at 15,288.90 US dollars in 2018. Trinidad and Tobago relies on its energy sector for much of its economic activity, and has one of the highest per capita incomes in Latin America and the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago is home to one of the largest natural gas liquefaction facilities in the Western Hemisphere. This country produces about nine times more natural gas than crude oil on an energy equivalent basis with gas contributing about two-thirds of energy sector government revenue³.

Data from the Central Statistical Office indicated that the unemployment rate stood at 4.4% in 4th quarter of 2017. Trinidad and Tobago's average unemployment rate increased from 3.9 percent during fiscal 2016 to 4.6 percent during fiscal 2017. The unemployed were distributed over most industries, with the exception of Other Mining and Quarrying and Wholesale/Retail Trade, Restaurants and Hotels (which together reported 100 fewer unemployed persons). Trinidad and Tobago's labour force contracted by 2,700 persons, from 636,800 in the third quarter of fiscal 2017 to 634,100 in the fourth quarter. This resulted in a slight decline in the participation rate over the period: from 59.5 percent to 59.1 percent. In terms of sex distribution, more than half of the individuals employed in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2017 were male (59.2 percent or 356,500 persons), compared to female (245,500 persons or 40.8 percent).⁴

STATUS OF WOMEN

The status of women in Trinidad and Tobago compares favourably with many middle income developing nations. The equal rights of men and women are guaranteed under the 1976 Republican Constitution. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the implementation of concrete measures aimed at promoting gender equity and equality. The Gender Affairs Division (GAD), located in the Office of the Prime Minister is the national focal point for gender and development. The Division works collaboratively with state agencies, academia and civil society to promote an active and visible policy to mainstream gender perspectives in all policies, programmes, legislation and projects.

Gender and development is also guided by several national and international mandates including the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the CIM/OAS Plan of Action; the Belém do Para Convention; the Commonwealth Plan of Action; the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions No. 100, Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 and No. 111, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958.

² Latest Indicators-Central Statistical Office. <http://cso.gov.tt/>

³ The CIA World Factbook 2018-2019

⁴ Trinidad and Tobago Review of the Economy 2018 "Turnaround"-Ministry of Finance.

SECTION ONE:

PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

1. Achievements, Challenges and Set-backs

Achievement, challenges and set-backs in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Legislation

- **The Family and Children Division Act, 2016:** The Act establishes a specialised Children Court and Family Court as subdivisions of a Family and Children Division of the High Court. The Courts commenced operations in February 2018 and have expanded geographically since that time. The Children Court supports the sustainable, coordinated and efficient delivery of legal and social services to victims of child abuse and neglect, children in need of supervision and child offenders. The targeted interventions which intersect with the protective jurisdiction of the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago are particularly important for victims of child sexual abuse, the majority of whom are girls. A child who has either been the victim of or a bystander in matters requiring a Protection Order under the Domestic Violence Act also comes under the specialised jurisdiction of the Children Court. Domestic violence is defined to include physical, sexual and emotional or psychological abuse. Pursuant to the Act, a Family Court, which operated as a pilot since 2004, transitioned into a single High Court jurisdiction for improving access to family justice. Importantly, the Family Court also has jurisdiction to hear applications for the issuance of a Protection Order under the Domestic Violence Act other than those which are children matters thereby facilitating improved access to justice for victims, the majority of whom are women. Access to justice is facilitated through multiple pathways including specialised organisational and staffing structures, resources and services.
- **The Miscellaneous Provisions (Marriage) Act, 2017:** The Act, which came into force in October 2017, repealed the child marriage provisions under the existing four Marriage Acts. The Act further standardised the age of marriage to 18 consistent with the age of majority and the age of sexual consent. The Act gives primacy to the constitutional principles of non-discrimination, gender equality and security of the person as well as the principle of the best interest of the child. Abolishing child marriage in Trinidad and Tobago is also consistent with international human rights norms and standards articulated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Joint Recommendation of the Committee of the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2014) which specifically identified child and/or forced marriage as harmful practices "grounded in discrimination based on sex, gender and age, among other things".
- **The Children's Authority Act, 2000:** A new and improved child protection system managed by a statutory body, the Children's Authority, was operationalised in May 2015 by virtue of the proclamation of the Children's Authority Act together with the Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act, 2000 and the Adoption of Children Act, 2000. The legislative framework, embodied in this package of children's legislation that governs the treatment of child abuse victims, many of whom are girls, is in keeping with the Government's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Following commencement in 2015, these statutes have been kept under close review resulting in further significant amendments in 2016 and 2018 under the Family and Children Division Act, 2016 and the Miscellaneous Provisions (Supreme Court of Judicature and Children) Act, 2018 respectively.

- **The Children Act, 2012:** The Act, which came into force in May 2015, criminalises a wider range of sexual conduct against children including sexual penetration, sexual grooming, child pornography and the abuse of children through prostitution. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years. The Act further assures the holistic protection of a victim in these criminal matters. It also extends this protection to children who have suffered harm or are likely to suffer harm. Importantly, “harm” includes, *inter alia*, ill-treatment, physical, sexual or mental abuse, domestic violence, psychological suffering from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another and any act or omission which impedes or may impede or is detrimental to the physical, psychological, intellectual, social, behavioural, mental or emotional development of a child. The Act also extends the application of the mandatory reporting provision for suspected child sexual abuse. Moreover, the protective jurisdiction of the Children Act closely articulates with the new child protection system. The Children Act also lays the foundation for a new and modern child justice system which culminated in the enactment of the Family and Children Division Act, 2016.
- **Electronic Payments into and out of Court Act, 2018:** The Act, which came into force in December 2018, makes provision for payments into and out of Court to be made electronically making it much easier to make and to receive maintenance payments. It therefore benefits a significant number of women who receive maintenance payments on behalf of their children by eliminating uncertainty, long queues, the need to take time-off from work and the indignity of having to conduct personal family business publicly.
- **Amendment to the Education Act, Chap. 39:01:** In 2012, the Education Act was amended to change the compulsory school age from between 6 and 12 years to between 5 and 16 years and commenced in May of 2015. The amendment removes the inconsistencies with the laws governing the employment of minors and is also in keeping with the Government’s commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2019:** The Act amends the Sexual Offences Act, 1986 to significantly widen the categories of persons mandated to report suspected sexual abuse of a child and to strengthen the provisions governing sex offender registration. However, the amending legislation is not yet in force.

Policy

- **National Policy on Gender and Development: A Green Paper**
In March 2018, the Draft National Policy on Gender and Development in Trinidad and Tobago (NPGD) was laid as a Green Paper in Parliament by the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister. Cabinet has agreed that the NPGD ‘*be used as the official government policy pending its final adoption*’.
- **National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment**
A National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment developed via a consultative process, was laid in the Parliament on March 8, 2019. The Policy, which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MOLSED), is designed to prevent, prohibit and address sexual harassment at all levels in the workplace. The Policy seeks to develop a social construct to expand the scope of the industrial relations framework in Trinidad and Tobago that promotes ethical and non-discriminatory practices in the workplace towards the elimination of sexual harassment. The sensitive nature of sexual harassment in the workplace, in addition to cultural barriers, varying demographics and undefined avenues for redress have hindered its reporting either as a crime under the relevant laws or under the Equal Opportunity Act, 2000. Research studies have also been limited. There is therefore an absence of collective data which accurately reflects the prevalence of sexual harassment.

- **Education Policy Paper 2017-2022**

The Education Policy Paper, approved by Cabinet in March 2019, is intended to guide the actions of the Ministry of Education through the next five (5) years in order to advance educational development in Trinidad and Tobago and treat with current challenges within the education system. The Policy is intended to provide the Ministry of Education with the strategic direction to guide its programmes, projects and action plans for the ECCE, Primary, Secondary, Technical/Vocational and Tertiary subsectors for the period 2017-2022. As such, the Policy Paper is underpinned by three (3) strategic goals focusing on effective governance and administration of the education system; access to educational opportunities by all learners; and quality education provided at all levels.

- **National Parenting Policy 2017**

One of the key objectives of the Draft National Parenting Policy is to ensure the development of effective multi-sectoral provisions to support parental empowerment in the performance of parenting duties, irrespective of family form, in order to promote the optimal holistic development of children at all stages of growth. Policy prescriptions for the continuing education of teenage mothers, co-parenting, parental leave, childcare services and flexible working hours are highlighted. Emphasis is also placed on parenting information, advice and support and the identification of avenues through which such services will be delivered and expanded. This Policy was laid as a Green Paper in the Parliament in 2017.

- **Draft Labour Migration Policy**

The GoRTT through the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development is currently working towards the development of a Labour Migration Policy for Trinidad and Tobago. In 2017, Cabinet agreed to the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Development of a Labour Migration Policy for Trinidad and Tobago. The Chairman and Members of the Committee were appointed by the Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development in July 2018. The Policy is in its developmental stages and would include recommendations for the protection of migrant workers, inclusive of women and other vulnerable groups.

International Conventions, Agreements and Obligations

- **Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):**

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT) submitted its combined fourth to seventh periodic reports under Article 18 of the Convention in 2015. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) considered the said combined reports on 18 July 2018. (CEDAW/C/TTO/4-7).

Having regard to the follow up to the concluding observations of the Committee, the GoRTT submitted an Interim Report in 2017 on the adoption of the National Policy on Gender and Development. A further Interim Report was submitted in 2018 on a national action plan on the implementation of the Committee's concluding observations, the development of an inventory of all laws that discriminate against women with a view to amending or repealing them and the harmful practice of child marriage.

In 2018, the GoRTT nominated its first candidate, Professor Rhoda Reddock to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) for the period 2019-2022. Professor Rhoda Reddock was elected by an overwhelming majority during the June 2018 CEDAW Committee elections in New York. This is the first time since becoming a party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1990, that Trinidad and Tobago has presented a candidate to CEDAW. Professor Reddock was one (1) of sixteen (16) candidates competing for the twelve (12) vacancies on the Committee, at elections

held on June 7, 2018 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Professor Reddock secured 158 out of 185 votes - the highest number of votes received among the candidates.

- **Belém do Pará Convention**

As a member of the Organisation of American States (OAS), the GoRTT ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women in 1996. The effective implementation of the Convention requires a continuous and independent evaluation process, which in 2004 led to the creation of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI). As a result of having ratified the Convention, Trinidad and Tobago is obligated to report to MESECVI. In 2015, Trinidad and Tobago submitted its completed report to the Organisation of American States (OAS).

- **Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030**

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has aligned its national development strategy, Vision 2030, to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which has provided a unique opportunity for the Government and people to augment implementation of the Montevideo Consensus and the Montevideo Strategy. These key documents of the Government outline overlapping development interventions which are also articulated in both the Montevideo Consensus and the Montevideo Strategy. Thus, the successful implementation of these development agendas will inherently facilitate the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus and the Strategy.

- **MEMBERSHIP ON INTERNATIONAL BODIES:**

Trinidad and Tobago is currently a member of three (3) United Nations bodies, namely:

- a) The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) for the 2017-2020;
- b) United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) period 2019-2022;
- c) The Executive Board of UN Women. Her Excellency Ms. Penelope Beckles Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York is serving as President of the Executive Board in 2019.

As a member of the OAS, Trinidad and Tobago is also a Member of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM).

CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

- As a developing country TT continues to be challenged in meeting the needs both of vulnerable groups and of the population at large as pockets of poverty endure, especially affecting women, youth and the elderly;
- Limitations of human and financial resources;
- Limited national research in gender and development issues;
- Fragmented data/ the lack of disaggregated data which impedes measurement of progress;
- Misconceptions of gender concepts such as sex versus gender which are used interchangeably. However, the Gender Affairs Division in collaboration with other key stakeholders continues to conduct public education and gender awareness training; and
- Gender-based and societal violence continue to negatively impact the society. However, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with key stakeholders, continues to address this issue through legislation, policies, programmes and public education.

2. Top Five Priorities for Accelerating Progress

Top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in Trinidad and Tobago over the past five years.

i. Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice

Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice for women and girls has been a priority on the legislative agenda in Trinidad and Tobago (see question 1).

- a. A Gender Equity Protocol for Judicial Officers -Justice through a Gender Lens- was launched on November 27, 2018 by the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago, in conjunction with the Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening Reform (JURIST) Project, UN Women, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO), and the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Women Judges (TTAWJ). The Protocol is a practical guide geared towards fostering and improving gender sensitive adjudication in Trinidad and Tobago. It combines a social and historical framework, international treaty principles, local legislation mandates, and regional and local case law to provide key and critical instructions to ensure that each step of adjudication and proceedings, especially in particular types of matters, is analysed through a lens of equality and non-discrimination. It also includes the Procedural Fairness perspective, based on the JEITT's research, to ground and inform the fair and equal treatment of users of the court systems and to secure public trust and confidence in the justice system.
- b. Trinidad and Tobago also has a number of policies in place to protect women and girls from inequality and discrimination. The National Policy on Gender and Development in Trinidad and Tobago (NPGD) was laid in Parliament as a Green Paper, which is to '*be used as the official government policy pending its final adoption*', is the country's framework for achieving gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls. The Policy sets out a comprehensive framework for accelerating gender equality across key areas which are aligned with the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Gender and Child Affairs Division of the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) has also developed a National Action Plan for the implementation of the general recommendations of the CEDAW committee pursuant to the Committee's consideration of the combined 4th-7th periodic reports of the GoRTT. The Plan lists targets, timelines and stakeholders required to complete objectives corresponding to the CEDAW Committee's recommendations, with a significant emphasis on capacity building, data collection and public awareness. The Action Plan is being implemented. Several of the action items have been implemented including the change in the age of marriage and a project was designed to conduct the review the legislation. The UNWomen, Barbados has indicated its willingness to provide technical and other support for this project in fiscal 2019/2020.

ii. Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls

Education in Trinidad and Tobago is free up to tertiary level (undergraduate), and postgraduate studies are partially funded. National scholarships are also available to all. There are more females enrolled at tertiary institutions than males. The GoRTT is the primary source of funding in the local higher education sector for both recurrent and capital expenditure, as well as tuition and non-tuition fees by way of grants, scholarships and soft-loans.

Over the past decade, quality assurance within the higher education sector has experienced significant improvements; particularly owing to the establishment of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) in 2004 by the ACTT Act, Chapter 39:06. This legislation

mandated all institutions operating within the higher education sector to conform to baseline standards of quality through a process of registration. In 2005, there were less than thirty (30) institutions registered and today, there are over seventy (70) institutions registered with the ACTT. A similar trend has occurred with increasing numbers of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions obtaining Centre Approval from the National Training Agency (NTA).

The higher education landscape of Trinidad and Tobago has undergone dramatic transformation over the last twenty (20) years. In response to an increasing demand by industry for a highly skilled workforce and a growing aptitude in the citizenry for self-advancement, the GoRTT has been able to respond through its numerous funding mechanisms and targeted project and programme interventions, resulting in the following sectoral achievements:

- a) Over a 100% increase in the number of Tertiary Level Institutions (TLIs) registered with the ACTT;
- b) Notable increase in the number TVET providers approved by the NTA;
- c) Significant increase in the number and types of programmes being offered locally;
- d) Significant expansion in the number of TLI campus locations, spread across a wider geographic region; and
- e) Expansion of student enrolment to approximately 50,000 at present.

The goal of the Ministry of Education for the Higher Education sector over the upcoming years is to increase the higher education attainment rate from 15.78% to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average⁵ of 35% by 2030.

iii. Eliminating violence against women and girls

The protection of women and girls from violence remains at the top of the Government's legislative agenda. Recent legislative reforms have helped to ensure that children are protected against sexual violence. The Children Act, 2012 protects against a wider range of sexual conduct against children and prescribes increased penalties for a range of offences. The Miscellaneous Provisions (Marriage) Act, 2017 abolished the harmful practice of child marriage, considered a form of violence against children. Of the 3,478 child marriages that took place in Trinidad and Tobago over the period 1996-2016, girls comprised 98% of the parties to those marriages. The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2019 which seeks to prevent sexual violence is gender-neutral. However, the statistics reveal that girls and women are primarily the victims of such violence.

Violence in the rural communities against women and girls is often not reported due to the heightened shame faced in small communities. However, the Government, in collaboration with Civil Society Organizations, has been working in the communities to create awareness.

The Draft National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP) on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) will be the primary policy tool of the State in the implementation and coordination of policies and programmes aimed at reducing GBV in Trinidad and Tobago. The nature of GBV demands a participatory multi-sectoral approach to policy development, which strengthens the State's capacity to implement and adapt policies and programmes, with support from key civil society organizations to suit the current local context of GBV. The NSAP was submitted to Cabinet for approval. During the period July to September 2018, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) conducted a Readiness Assessment exercise with key

⁵ OCED Online Data Centre, 2015.

Ministries/Departments for whom lead roles were assigned the implementation of the NSAP on GBV. This Report on the Readiness Assessment is before the Cabinet of the Government for consideration.

In June, 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development began the consultative process in respect of formulating a Draft National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment in Trinidad and Tobago. Stemming from contributions that were made during national consultations, the National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment in Trinidad and Tobago was drafted and finalized, and was laid in Parliament on March 8, 2019. The Policy defines Sexual Harassment and identifies core values and aims with an overall objective of preventing Sexual Harassment in the workplace. The Policy also serves to identify and address relevant issues, and provide guidance on actions that may be taken by all stakeholders in addressing sexual harassment issues in their respective roles in the workplace. In terms of application, it should be noted that the Policy applies to all employers, prospective employers and workers, including household assistants, apprentices and trainees of all forms of enterprises in the public and private sectors as well as Third Parties, such as subcontractors, volunteers, patients, clients (including hospitality and tourism industry), customers and stakeholders of employers. In this regard, every employer must therefore take steps to develop, implement and promote a sexual harassment policy that is suitable to the structure of their particular workplace. Measures specific to prevention, complaint procedures, handling complaints, proper record keeping and monitoring and evaluation are to be included. Such measures must also ensure confidentiality, expediency, thoroughness and fairness to all concerned. The failure of an employer to swiftly and appropriately address a complaint of sexual harassment, having become/made aware of its existence, can result in severe legal, financial and social consequences.

The Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) also issued its “Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace”. The EOC prepared this document as a guide to both the private and public sectors, by providing information on understanding, preventing and resolving workplace sexual harassment. Employers and employees are encouraged to apply these Guidelines in the workplace and to heed the guidance provided, not only to eliminate and prevent sexual harassment, but to also minimise the risk of liability for unlawful sexual harassment at work. Under these Guidelines, employers are called upon to denounce a workplace culture which tolerates or condones sexual harassment.

The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is in the process of creating Domestic Violence Units to address the needs of victims. These Units, like the already established Child Protection Units will house police officers with specialised skills to manage GBV. These Units will be supported by the Victims and Witness Units which already exist. The Police Training Academy of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is in the process of strengthening the curriculum on Domestic Violence, from a gender perspective, through consultative process with other Government and non-governmental agencies.

- iv. Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights**
- The Ministry of Health (MoH) has a universal access policy which allows all persons access to free health care. Services include sexual and reproductive health care, the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine for children, contraception, and pap smears with follow up at specialist clinics. Additionally, breast examination clinics conduct examinations with follow-up investigations and specialist referral clinics are available. Also, antenatal clinics are free with blood and ultrasound services to monitor progress. HIV testing is free at sites throughout the country with a dedicated Queen’s Park Counselling Clinic (QPCC) to counsel and test for STDs. Post-natal services are also free with a mandate for District Health visitors

to visit new mothers within seven (7) days of delivery to prevent complications in mother and child. Challenges for HPV is the notion that the vaccine will promote sexual activity of young people and parents are therefore reluctant to give permission.

v. Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes

In Trinidad and Tobago, initiatives aimed at changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes are led by the Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister, in collaboration with key stakeholders of Government, Academia and Civil Society (Non-Governmental Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, and Community Based Organizations etc.). Initiatives include public awareness and education; outreaches targeting secondary schools students, communities and groups. A number of sensitization training programmes have been conducted over the past five years with an emphasis on strategies to eliminate gender inequalities. Topics covered include basic definitions of gender and sex and how rigid gender roles and stereotyping can lead to gender discrimination and GBV/domestic violence.

3. Measures to Prevent Discrimination and Promote Rights; Women & Girls

Measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls

• Women living in remote and rural areas

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the importance of gender equity and equality and the development of citizens in both urban and rural communities to the process of national development. In this regard, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to empower men and women in these communities, creating the environment for citizens to attain their full potential including dedicating a Government Ministry to address the needs of rural communities. The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government plays a pivotal role in securing the functional cooperation necessary for national initiatives. In the execution of the Ministry's functions, Municipal Corporations and Special Purpose Enterprises assist communities by pooling resources in targeted areas such as Infrastructure Development, Disaster Management, Public Health and Sanitation. The Rural Development Company of Trinidad & Tobago (RDC) under the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government was established to expedite the physical development of the country. RDC has responsibility for the management and implementation of the projects under the Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF) which relate to rural development. In Tobago, these functions are executed by the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) on behalf of the people of Tobago.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) provides the following programmes:

- a) Extension programmes in agricultural production areas such as crop, livestock, horticulture, apiculture, aquaculture, agro-processing and value addition. The MALF offers skills training and certification to rural women, men and youth in various tasks along the agricultural value chain including land preparation, pest control, and allied upstream and downstream activities;
- b) Promotion of public-private partnerships to generate financial capital in rural communities;
- c) Construction of Agro and Light Industrial Parks in rural areas focusing on value addition and agro-processing (small agro-processing enterprises/ cottage industries are mostly operated by women). The raw material outputs from agriculture, fisheries and forestry are used as inputs in the industrial economy thus strengthening the bond between primary producers and manufacturers;
- d) Special training and development of young entrepreneurs in Ornamental Horticulture in rural communities; and

- e) Administration and distribution of state lands in Food Crop Projects in rural communities, all farmers are invited to apply.

The Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) under the purview of the Ministry of Works and Transport, has increased its services to include rural communities making its services accessible to all citizens. At present, the PTSC has 28 routes available to persons in rural communities. Plans are ongoing to increase the PTSC's bus fleet in order to operate on 100 % of the rural routes.

The Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad and Tobago (NRWPTT), a non-governmental organization is the local chapter of the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP). The NRWPTT has the following priorities:

- a) Provide rural women with access to credit for micro-business projects;
- b) Contribute to Government policies catering to the special needs of rural women producers;
- c) Offer marketing support, training, research, technical support and outreach services;
- d) Contribute to the elimination of gender bias in the ownership of land; and
- e) Host local fruit festivals to raise awareness about the health benefits and creative uses of selected fruits, showcase the product and services of women in rural communities and contribute to the local tourism sector.

- **Indigenous women**

Prior to the crafting and approval of the "Beijing Platform for Action", The First Peoples of the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community, Trinidad and Tobago were officially recognized as "representative of the indigenous peoples of Trinidad and Tobago" in 1990. Since then, successive governments have taken steps to build the capacity and recognition of the Community through different levels of financial support. A Cabinet appointed Committee worked with the Community to develop projects and programmes to support the indigenous peoples. In the post-Beijing period, specifically over the period 2014 – 2019, a remarkable change has taken place in terms of the visibility of the First Peoples, and a positive upward climb to progress:

- a) The Queen of the Community provides a role model to other indigenous women;
- b) The Annual festival of Santa Rosa led by indigenous women continues with greater visibility;
- c) Annual camps, supported by Government have allowed for leadership training and discussion on social issues among the women, youth and children;
- d) The University of the West Indies Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) hosted a Conference on Indigenous Women in 2017;
- e) The Community participated in several conferences addressing violence against women, domestic violence and child abuse; and
- f) In 2014, two women participated in the discussions at the Permanent Forum around Articles 22-24 in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The First Peoples were granted a "One-Off" Public Holiday in 2017, leading to a continual ingathering of First Peoples – mainly women. On Indigenous Peoples Day, 2018, 25 acres of land were returned to the First Peoples. Indigenous women will play a major role in its development towards economic gain. The advocacy of the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community has led to building awareness among indigenous women in different parts of the country, to the extent that Queens will emerge in those communities.

The Community is largely financially supported by a Government Subvention and technical support from various Ministries. The Community is making every effort to become more visible, in the hope that more support will come nationally, regionally and internationally.

- **Women and children living with disabilities**

The National Policy on Gender and Development outlines some specific policy measures to address the needs of women and men living with disabilities.

The Ministry of Social development and Family Services provides programmes and services for Persons with Disability (PWD). The following initiatives are pursued in support of persons with disabilities:

- a) **Co-ordinating and Monitoring the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).** The GoRTT signed the UNCRPD on September 27, 2007 and ratified said Convention on June 25, 2015. In December 2018, Trinidad and Tobago completed the Draft Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons of Persons with Disabilities;
 - b) **Co-ordinating, developing and monitoring implementation of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities.** Trinidad and Tobago's revised National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, a Green Paper, was approved by Cabinet and published in July 2018. It recognises a human rights framework for addressing disability and the development of a more "inclusive and barrier-free society", which advocates for and allows the integration of persons with disabilities into their own communities. The Policy also aims to eliminate marginalisation of, and discrimination against all persons with disabilities ensuring effective access to justice. This Policy addresses challenges faced by women and children with disabilities. The Policy is before the Cabinet.
 - c) **A Disability Assistance Grant** is paid to citizens and legal residents of Trinidad and Tobago aged eighteen (18) and above who are medically certified as being permanently disabled and cannot be employed. This grant is in the amount of TT\$2,000.00 per month and persons whose annual income does not exceed TT\$12,000.00 are eligible for this grant. In an effort to provide greater assistance to disabled children, a disability assistance grant for children under 18 years was introduced in January 2019. Children with disabilities are now eligible to receive \$1,500 per month.
- **The Disability Affairs Unit** of the Ministry promotes programmes, practices and attitudes which facilitate the full inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in all spheres of life, including women and girls by:
 - a) Advocating for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities;
 - b) Providing technical support and referral for persons with disabilities, their families and all other persons interested in learning about disabilities;
 - c) Networking with pertinent NGOs, mass media and international organisations to collect and disseminate information on disabilities;
 - d) Implementing programmes that empower persons with disabilities;
 - e) Sensitising and increasing public awareness of issues pertaining to persons with disabilities; and
 - f) Conducting research and collecting data on persons with disabilities.
 - **Women living with HIV/AIDS:** The HIV/AIDS Coordinating Unit, which falls under the remit of the Ministry of Health, is tasked with reducing the incidence of HIV infections and also mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS in persons infected and affected in Trinidad &

Tobago. The Unit coordinates, advises on policy direction, monitors and evaluates the implementation of the Ministry of Health's response to the HIV epidemic through the HIV/AIDS Health Sector Plan (HSP). The activities identified in this plan are implemented by the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs). The Health Sector Plan covers four of the five priority areas of the National Strategic Plan (NSP). These are: (i) Prevention, (ii) Treatment, Care and Support, (iii) Advocacy and Human Rights, and (iv) Surveillance and Research. The prevention programme includes:

- a) **Free HIV Testing & Counselling:** This service is offered through the RHAs and non-governmental organizations (NGO) partners. In the Same Day HIV Counselling and Testing Programme, patients' risk assessments are done to ensure that persons remain HIV negative and HIV positive persons get the requisite treatment, care and psychosocial support to both optimize their health and not be a transmission risk to others.
 - b) **Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Programme (PMTCT):** The current strategy is to eventually eliminate the transmission of HIV from mother to child through the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) Programme. All first attendees to antenatal clinics are offered an HIV test twice in pregnancy. Expectant mothers found HIV positive are referred for treatment and with current therapy, can effectively prevent transmission to the unborn.
- **Health Promotion using Information, Education and Communication:** Health promotion and event campaigns are major prevention strategies. These include collaborations with Rapport, a youth intervention service offering information, education and counselling to the nation's youth, as well as, national testing campaigns including World AIDS Day and Caribbean HIV Testing Day.
 - **HIV Treatment, Care and Support:** This programme provides free antiretroviral treatment and care programmes for both adults and children infected and affected by HIV through the RHAs with access to laboratory HIV diagnostic services. One of the vulnerable target population groups receiving these services are youth & young adults, migrants, substance abusers, victims of sexual violence, women, children and the elderly.
 - **Younger women:** Trinidad and Tobago is finalising a Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Policy through the Ministry of Health, which includes, minors' access to SRH services. Additionally, there is a National Steering Committee for the prevention and elimination of Child Labour in Trinidad and Tobago led by Ministry of Labour on which key stakeholders are represented.
 - **Older women:** The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) addresses various targets groups including older women. The Senior Citizens' Pension grant provides financial assistance to eligible senior citizens of Trinidad and Tobago who are sixty-five (65) years and over, and resident in Trinidad and Tobago for twenty (20) years preceding the date of application.

The Division of Ageing, MSDFS serves as an umbrella agency focusing on ageing initiatives, and acts as an advocate for older persons in Trinidad and Tobago. Its mission is to educate and sensitize key stakeholders and the general public on the ageing issues; and to enhance the quality of life of older persons throughout Trinidad and Tobago by providing an enabling environment for their continued development. Functions of the Division of Ageing include:

- a) Develop standards of care for older persons;
- b) Monitor and coordinate the implementation of the National Policy on Ageing;

- c) Organize and coordinate training programmes, seminars and workshops for care providers of older persons;
- d) Develop and implement programmes and projects for the benefit of the older persons;
- e) Conduct research on matters pertaining to ageing and older persons;
- f) Conduct public sensitization programmes nationwide on issues regarding ageing and older persons;
- g) Network with social-sector Ministries, the private sector, and civil society in the interest of older persons; and
- h) Control, monitor and regulate Homes for Older Persons.

Older Persons Information Centre (OPIC): The Older Persons Information Centre (OPIC) serves as a referral mechanism within the Division of Ageing, linking the elderly with key services available to them through both public and private agencies. Through OPIC, the following services are provided:

- a) Information on inquiries about Homes for the Aged;
- b) Information on abuse cases regarding the elderly and appropriate referrals which are made for assistance and monitored accordingly;
- c) Referrals to providers of medical equipment and services;
- d) Access to Caregivers and other similar services;
- e) Information on legislation related to older persons; and
- f) Contact information for services related to older persons.

Additionally, Old age pensioners, senior citizens sixty (60) years and over, uniformed school children and recipients of public assistance are entitled to free transport on the public transportation system operated by PTSC.

- **Migrant Women and Refugees:** The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is cognizant of the need to offer protection to vulnerable populations including migrant and refugees. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) acceded to the **1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol in 2000**, and is also signatory to the United Nations (UN) **Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime** and supplementing convention such as the **Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), No. 97**.

The Government has made great strides in enacting legislation and implementing measures to combat trafficking in persons, however the country does not currently have specific legislation to address migrant workers. The Government has sought to address this situation through the development of a National Policy to Address Refugee and Asylum Matters in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, adopted by Cabinet in June 2014.

The GoRTT has attempted to acknowledge the rights of migrants and the need for protection of those rights by granting Venezuelan migrants a 12 month amnesty under the Immigration (Amendment) Regulation 2019 and the Immigration (Amendment to the Second Schedule) Order 2019 in accordance with Section 10 of the Immigration Act, Chapter 18:01.

The Government continues to work assiduously to protect and promote the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families and continues to revise its policies in order to adequately address issues of migrants. Through its ministries and agencies, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago works in collaboration with key civil society organizations, international and regional agencies and the private sector to combat the issues faced by migrant workers.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been working with the state, partner stakeholders and civil society organizations to build capacities on implementing a Regional Action Plan to specifically address among other things, Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in the Caribbean. An outcome report was generated after multiple High-Level meetings in 2018.

Additionally, the Living Water Community, a lay Catholic group, serves the poor as well as asylum seekers, refugees and migrants until their cases are resolved. The migrants and refugees ministry of Living Waters works with other ministries within the Living Water Community, particularly to source food and other supplies. The Living Water Community, an implementing partner of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), trains staff members to support its provision of relief to migrants and refugees.

- **Internally displaced women:** The Social Displacement Unit under the MSDFS, monitors a network of treatment and rehabilitation alternatives that would empower socially displaced persons (including street dwellers) and facilitate their reintegration into society, through collaboration and networking with Key Stakeholders via an Inter-Ministerial Committee. The core functions and services of this Unit include:
 - a) Provision of rehabilitation programmes and services to the socially displaced;
 - b) Provision of information and advice on policies and programmes for socially displaced persons;
 - c) Developing and coordinating rehabilitation programmes and services for socially displaced persons;
 - d) Coordinating public sensitization campaigns on the socially displaced;
 - e) Networking with local, regional and international agencies; and
 - f) Monitoring and evaluating services and programmes for the socially displaced.

There are special centres set-up for men and women impacted by drugs and efforts are underway to establish separate centres for boys and girls impacted by drug abuse.

- **Women in humanitarian settings:** The individual rights of all citizens, men, women and boys and girls within the jurisdiction of Trinidad and Tobago, are protected under the Constitution. The Constitution expressly declares that the fundamental rights which it sets out, exist without discrimination, by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex. Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago is participating in the UNFPA led initiative the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP), which is a set of priority activities for reproductive health that should be implemented in the initial phase of an emergency and humanitarian setting. Government Ministries and NGOs in Trinidad and Tobago attended a MISP Capacity Building Workshop in May 2019 hosted by the UNFPA towards strengthening emergency intervention efforts by first responders.

4. Impact of humanitarian Crises on BPfA Implementation?

Has the increasing number of humanitarian crises—caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events—affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country?

No.

5. Top Five Priorities for Accelerating Progress

Top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in Trinidad and Tobago for the coming five years.

- 1) Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice;
- 2) Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls;
- 3) Eliminating violence against women and girls;
- 4) Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; and
- 5) Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will address these priorities through public awareness and education programmes, provision of services, community and school outreaches, ongoing review of laws and policies and through collaboration and dialogue with key stakeholders of Government, Civil Society, Private Sector and Academia.

SECTION TWO:

PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Critical areas of concern:

- A. Women and poverty
- F. Women and the economy
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

6. Actions to Advance Gender Equality: Paid Work and Employment.

Actions taken in the last five years to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment.

- **Measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace:**
 - National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment (see Section on Policy Achievements on pg. 9).
- **Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women.**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) continues to provide access to financial services and credit to agro-producers through the Agricultural Development Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (ADB). The ADB specializes in development financing for the agricultural sector. The Bank creates a portfolio of innovative and comprehensive financial products and services that meet the diverse needs of farmers and other agro-entrepreneurs consistent with sector development and Government's mandate given to develop the agricultural sector.

- **Improved access to modern technologies (including climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (including agricultural extension).**

Agricultural Incentive Programme: The Agricultural Incentive Programme under the MALF is designed to provide support to the various agricultural subsectors by offering grants and rebates which encourage farmers to continue and even further expand their current production. The program seeks to boost the overall efficiency and productivity of farming communities with the aim of securing sustainable livelihoods.

Agricultural Finance Support Programme (Agro-Incentive): The Agro-Incentive Programme also encourages new and existing farmers who wish, among other things, to invest in modern farming technology or other efficiency upgrades on their farms to resist the effects of changing weather patterns; reduce labour reliance; introduce more efficient use of water; reduce cost of production or improve health and safety as well as food safety. The Agro-Incentive provides equitable access to a grant/incentive valued up to TT\$100,000 to agro-producers with the aim of encouraging relevant, efficient and methodical applications to agriculture.

Climate smart technologies include the MALF's relationship with the Inter-American Institute for Corporation on Agriculture (IICA) and Caribbean Agricultural Research and

Development Institute (CARDI), an Institute charged with meeting the research and development needs of the agriculture in the region as identified in national plans and policies, as well as providing an appropriate research and development service to the agricultural sector of member countries.

- **What supported the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment**

The Policy on minimum wage has seen an increased twice in the minimum wage paid to employees; 2015 and 2019.

- **Devised mechanisms for women's equal participation in economic decision-making bodies (e.g. in ministries of trade and finance, central banks, national economic commissions).**

Trinidad and Tobago is among countries in the Caribbean and Americas region where women are nearing or exceeding the gender parity position of 30 per cent of representatives. Women have made remarkable strides in ensuring that females are represented in high positions in society. Similarly, in economic decision-making bodies, women have succeeded significantly in this area.

At the helm of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) is Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, who was appointed as the Minister in September 2015. As one of the frontline Ministries within the Government, the MTI is leading the drive to position Trinidad and Tobago as a manufacturing base, and the business, trade, and financial hub of the Americas. The Ministry's core responsibility is to grow trade, business and investment, particularly through driving the non-energy sectors of the economy. As the pivotal agency for trade promotion and development, MTI manages and coordinates the trade process to ensure access to international markets for companies located in the country.

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce is the largest business services organization in Trinidad and Tobago, representing every sector and industry through advocacy and by offering a mix of value-adding benefits. The organization has provided 138 years of distinguished service to the business sector, and since its establishment on March 14th, 1879, has lobbied on behalf of the members' interests. The Chamber is poised to meet the needs of its membership of over 600 companies with approximately 2000 representatives spanning the services, import, export, and manufacturing and distribution sectors. The Chamber was led by Ms. Catherine Kumar, a position she held from January 2010 to September 2016. The Chamber continues to promote women as entrepreneurs.

Within the Ministry of Finance, women are at the helm of Divisions and Units. The Ministry has a total of nineteen (19) Divisions and Units, twelve (63%) out of which are headed by women.

7. Actions to Recognize, Reduce and Redistribute Unpaid Care

Actions taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation.

- **Unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g. time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts)**

The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MoLSED) launched a National Domestic Workers Register in 2012, which encourages domestic workers and employers of

domestic workers to register with the Ministry. Its objective is to provide for proactive monitoring activities by labour inspectors to ensure decent working conditions for domestic workers. The Register also provides vital labour market information on the demographics of domestic workers which will assist in policy development and in review of labour legislation specific to this sector. A public sensitization campaign through print, television, radio and electronic media to advertise the Register commenced in 2015. This campaign also educated the public on the rights and responsibilities of workers and their employers.

The National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE) is a trade union organization whose mission is to secure the best quality of life for low income workers by providing effective representation, skilful negotiation, aggressive advocacy, and continuous programs of training and education for the personal development of workers and their family. The main objectives of the organization are to protect members against unfair and unjust treatment by employers; to assist members to attain a better life and to develop themselves mentally and physically as far as possible; to take up bona-fide grievances which members may have endured to redress them satisfactorily and to organize all other types of low income workers who may be desirous of joining for effective representation into the Union.

The NUDE developed a domestic workers co-operative “The Service Workers Centre Co-op” with the financial support of the ILO and the technical assistance of the Co-operative Division of the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development. The Co-operative is to seek employment contracts from private home owners and small business establishments to offer them services in cleaning, ironing, housekeeping, landscaping and care-giving. The Cooperative was able to develop a contract for domestic workers to be used for the co-op and also can be shared with employers of domestic workers.

- **Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable**

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) under the Ministry of Education is the first phase of the seamless education system in Trinidad and Tobago and targets children aged three (3) to five (5) years.

The Ministry of Education Centres (existing and planned), together with the Private Providers, cater for approximately 33,226 three to four plus year old children. For the academic year 2013/2014, a total of 30,884 were children enrolled in the ECCE Sector. The 2011 National Census put the three to four age-group population at 38,131 children. At present, a number of Government ECCE Centres are either at varying stages of construction or in the planning stage. It is expected that over the next several years, these Centres will come on stream and add to the nation’s capacity to meet the needs of our ECCE population.

To support single parents the Government, in 2019, announced its plans to meet the cost of day care services for those single parent headed households are unable to meet the cost of those services. This will allow those parents quality care for their children at institutions which are licence and have meet the national standard for caring children.

- **Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care**

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) provides various programmes and services geared toward the assistance and protection of the vulnerable and marginalized groups in society including the **elderly**. The Ministry has an integrated approach in addressing the social challenges of poverty, social inequality and social exclusion. The programmes and services offered are therefore not gender specific but rather, inclusive in

nature and geared towards all vulnerable persons. This forms part of the National Social Mitigation Strategy managed by the Ministry.

Through the National Employment Service (NES) of the MoLSED, Trinidad and Tobago continually strives to assist Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in obtaining employment opportunities in the public and private sectors. The NES was constituted to specifically facilitate the needs of the employer and the job seeker. In order to facilitate ease of accessibility, the NES has a network of offices throughout the country. The work of the NES is also aligned with government's initiative aimed at promoting inclusion and equality of opportunity regarding employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for PWDs.

In January 2017, an employer survey was conducted by the MoLSED. This survey sought to ascertain employers' perspectives on the hiring and retention of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Trinidad and Tobago. It comprised a sample of the approved employers within the NES database, as well as, a sample of advocacy institutions for PWDs. The results of the exercise indicated that:

- a) The majority of the respondents (59%) indicated that they do not currently hire PWDs;
- b) A substantial majority of respondents (75%) noted that they had not implemented workplace accommodations, while those who had done so had only provided accessibility to workplace parking;
- c) Companies also noted that their lack of employment of PWDs was a result of a lack of applications submitted by the PWDs to access job opportunities;
- d) With respect to training and development, employers who have engaged in training of PWDs, noted that a key requirement for PWDs was training in the specific technical skills area related to the job function; and
- e) The majority of institutions serving PWDs were faced with financial constraints which hindered their ability to acquire specialized trainers or to embark on new projects/training programmes for their clientele.

The Elderly & Differently-Abled Mobile Transport Programme (ELDAMO) under the purview of the Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) was established to encourage the active participation of the elderly and differently-abled citizens in an innovative transport shuttle system which would facilitate their spatial mobility and link them with essential community resources in their cities and towns.

The Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme (GAPP) under the MSDFS is an intensive short-term Intergenerational Training Programme which imparts knowledge and skills in elder care to young persons. It also aims at empowering young persons to respond to the growing and complex needs of an ageing population. Some of this programme's objectives are to instil in young people a sense of national pride and civic mindedness; improve intergenerational relationships and to improve the quality of life of the elderly.

- **Invested in time- and labour-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women:** The National Social Development Programme (NSDP) under the MSDFS seeks to ensure that needy citizens and underdeveloped communities of Trinidad and Tobago have access in their homes to a reliable and sustainable supply of pipe borne water and electricity. The programme also aims to ensure that citizens enjoy the use of improved sanitary plumbing facilities and homes that are in uninhabitable conditions, in an effort to raise their standard of living and quality of life. The areas of services under the NSDP include: improved water supplies; electrification and lighting of community facilities; house wiring assistance facility; materials

for sanitary plumbing assistance; minor house repairs and improving children's play parks and senior citizens' homes.

- **Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers:** Trinidad and Tobago does not have legislation specifically targeting the needs of migrants, however the MoLSED is currently working towards the development of a Labour Migration Policy for this country. In 2017, Cabinet agreed to the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee for the development of this Policy. At present, the Policy is in its developmental stages and will include recommendations for the protection of migrant workers, inclusive of women and other vulnerable groups.
- **Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work:**

Male Programmes are critically important to any gender thrust as it engages men in the process of promoting gender equality. These initiatives are led by the Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister and include:

 - a) **Defining Masculine Excellence (DME):** DME is specifically designed for males and is aimed at stemming the tide of problems associated with the concept and perceptions of masculinity. This programme also provides males with training to improve their lives and support a wider project that involves the establishment of support groups for men and other initiatives. It equips men to face gender related challenges. The Programme currently consists of nine (9) modules, with seven (7) sessions addressing various issues including: self-esteem, man and his feelings, father and son bonding, male friendships, masculinity in the workplace, a man and his mother, men and their life partners, the hidden value of a man, and the celebration of masculine excellence.
 - b) **Food Preparation and Home Management for Men and Boys:** This programme is designed to equip men and boys with skills training in food preparation, home management, and financial literacy. This programme therefore seeks to promote shared responsibilities within the household, thereby reducing the burden of care on women and improving family relationships as well as preparing males to participate more efficiently with management of the household.
 - c) **Civil Society Working Group -Male Programmes:** The Gender Affairs Division, established a **civil society working group with specific emphasis on male issues.** This Civil Society Working Group is a forum created to disseminate information regarding the implementation of existing or new initiatives targeting men and boys. It facilitates the active involvement of men and boys in working to address gender and development issues surrounding masculinity. This initiative targets: Faith-based organizations, community-based organizations and other civil society organizations which address issues specific to men and boys.
 - d) **Barbershop Initiative:** Launched in 2018, the Barbershop Initiative targets males aged 14 years and older from within specific communities. The barbershop is identified as a predominantly male space where men and boys regularly converge and conversations on various issues occurs. In an attempt to influence a wide cross section of men and boys and distinguishing that some spaces are mainly occupied by males, the programme aims to create a setting for male-to-male discussions about behaviours, attitudes and negative gender stereotypes. The programme also identifies organizations which provide support and other services for men and boys. It encourages men to make a proactive commitment

to gender equality at an individual level and create awareness of existing cultural/social gender norms which prevent women's empowerment.

8. Impact of Austerity/Fiscal Consolidation Measures

Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?

Yes. A decrease in public expenditure has occurred. However, no assessments on its impact on women and men have been conducted. However, the Government in recognising that such decreases in expenditure may have an impact has developed and commenced the implementation of a National Social Mitigation Strategy 2017 – 2022. The NSMP has as its theme: "Building Resilience to Secure a Nation." In this Plan, a primary focus is on building the resilience of the citizenry to enable them to be better able to cope with the shocks and stressors specifically resulting from the economic downturn; but also, to build the capacity to cope with any future shocks and economic challenges.

Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

Critical areas of concern:

- A. Women and poverty
- B. Education and training of women
- C. Women and health
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

9. Actions to Reduce/Eradicate Poverty

Actions taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls.

- **Promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labour market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures**
The Community Education Programme under the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts (MCDCA) has a twofold function. Firstly, it provides critical support for low-income householders by (i) equipping them with skills to engage in home-based production of goods and services that reduces household expenditure; and (ii) allows for the more effective use of scarce financial resources, which helps to improve their standard of living. Secondly, the programme trains unemployed and under-employed persons with the requisite skills to enhance their competitiveness in the job market and in the creation of sustainable self-employment initiatives.

The On-The-Job Training Programme (OJTP) has existed since 2002 and enlists participation of both the public and private sectors. The OJTP affords young persons (male, female and those with disabilities) between the ages of sixteen to thirty-five (16 – 35) with the golden opportunity to acquire work-based knowledge and industry-specific experience. This induction into the World of Work provides the OJTP Trainees with a "foothold" in the labour market through targeting graduates from secondary, technical and vocational as well as tertiary institutions. The number of persons participating in this Programme, including women have increased

significantly over the past five years. The wages paid to the group have also increased beyond the minimum wage.

- **Supported women's entrepreneurship and business development activities**

The Community Education Programme under the purview of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts (MCDCA) also consists of Domestic Support/Skills Training Projects which expose the economically disadvantaged citizens to skills training in order to enhance existing skills or learn new-skills to assist them to become engaged in home-based production of goods and services to compensate for a deficiency or absence of reliable household income.

Additionally, the Craft Development Programme preserves the creativity and artistic ingenuity of local artisans. It also promotes craft production as a viable contributor to the national goals of economic diversification and job creation.

The Export Centre Services Limited, which also falls under remit of the MCDCA, also provides support through training for the development of women and girls in the craft development field. These training opportunities are geared toward the enhancement of skills to better contribute to the quality of life of women in this field. Over the years, women have been the predominant participants in these programmes. The MCDCA understands how integral these programmes are to the development of women and will continue to provide avenues to support the advancement and overall empowerment of women and girls.

The Sowing Entrepreneurial Empowerment Development (SEED) Programme, MSDFS seeks to improve the standard and quality of life of our nation's citizens through programmes and facilities that are developmental and entrepreneurial in nature. Small grants are provided to assist clients who are interested in starting a business or improving their skills set. The beneficiaries of this programme include persons living in poverty, welfare recipients and other persons over the age of eighteen (18) years and in receipt of benefits from the Ministry. SEED assists persons in need who are interested in undertaking a micro-project (small business venture or skills training) with a grant of up to \$15,000.00.

- **Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women)**

The MSDFS addresses the social challenges of poverty, social inequality and social exclusion through rehabilitative and skill enhancement initiatives. The MSDFS provides various programmes and services geared toward the assistance and protection of the vulnerable and marginalized groups in society including: women, children, persons with disabilities, elderly, poor/indigent, socially displaced, ex-prisoners, deportees and persons living with HIV/AIDS. The programmes and services offered are therefore not gender specific but rather inclusive in nature and geared towards all vulnerable persons. In view of the foregoing, there are many services offered by the MSDFS which support women and girls indirectly through the provision of *inter alia*: micro-credit, food support, training, parental support, social assistance via NGOs and financial assistance.

- **Introduced/strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty**

As it relates to strengthening low cost legal services for women living in poverty, the Government has within the last five (5) years, authorized a number of changes to the structure and scope of the Legal Aid and Advisory Authority (LAAA). The LAAA, which is the Authority responsible for providing legal advice and legal representation to persons who cannot afford to pay for legal services, has increased its complement of Attorneys to better serve members of the public living

in poverty. Additionally, a new office for the Authority was opened in September 2018, so that persons in the central district could have easier access to its low cost legal services. The LAAA now has offices in the North, South, Central, Tobago and a sub office in Couva. In February 2019, the Authority launched its new website which provides information about its services and how to access their services. The newly launched website also includes a section where private Attorneys who wish to provide services to persons living in poverty, can register online to be part of the Legal Aid Panel of Attorneys.

Apart from providing legal advice at a minimal cost to all members of the public and legal representation free of charge to persons who qualify, the Authority also from time to time, takes part in many Outreach Programmes hosted in various parts of the country. At these Outreach Programmes, which are free to the public, persons can learn about the low cost legal services that the Authority provides and in some cases, even obtain on the spot free legal advice. In addition to the aforementioned, the Government is currently in the process of making inroads to further strengthen the provision of low cost legal services to persons living in poverty with its proposal to implement a Public Defender's Unit in the LAAA. This unit will focus on providing legal representation solely to persons charged with a criminal offence.

10. Actions to Improve Access to Social Protection

Actions your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls.

- **Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women (e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programmes, social assistance)**
 - a) **The National Employment Service (NES) of Trinidad and Tobago** – The NES comprise ten (10) Employment Centres, which provide job placement, counselling and advisory services to job-seekers. Additionally, there is a Division which manages the Canada Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Programme (CCSAWP). The NES was strengthened to expand its services to facilitate access to sustainable employment opportunities which are made available to job seekers and the placement of vacancies by employers via its online registration system and its network of offices across Trinidad and Tobago. Under the NES, the Ministry is currently implementing a Ten-Point Plan on Unemployment to target the retrenched and unemployed in Trinidad and Tobago. Women who may have been retrenched or are unemployed can benefit from the activities under the Ten-Point Plan on Unemployment.
 - b) The Government of Trinidad and Tobago continues to provide employment programmes including the **Unemployment Relief Programme (URP)** and **Community Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP)**. These programmes address levels of unemployment throughout the country among the lower skilled and unemployed populations. Areas of training provided by these programmes include crafts, furnishings, cleaning, painting, community work, geriatric care and beautification of surroundings while they are employed.
 - **The Unemployment Relief Programme (URP)** provides short term employment to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. The programme is also designed to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of individuals and community groups and to assist in the delivery of small-scale projects in various communities. The Women's Programme teaches women marketable skills while providing employment, using an "earn while you learn" approach. The Special Projects Delivery component awards contracts for work in the community to

small scale contractors. Effective December 1, 2019 there will be an increase in the wages for both URP and CEPEP workers by 15 %.

- **Introduced or strengthened conditional cash transfers**

The Food Support Programme also known as the Food Card, is a short-term food assistance and development programme that targets vulnerable persons and families in need. Recipients can purchase basic food items necessary to meet their daily nutritional requirements, thereby enhancing the health and dignity of their household and reducing the incidence of poverty. The programme is currently implemented through a Debit Card, (the Food Support Card) which is an electronic cash transfer facility. A condition of this programme is that all recipients must, unless otherwise advised, join a Developmental Programme. This Developmental Programme is a more holistic approach to poverty alleviation which takes into consideration conditions that confines the family's effort to move out of poverty. It provides families in extreme poverty with access to critical services, facilitating their access to services relevant to their needs. It seeks to empower the household to improve their quality of life.

In providing short-term basic food assistance to vulnerable households through appropriate targeting, there was a \$100.00 increase in the value of the Food Card in order to support the most vulnerable in our society. This is aimed at bringing relief to the most vulnerable households in society and assisting with food security.

- **Introduced or strengthened unconditional cash transfers**

In its continued efforts to improve the well-being of the elderly, on January 01, 2019, public service pension was increased to a minimum of \$3,500 (TTD) per month immediately upon retirement. The **Senior Citizen Pension** ceiling was also increased to \$6,000 (TTD) thereby allowing persons in receipt of both the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) pension and Senior Citizens' Pension to receive up to \$3,000 (TTD) from both per month. Effective January 2020, Daily-paid workers in the public service with an appropriate minimum length of service be eligible for the minimum public service pension of \$3,500.

In providing greater assistance to disabled children, effective January 01, 2019, the Disability Assistance Grant for children under 18 years was also introduced. Disabled children are now eligible to receive \$1,500 per month. The Disability Assistance Grant for persons 18 years and over was also increased from \$1800.00 to \$2,000.00. It is expected that with these changes, there will be an overall improvement in the standard of living for those who face challenges in meeting basic economic requirements for themselves and their families.

- **Introduced or strengthened non-contributory social pensions**

The Public Assistance Grant provides financial aid to vulnerable citizens, unable to earn a living to support themselves or dependents because of illness, injury, imprisonment, death and/or abandonment by a parent or guardian. It is also paid on behalf of needy children whose fathers, mothers or both parents have died, are hospitalized, imprisoned or have deserted the family. This grant is also paid to a parent or guardian on behalf of a child with a severe disability and where the household income is deemed inadequate.

- **Reformed contributory social protection schemes to strengthen women's access and benefit levels**

In March 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) implemented a Standard Means Test to support the administration of grants. This initiative aims to reduce misuse, ensure enhanced effectiveness of the social safety net and more importantly safeguard those in need of social assistance.

On January 23rd, 2019 the Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago (NIBTT) for information sharing on clients of both entities. The MOU is geared towards facilitating information sharing thereby reducing client traffic to NIBTT and enhancing customer service. The increase collaboration between the two parties, seeks to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the processing of grants. Approximately forty to fifty thousand cross beneficiaries, women included, are expected to benefit, all with the intention of minimising service cost and time.

Additionally, on January 28th, 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services and IGOVTT was signed to formalize their mutual interaction and increase accessibility to all. This new arrangement seeks to improve service delivery and access to social welfare services through traditional and non-traditional service delivery channels. Members of the public will have the ability to access social welfare and other services of the Ministry.

11. Actions to Improve Health Outcomes for Women & Girls

Actions taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls.

- **Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services**

In Trinidad and Tobago, quality health care is offered at no cost through the public health system. This includes family planning, antenatal care, childbirth (normal delivery), caesarean section, management of other birth complications, postnatal care for mothers, immunisation services for pregnancy, access to medicines and pharmaceutical products, testing and treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections (including HIV and syphilis), and screening for cervical cancer.

In 2016, the Directorate of Women's Health was established. The position of Director of Women's Health is managed by a doctor who is specialized in obstetrics and gynaecology. This Directorate has placed women's health at the forefront in all aspects covered by the Ministry of Health. The Directorate of Women's Health is charged with the responsibility of implementing policies that specifically target and bring about improvement to women's healthcare issues. There is now a firm direction and the ability to have policies written and implemented. As of February 2019, there are ten (10) persons employed in the Directorate: Director, Biostatistician, Clinical Auditor, three (3) Research Specialists, Manager of the Breastfeeding Coordinating Unit, and two (2) Business Operations Assistants.

The Ministry of Health has also developed the **Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and Syphilis in Trinidad and Tobago: Plan of Action 2019 - 2020** which is currently in draft. The vision of this Plan is to have a generation who are free of HIV and congenital syphilis whilst the goal is to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis by 2020. This Plan is specifically targeted towards pregnant women with confirmed HIV/syphilis in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ministry is currently working on the **Finalisation of the National Breastfeeding Policy**. The objectives of the Breastfeeding Policy are to (i) increase the percentage of babies who are exclusively breastfed for the first twelve (12) weeks or three (3) months of their lives to ninety-percent over the next five years; (ii) provide the framework for the implementation of the "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding" and the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in all public healthcare facilities; (iii) advocate for the enforcement of regulations concerning the production and marketing of breast milk substitutes as contained in the World Health

Organization (WHO)/UNICEF International Code of Marketing of Breast milk Substitutes; and (iv) develop legislation for the country as it relates to the WHO/UNICEF International Code of the Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes. The Policy includes guidelines for breastfeeding for HIV positive mothers and will be applicable to all childbearing women and their families, licensed childcare providers as well as other relevant stakeholders involved in feeding infants and children.

Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with United States Agency for International Development (USAID), trained health care workers on the care of infants and their families affected by Zika. The Child Development and Behaviour Unit of the North Central Regional Health Authority is leading on a project, funded by the USAID, which includes training for healthcare providers, caregivers and parents. Some topics to be addressed include early stimulation, psychosocial support for parents, and training specific to the cohort of children and families affected by the Zika virus.

- **Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services**

In Tobago, the Tobago Regional Health Authority (TRHA) continues to provide sexual and reproductive health services to the public at no cost to the client. Services targeting women include the provision of contraceptives, advice on family planning, pap smears, breast examinations, child health services, breast feeding advice and counselling. Antenatal and postnatal services are accessible across the island and home visits are a routine part of service delivery. Contraceptives are recommended for teenaged mothers and are offered routinely as part of the postnatal care. Contraception is not offered routinely to sexually active persons under 18 without the consent of a parent or guardian.

The Government's HIV/AIDS education and awareness strategy includes the HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention Programme for Rural women. This programme is open to women 18 – 45 years who are willing to obtain and share information about HIV/AIDS.

The National AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC), Office of the Prime Minister is a multi-sectoral body established to co-ordinate the national response to HIV and AIDS. The establishment of the committee was approved by Cabinet and the committee is comprised of representatives from government ministries, persons living with HIV, civil society, faith-based organizations, academic and research institutions, trade unions, private sector, youth, Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and UN organizations. The goals of the NACC's National Strategic Plan are: to reduce the incidence of HIV infections in Trinidad and Tobago; to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS on persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS; and to reduce HIV and AIDS related stigma and discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago. The NACC also developed a Draft National HIV and AIDS Policy 2019 in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Other Initiatives undertaken by the Health Sector include:

- a) Initiated Treat All Policy in 2017. "Treat all" ensures early diagnosis and initiation, effective linkage and retention;
- b) Capacity building for service providers;
- c) Expanded opportunities for HIV testing;
- d) HIV combination prevention (focus on key populations and adolescents); innovation (e.g. PrEP; HIVST) and addressing structural barriers;
- e) Tailored services for key populations (community and person-centered approach);
- f) Integrated approach to co-infections and co-morbidities (HIV-TB);
- g) Lab strengthening (POC testing; Viral load; STI diagnostics);

- h) HPV screening and vaccination;
- i) Surveillance (including GASP surveillance);
- j) Program strengthening (integration, decentralization, SRH & HIV);
- k) Staff Education- preceptor-ship program;
- l) Patient advocates;
- m) Prison outreach ministry; and
- n) Vaccine Program- Hep B, HPV.

Trinidad and Tobago through the Ministry of Health has a Mental Health Unit dedicated to promoting mental health, preventing mental and substance use conditions through advocacy, education, research and access to evidence-based services for all persons who suffer from a spectrum of mental disorders and to improve the lives of patients and their families. The Mental Health Unit facilitates the operationalization of Mental Health Policies, coordinates the process of updating Mental Health Legislation and develops guidelines for quality assurance in mental healthcare, identifies and seeks to reduce gaps in service delivery and monitors and evaluates programme performance at the regional and national level. The Children and Adolescents Living with Mental health issues (CALM) Clinic is an adolescent mental health clinic in east Trinidad (St. Augustine). The Clinic operates once per week on Saturdays and began out of the need for services for the abundance of suicidal teens presenting at Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex. It is now a holistic Teen Clinic which provides: Mental Health Support, Family Counselling and Health Literacy. CALM specifically targets patients 12 to 19 years old, who are at risk, already engaged in, or are exposed to behaviours that makes them vulnerable for undesirable social, behavioural, educational or mental health outcomes.

- **Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns**
The Health Sector in collaboration with the National Aids Coordinating Committee has developed HIV testing campaigns targeting men
- **Provided gender-responsiveness training for health service providers**
To replace the obsolete antenatal record, Trinidad and Tobago introduced the Perinatal Information System (SIP) which was developed by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), to allow for real time generation of maternal and neonatal statistics at various levels within the health system. Training for health service providers began in 2015 and is ongoing to date. SIP piloted in May 2017 in sixteen (16) sites, and is mandated for use in all public health facilities by the Chief Medical Officer in August 2018.
- **Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes**
In terms of providing access to **comprehensive information on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)**, the GoRTT through the Ministry of Education (MOE) has provided for the implementation of HFLE curriculum in primary and secondary schools. The Ministry of Education has established a coordinator for the health and family life curriculum to improve program delivery. HFLE is taught at the Secondary schools for at least two (2) periods per week or teaching cycle using the revised 2014-HFLE Curriculum for secondary schools Forms 1 -3. The HFLE secondary school programme consists of the four (4) themes and a number of selected topics organized within a basic structural framework. At the Primary schools, the skills, values, and attitudes are infused into other subject areas using an integrated thematic approach. HFLE has been implemented in at least three quarters of primary schools in Trinidad and is integrated and not delivered as a standalone subject.

- **Provided refugee women and girls as well as women and girls in humanitarian settings with access to sexual and reproductive health services**

In Trinidad and Tobago, all persons (including women and girls) within its jurisdiction, have access to Universal Health Care. Additionally, the Draft National HIV and AIDS Policy 2019 promotes access to free SRH and HIV services for documented and undocumented migrants.

12. Actions to Improve Education Outcomes & Skills

Actions taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls.

- **Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programmes**

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has recognized that tertiary education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and lifelong learning play a pivotal role in the social, economic and cultural development of the country. The aim of the National Policy on Tertiary Education, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Lifelong Learning is to expand and develop tertiary education and to strengthen technical and vocational education and training as part of a seamless system to allow for alternative pathways to further and higher education. This Policy also promotes learning and skills transfer, strengthens workforce competence, supports industrial development and promotes workplace readiness through the award of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ). TVET initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago include:

- a) Retraining Programme:** The Retraining Programme targets retrenched or displaced workers between the ages of 25 and 45 years. Individuals are drawn from diverse communities to become beneficiaries of the Programme. Unemployed persons can obtain training to increase their opportunities for employment or self-employment through the Retraining Programme. The Programme offers training in basic vocational skills, while emphasis is also placed on the development of positive work habits and attitudes as well as the acquisition of entrepreneurial, interpersonal and communication skills. Programme trainees are certified to National Occupational Standards through the Trinidad and Tobago Vocational Qualifications (TTNVQ) Framework, the new national accreditation system for vocational education, which enables them to pursue further education and training.
- b) The Multi-Sector Skills Training Programme (MuST)** provides training in construction, hospitality and tourism for eligible citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. The Training programmes provide training in fields traditionally dominated by men such as automotive repairs, air-conditioning and refrigeration and construction technologies.
- c) The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP)** is an intervention strategy aimed at addressing the issue of escalating unemployment, particularly among young persons between the ages of 15 and 35. YTEPP Limited offers over 80 vocational courses in 12 occupational areas, and training is conducted in six-month cycles. The Programme is open to eligible persons who are interested in entrepreneurship or acquiring Level I and II (craft and pre-craft) technical vocational training.
- d) Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC):** The CCC which operates through the Ministry of National Security offers introductory training, life skills development and on-the-job training to at-risk youth. The programme aims to: raise the self-esteem of young persons deemed to be at-risk; initiate interventions that would assist in fostering socially desirable

behaviours among youth; train and develop unemployed/ unemployable persons in the target group to prepare them for employment; foster a sense of national pride in participants; and provide temporary employment for unemployed young persons.

- **Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education**

The Ministry of Education provides access to quality education to females and males of all ages. Universal education at the Primary and Secondary levels is provided free of charge throughout the twin island state, and the following support systems to facilitate access are provided to all students who qualify:

- a) School Transport;
- b) School Meals;
- c) Textbooks; and
- d) Psycho-social services such as guidance, counselling, social work services, special education services.

- **Promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls**

The Ministry of Education's **National School Code of Conduct** provides guidance to all school personnel towards ensuring that the school is a safe and secure learning environment where all children can learn and develop holistically. The National School Code of Conduct outlines the responsibilities of school personnel, standards of behaviour and range of consequences for violations. The Code of Conduct sets the context and provides the structure for the development and implementation of school-level discipline policies (discipline plan/discipline matrix) with reference to regulations under the Education Act, national policies, circular memoranda and guidelines as issued by the Ministry of Education. The Code of Conduct addresses issues such as the responsible use of technology, cyberbullying, data security and privacy and social media. Principals, in collaboration with staff, parents and students and other stakeholders in the school community are expected to implement the National School Code of Conduct in a manner that is sensitive to diversity and the culture of schools.

- **Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and digital fluency and literacy**

Over the 15-year history of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), the highest number of female students graduated from Education Programmes, Process and Utilities Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Information and Communication Technology programmes. UTT graduates have been showcased for their expertise both within Trinidad and Tobago and internationally in a number of areas: Fashion and Design, Performing Arts, Engineering, and Marine Sciences.

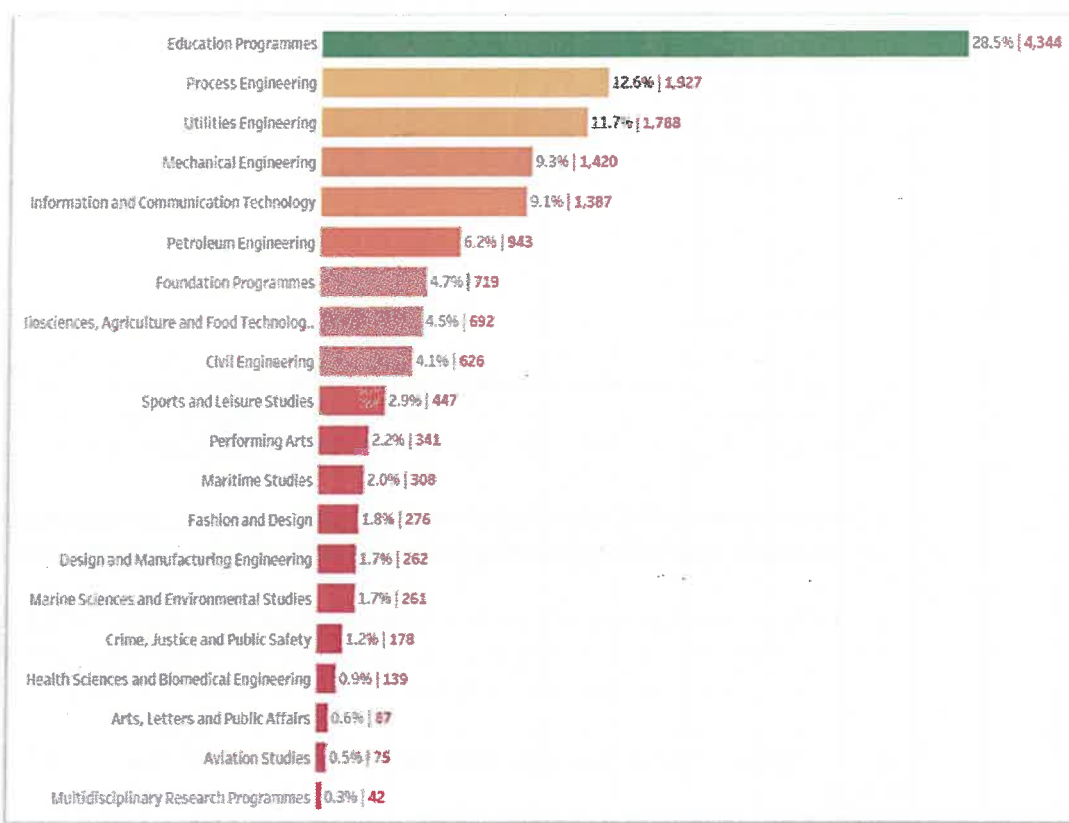


Figure 1 shows the female graduates by academic areas over the Past 15 Years at UTT. Source: University of Trinidad and Tobago 2019.

- **Strengthened measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/or motherhood**
 - The GoRTT has established mechanisms to ensure that girls who become pregnant and boys who are fathers can complete their education and training, in order to attain sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their dependants. The following three (3) programmes are available specifically for adolescent mothers:
 - a) Mary Care Residential Facility for Pregnant Teens and Teen Mothers;
 - b) CHOICES and the Adolescent Mothers' Programme, managed by the Child Welfare League of Trinidad and Tobago (CWL); and
 - c) Adolescent Mother Programme, Tobago (funded and supported by THA).

OPM (GCA) proposes that another aspect be added to create a synergy across the programmes and between adolescent parents (AP). It will entail individual educational plans developed for each AP depending on their current status and assessed capabilities; where necessary remedial, primary and or secondary level classes will be provided directly through in-house or sourced tutors; liaising with the MOE to ensure that public examinations can be taken; liaising with other educational programmes and services to facilitate opportunities for APs to further their education, improve self-sufficiency and their capability to adequately provide for themselves; and the provision of on-site nursery services or sourcing adequate nursery or ECCE services off site. This is before the Cabinet for consideration.

Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

Critical areas of concern:

- D. Violence against women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

13. Forms of Violence Prioritized for Action.

Forms of violence against women and girls, prioritized for action.

- **Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape**
 - The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is in the final review stages of the Domestic Violence Act 1999, in order to strengthen the protection for victims of DV.
- **Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment**
 - a) See **National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment in Trinidad and Tobago** on pg. 9.
 - b) See **EOC “Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace”** on pg. 14.
 - c) Amendment to the **Sexual Offences Act** is currently being debated in parliament. Possible amendments would include the formation of a sexual offender’s registry.
- **Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (e.g. cyber violence, online stalking)**

The Cybercrime Bill 2017 is currently being debated in Parliament. The purpose of the bill is to create offences related to cybercrime and for other related matters in Trinidad and Tobago. Clause 16 of the Bill proposes to create the offence of violating a person’s privacy by capturing and sharing pictures or videos of a person’s private area without his consent. The offence would carry a fine of \$100,000 and two years’ imprisonment on summary conviction; or a fine of \$500,000 and three years’ imprisonment on conviction on indictment.
- **Child, early and forced marriages**

See the **Miscellaneous Provisions (Marriage) Act, 2017** on pg. 8.
- **Trafficking in women and girls**

The Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) under the purview of the Ministry of National Security, collaborates with Civil Society Organization to provide safe spaces, counselling etc. for trafficked persons. For child victims, the Children’s Authority is legally responsible for the shelter, repatriation and social services afforded to child victims.

The CTU is mandated by law to address matters pertaining to human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago and addresses some issues of migrants. The CTU partners with NGOs to provide services to victims. The CTU also established standard operating procedures for reporting suspected trafficking cases. The Government, through the CTU, partners with an internal organization and victims’ home governments to ensure safe and responsible repatriation for victims. In March 2015, the CTU launched a toll-free hotline to receive reports of suspected human trafficking cases. The government provided anti-trafficking training or guidance for its diplomatic personnel. The Unit conducts public awareness and sensitization on the issue of trafficking of persons. Additionally, the CTU disseminates information on trafficking to the public through child trafficking brochures, PSAs via social media, radio, media interviews.

14. Actions Prioritized on Violence: Last Five Years

Actions prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls.

- **Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation**
See **Miscellaneous Provisions (Marriage) Act, 2017** on pg. 8.
- **Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls**
 - **The National Policy on Gender and Development** is the product of collaboration among government, civil society, private sector, academia and the general public. The Policy provides a framework for the inclusion of gender perspectives in addressing all areas of national development. It was laid as a Green Paper in Parliament on 9 March 2018. The Government has agreed that the Policy be used as the official Government Policy, pending its final adoption as a White Paper. One thematic area in the Policy is Gender-Based Violence and Human Security with the objective ‘to develop and implement integrated measures to prevent, treat and alleviate the incidence of gender-based violence, increasing women’s and men’s understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities, and improving remedies for redress’. The Policy also addresses the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights, placing special emphasis on preventing gender-based violence, disease transmission and maternal mortality and morbidity. Furthermore, the Policy stresses the importance of innovative curriculum development strategies in Health and Family Life Education (HFLE), to increase its effectiveness in promoting sexual and reproductive health and addressing gender-based violence.
 - **The Draft National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP) on Gender Based Violence (GBV)** will be the primary policy tool of the State in the implementation and coordination of policies and programmes aimed at reducing gender based violence in Trinidad and Tobago. The nature of gender based violence demands a participatory multi-sectoral approach to policy development, which strengthens the State’s capacity to implement and adapt policies and programmes with support from key civil society organizations to suit the current local context of GBV. The NSAP was submitted to Cabinet for approval. During the period July to September 2018, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) conducted a Readiness Assessment exercise with key Ministries/Departments whom lead roles were assigned for the implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP) on Gender Based Violence (GBV). This Report on the Readiness Assessment has been forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.
 - **Regional Work Planning Meeting for Child Protection Focal Points:** The OPM collaborated with UNICEF to host a Regional Work-Planning Meeting for Child Protection Focal Points from August 14-16, 2018. Eleven (11) countries participated in a 10 Point Action Plan meeting, following which, Trinidad and Tobago developed a National Child Protection Action Plan.
- **Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women’s access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases)**
 - a) See **the Family and Children Division Act, 2016** on pg. 8.
 - b) The Legal Aid & Advisory Authority (LAAA) provides legal representation in the Magistrates’ Court, High Court and Court of Appeal of Trinidad & Tobago by a lawyer assigned by the Authority.

- **Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)**
 - a) **National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH), 800-SAVE:** Through the administration of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which falls under the Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs), victims of domestic violence, wherever they might be can have their cases referred to the relevant authority, receive counselling, be referred to a shelter and receive information on the legal services available to address their situation. This toll free service is operated 24 hours a day, seven days per week inclusive of public holidays. During the period 2015- 2018, this hotline was accessed by more persons and facilitated a total of 12,402 calls.
 - b) **The Legal Aid Clinic:** operates for the benefit of financially challenged members of the public, with due regard being paid to matters of educational interest and value to the students. It therefore provides legal services for the community and the general public who are of limited means.
 - c) **Housing Assistance:** This is an initiative of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services where victims/survivors are eligible for housing assistance including public housing and rental assistance.
 - d) **Family Court:** This Court operated under the Judiciary and offers a range of related support services such as Mediation and Social Services including psychological care and counselling for victims/survivors and perpetrators of violence.
 - e) **Establishment of Safe Houses/Shelters:** In addressing the issue of gender based violence particularly domestic violence, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago through the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) has constructed two domestic violence shelters and these are expected to be operationalized by the end of calendar year 2019. Additionally, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) is refurbishing four residential properties for the provision of services and safe spaces for persons who are victims of domestic violence.
 - f) **Shelters:** Currently, domestic violence shelters are owned and operated by Non-Governmental Organizations which provide a safe haven for victims of domestic violence and their children.
 - g) **The National Family Services (NFS) Division:** This Division under the purview of Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, offers free counselling services for individuals, groups and families. This service provides preventive, remedial and developmental counselling for persons who may be facing a crisis or dealing with psychological problems associated with domestic violence among other social problems.
 - h) **Families in Action:** A non-governmental organization, Families in Action provides counselling, assessment and referral services for victims of sexual violence. It also manages a helpline which offers 24-hour emergency/crisis intervention. Other services of the organization include community outreach programmes, group support and workplace support.
 - i) **Trinidad and Tobago Coalition against Domestic Violence (CADV):** The Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a Non-governmental Organisation with the capacity to provide both counselling services and Shelter to victims of sexual violence.

- j) **ChildLine:** Is a proactive response to the needs of children and young persons. It is a free, confidential telephone hotline for children and young persons in trouble or danger or who simply need someone to talk to. ChildLine responds to calls from anywhere in Trinidad and Tobago.
- k) **Rape Crisis Society:** The Rape Crisis Society is a Non-Governmental Organisation which provides continued counselling for victims and their families. Victims also engage in group therapy. Counsellors assess victims and refer them for relevant services for instance, HIV testing and counselling or to shelters.
- l) **Ministry of National Security: Victims and Witness Support Unit, of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service:** This unit provides services and support to victims and witnesses of crime. It also provides help for victims of Sexual violence, Domestic violence, Child Abuse, Stalking and Harassment
- **Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys)**
 - a) **Gender Based Violence (GBV) Outreaches Outreach:** The Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister conducts outreaches in institutions, schools, communities etc. in collaboration with key stakeholders of Government Ministries/Agencies, Civil Society Organizations and Academia. These outreaches consists of presentations, showcasing of theatrical plays addressing GBV and information booth displays.
 - b) **Project SARAH:** This initiative is a collaboration between the Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister and the Counter Trafficking Unit, Ministry of National Security and was launched in 2019. The programme targets males 18 years and older to create awareness around the relationship between gender norms and stereotypes and issues of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
 - c) **Barbershop Initiative:** This Programme is conducted by the Gender Affairs Division in collaboration with key stakeholders and is aimed at creating a forum for males 14 men to explore and discuss how gender stereotypes influences the attitudes and behaviours of men and boys.
 - d) See **Defining Masculine Excellence (DME)** on pg. 26.
 - e) See **Food Preparation and Home Management for Men and Boys** on pg. 26.
 - f) **Girl Power: Becoming a woman: safe spaces for women and girls in T&T:** The Network of NGO's for the Advancement of Women (the Network), in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) launched a project "Girl Power: Becoming a woman: safe spaces" for women and girls in Trinidad and Tobago 2014. This project aimed at creating safe spaces for at-risk girls and young women. The objective of the program is to reduce the influence of social norms that perpetuate the social and economic exclusion of girls and young women in three geographical areas of Trinidad and Tobago. The programme targeted girls between the ages of ten (10) to twenty-five (25) who were at a high risk for physical and sexual violence or pregnancy. Topics included sex and sexuality, and physical security modules incorporated into sports and physical activity sessions. They were also exposed to financial empowerment, a literacy module, and a life and job skills module.

- **Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including regarding particular groups of women and girls.**

a. **Central Registry on Domestic Violence (CRDV):** One of the main achievements of the Gender Affairs Division was the establishment of the Central Registry on Domestic Violence (CRDV). The CRDV is a central repository of data on domestic violence which has been collecting data from various governmental agencies and key civil society organizations. The Central Registry allows the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to present a more reliable and comprehensive view on the incidence of domestic violence/gender-based violence in Trinidad and Tobago. Out of the CRDV data, trends are identified and programmes are developed to address the issue of domestic violence in Trinidad and Tobago. The CRDV was officially launched in April 2016 and as of 2019, there are thirteen (13) agencies feeding data into the system including the National Domestic Violence Hotline (800-SAVE), the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and Domestic Violence Shelters. To date two (2) CRDV Data Reports have been published for the period 2017 and 2018 respectively. These reports can be viewed at <http://www.opm-gca.gov.tt/Gender/Gender-Initiatives/Central-Registry-for-Domestic-Violence>. The CRDV is currently being expanded to include all forms of gender based violence.

b. **The Crime and Problem Analysis (CAPA) Branch:** The CAPA Branch under the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) collects and analyses all crime data including GBV/ domestic violence/violence against women. It utilizes technology to determine patterns and where resources should be focused.

c. **Research Conducted on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Violence (SV):**

– **National Women’s Health Survey (WHS) for Trinidad and Tobago:** The 2017 Trinidad and Tobago Women’s Health Survey (WHS) was a national, quantitative, cross-sectional survey (of 1,079 women ages 15–64) designed to provide a diagnosis of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Trinidad & Tobago, with a specific focus on intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence (NPSV). This initiative was a collaboration of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and Inter-American Development Bank and conducted by QURE Limited. The Quantitative Study was launch May 2018. The survey measured the national prevalence of IPV and NPSV, determined risk and protective factors associated with IPV and documented the health consequences and coping strategies for female survivors of IPV. The 2017 WHS, the first national survey of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago, falls under a regional initiative of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and UN Women, who collectively created a CARICOM Model for National Prevalence Surveys of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)” (National Women’s Health Survey (WHS) for Trinidad and Tobago, 2017, p.xxi). See link to Survey: <https://publications.iadb.org/en/national-womens-health-survey-trinidad-and-tobago-final-report> .

– **Gender Based Violence in Trinidad and Tobago:** Qualitative Study was a collaboration between UN Women and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the Office of the Prime Minister, (Gender and Child Affairs). This Study was completed December 2017 and formed part of the National Health Survey. The qualitative study focused on the nature, patterns, contributing factors and consequences of violence against women in Trinidad and Tobago. The specific concerns investigated during the qualitative component of the study were: the impact of beliefs about womanhood and manhood on IPV; the gendered impacts of increasing economic insecurity on women; men and their relationships; the roles that ideals of romantic love play in women’s and men’s understanding of and response to violence in relationships; and the perception of the

availability and efficacy of state and civil society services for persons who experience IPV. (Gender Based Violence in Trinidad and Tobago: Qualitative Study, 2017, p.5). See link <https://www2.unwomen.org/media/field%20office%20caribbean/attachments/publications/2018/20181011%20af%20trinidad%20and%20tobago%20health%20for%20digital.pdf?la=en&vs=3559>.

- **'Knowledge and Attitudes Among Adults & Children on Gender Based Violence in Trinidad and Tobago:** In October 2016, UNICEF, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the Caribbean Development Research Inc. (CADRES) completed a study on the 'Knowledge and Attitudes Among Adults & Children on Gender Based Violence in T&T'. This Study was a social survey/opinion poll among adults and children in Trinidad and in Tobago. It sought to ascertain the attitudes and perceptions towards sexual and physical violence against children as it pertains to the public as well as students themselves. The findings of the survey were used to develop OPM programmes and initiatives such as the Child Protection Fair and the Unite Against Child Abuse and the annual duty bearers training programme.

15. Strategies Used to Prevent Violence: Last Five Years.

Strategies used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls.

- **Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours**
 - **Gender Based Violence (GBV) Outreaches:** The Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) conducts outreaches in institutions, secondary schools, communities etc. in collaboration with key stakeholders of Government Ministries/Agencies, Civil Society Organizations and Academia. During the period under review platforms utilized for outreaches included:
 - a) Interactive Sessions, Presentations and Lectures were conducted for beneficiaries such as Servol, MiLAT, CCC, Rotary Club, TTDF, UWI School of Nursing, YTEPP and in communities in Trinidad and Tobago.
 - b) **Community Outreach on GBV utilizing the Arts:** In 2019, Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister hosted Community Outreach on GBV utilizing the Arts, specifically, the theatrical play "Shades of I-She: Every Woman's Story". This play was written specifically to explore the complexities of GBV other forms of dysfunctional behaviour and a production of the Indigenous Creative Arts Network (ICAN). The play was written and directed by Eintou Pearl Springer. The Outreaches also included discussion/feedback session, and booth displays by key stakeholders of Government and Civil Society Organizations. These Community Outreaches were conducted in four (4) communities across Trinidad and Tobago during the period June to September 2019.
 - **Gender Sensitization Workshops:** The Gender Affairs Division, OPM continues efforts to mainstream gender equality and equity into all initiatives of Government, Civil Society and Private Sector by conducted various activities including workshop, presentation, lectures etc. on gender and development issues including, but not limited to: concept of sex and gender, gender equality, equity, mainstreaming, gender analysis, gender responsive budgeting, gender sensitive language and GBV. Sensitization Sessions were conducted for various target groups.

- **UN Women Foundations Programme: Strengthening Prevention Approaches to Address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the Caribbean:** The Foundations Programme, launched in 2018, targets young persons between the ages of thirteen (13) to twenty-four (24) years and is designed to engender an appreciation of core gender concepts such as gender socialization, gender equality and human rights. The overarching goal of the Programme is to accelerate action towards preventing GBV. This curriculum, as part of the Programme, is centred on an awareness of gender justice and human rights as universal and inalienable and on a psychoeducational approach that engages personal interrogation about gendered norms and values. To date seven (7) programmes have been conducted at the State supported Community Residences (CRs) for Children and Youth Institutions.
- **Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education**
 - a. **Youth Seminars on Building Healthy Relationships** for Secondary School Students are conducted by the Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in collaboration with key Stakeholders of Government, Academia and Civil Society organizations. Topic areas include GBV (specifically dating violence), respectful relationships and offensive behaviour/cyber bullying. For the period November 2018 to March 2019, five (5) youth seminars were conducted.
 - b. **The Child Right’s Ambassadors Programme:** This programme conducted by the Child Affairs Division, OPM trains children to be advocates and promote child rights in their schools and communities, using creative art forms (spoken word, drama, music). In 2017, the OPM trained 47 children from 18 schools and 4 Community Residences, which impacted approximately 7000 persons. The 2018 cohort (45 children from 20 schools and 2 Community Residences) also impacted approximately 7500 persons.
 - c. **“Unite Against Child Abuse” Campaign (2016-2019):** The Child Affairs Division, OPM in collaboration with UNICEF launched the “Unite Against Child Abuse” Campaign in 2016. This Campaign included:
 - **Child Abuse Training** for 500 + Bus drivers, 244 officers of Student Support Services Division and, 360 Early Childhood Care and Education teachers.
 - **Awareness & Education** strategies including:
 - 1) The development of a Child Abuse Workbook delivered to every Form 1 student in T&T;
 - 2) Child Abuse Posters in every school, Library and Health Centre in T&T;
 - 3) 40 Billboards in every regional district in Trinidad and Tobago; and
 - 4) Nine PTSC Buses wrapped with child protection artwork designed by children in T&T.
 - **Cricket West Indies Collaboration** to train over 400 + cricket coaches in child protection methods dubbed “Fair Play”. This training is now mandatory for all cricket coaches.
- See Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) on pg. 33.
- **Grassroots and community-level mobilization**

Community Outreaches on Gender Based Violence targeting both rural and urban communities

- **Working with men and boys**
See Project SARAH (pg.40), Barbershop Initiative, Defining Masculine Excellence, Food Preparation and Home Management for Men and Boys (pg. 26) conducted by the Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister.

16. Actions to Prevent Violence Facilitated by Technology

Actions taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images).

- **Introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions**
Over the five-year review period, court judgements have been handed down determined in cases involving online harassment, including a high-profile case of non-consensual sharing of intimate images where the (female) plaintiff was successful. Clause 16 of the Cybercrime Bill (2017) creates the offence of violating a person's privacy by capturing and sharing pictures or videos of a person's private area without their consent. This offence would carry a fine of one hundred thousand TT dollars and two years' imprisonment on summary conviction or a fine of five hundred thousand TT dollars and three years' imprisonment on conviction on indictment.

In 2015, the High Court heard the case of **Therese Ho v Lendl Simmons Claim No. CV2014-01949**. The case involved the posting of intimate images between an unmarried couple for the purpose of inflicting mental and emotional harm to the Claimant. The Claimant sued for breach of confidence and breach of her right to privacy. This was the first time that the common law concept of breach of confidence had to be applied in Trinidad and Tobago to deal with a circumstance where intimate photographs taken in private have been distributed without the consent of the other party. On the evidence presented, the court found the Defendant guilty of sharing the intimate images between himself and the Claimant for the purpose of inflicting mental and emotional harm.

The significance of this ruling was that it made the non-consensual posting of intimate images between two adult persons a common law offence on the grounds of breach of confidence and breach of right to privacy. The creation of this common law offence criminalizes the use of technology to facilitate violence against women, as Trinidad and Tobago does not have official legislation that criminalizes this behaviour as it relates to women. The Cybercrime Bill, 2017 proposes to criminalize such actions. Child pornography and exposing children to pornography is criminalized in the Children Act, Chap 46:01, Part VIII. However, this Act does not protect persons over the age of 18 years. Despite the lack of legislation, an aggrieved woman can apply to the court under the common law to have the offender prosecuted.

17. Actions to Address the Portrayal of Women and Girls in Media

Actions taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the importance of the role of media in addressing various issues including GBV, discrimination etc. As such media personnel are invited to cover and participate in workshops, meetings, conferences etc. hosted by Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) on various issues of gender and development including issues pertaining to women and children. Additionally, Civil Society Organizations continuously advocate for the positive portrayal of women, men boys and girls and responsible media reporting on GBV and other sensitive issues.

18. Action to Address Violence against Specific Groups of Women

Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?

No. However, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has implemented programmes, policies and services to address GBV including violence against women (VAW). These initiatives are accessible to all persons experiencing violence.

Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Critical areas of concern:

- G. Women in power and decision-making
- H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

19. Actions & Measures to Promote Participation

Actions and measures taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making

- **Provided opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, political campaigning**

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to establishing mechanisms to accelerate the achievement of gender equality in political participation and representation at all levels of the electoral process and women's full participation on the basis of equality with men in all areas of public life including: governmental bodies; the judiciary; trade unions; the private sector; political parties; employers' organizations; research and academic institutions; and national corporations. There are no legal constraints to women entering the political arena. However there may be perceived constraints as it relates to burden of care for family placed on women in society.

Trinidad and Tobago has achieved an appreciable level of participation and representation of women in politics and governance decision-making processes. Women currently hold non-traditional portfolios including President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Women in Trinidad and Tobago are afforded a number of opportunities to participate in decision-making. These include:

- a) **Public consultations:** The Government of Trinidad and Tobago, through various ministries and agencies, as well as civil society organizations and the private sector, hosts public consultations on various issues that impact and affect the citizenry. Additionally, all sectors of the population are invited to participate in this activity including women.
- b) Women of Trinidad and Tobago enjoy membership in the Country Women of the World through the **Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institute**. The Federation has unit associations throughout the country and contributes towards the development of national policies through their representation on national bodies. The Federation also

benefits from financial support from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The Federation offers services related to education, training, tutoring as well as the provision of other services that seek to improve the socio-economic status of rural women.

- c) There exists within Trinidad and Tobago **the Network of NGOs for the Advancement of Women**. They advocate for over 100 women's organizations in the country and is committed to the aims of UN Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Additionally, the Trinidad and Tobago Institute for Women in Leadership (TTIWIL), formerly the Network Training Centre was envisioned as a centre of excellence for women's access to a potential source of relevant and useful information – for enhancing women's transformational leadership and ability to participate in decision-making, to defend their rights as well as for action to promote their social, political and economic advancement. The establishment of the Network Training Centre was proposed as part of the Network of Non-Governmental Organisations of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women's Strategic Plan with the objective to:
- o establish a self-sustaining training facility as a centre of excellence for women;
 - o build the centre's training capacity for a range of human enrichment courses and transformational leadership skills; and
 - o build capacity in the NGO sector in Trinidad and Tobago in the areas of advocacy and lobbying.

Course sessions focus on two primary areas of leadership learning namely: Women as political leaders and Community Advocacy and Lobbying Skills.

- **The Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad and Tobago (NRWPTT)** provides rural women with access to credit for micro-business projects; contributes to gender sensitive government policies on rural women and land ownership. The Network also provides marketing support, training, research, technical support and outreach services for rural women producers.

Information/data on women's political participation including appointed and elected positions can be sourced from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and on the official website of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

20. Actions to Increase Expression & Participation in Media & ICTs

Actions taken in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT).

- **Strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership.**

The 5-Star ICT in Education Programme, under the purview of the Ministry of Education, is a holistic approach to incorporating information and communication technology into the teaching and learning process at the nation's schools. In addition to the provision of laptop computers to Secondary Schools across the country, the programme is comprised of:

- a) A governance structure for the management and coordination of all ICT initiatives;
- b) An ICT in Education Policy;
- c) Enhanced ICT infrastructure and digital devices in schools;
- d) Curriculum Reform; and
- e) Training and professional development of teachers.

The objective of the programme is to provide 21st century technology-enabled learning environments.

- **Taken measures to enhance access, affordability and use of ICTs for women and girls (e.g. free wifi hubs, community technology centers).**

In March 2018, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) represented the Government of Trinidad and Tobago at the Sixty Second Session of Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62), whose theme focused on the challenges and opportunities for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls through participation in and access to ICTs, among others.

The Ministry of Public Administration is engaged in the international commemoration of Girls in ICT which takes place annually on the fourth Thursday of April each year. In 2019, the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Administration and CANTO hosted a two-day interactive workshop for sixty (60) form 3 and 4 female students at TATT's headquarters. Students gained hands-on experience in Coding and Artificial Intelligence (AI) by developing their tech skills in building and programming a Google Toolkit (a basic version of Amazon Alexa). The workshop also include stakeholder booth displays.

Girls in ICT Day is commemorated by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and it is aimed at encouraging girls and young women to pursue careers in ICT. This is viewed as important to development in the 21st Century since it is estimated that approximately 60% of jobs in the future will have an ICT component. With a projected shortfall of two (2) million ICT employees globally by 2020 and the fact that only 1 in 4 jobs is held by a woman, there is a critical need to address the gender imbalance in the ICT industry. These factors are more heightened in the Caribbean context which in general, has had limited digital advancement and which will negatively impact the Region's development if solutions are not identified and implemented.

As a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Trinidad and Tobago has sought to highlight Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) role in the advancement of girls and women's socio-economic development through various activities. These include a Girls in ICT School Tour in 2012; Girls in ICT Forums in 2013 and 2014; Youth Training Camps in 2015 and 2016; and ICT Workshops from 2016 to 2018, all of which have targeted not only young women between the ages of thirteen (13) to eighteen (18) years old, but also included young men.

21. The National Budget & the Promotion of Gender Equality

Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

Yes. This is done for the Gender Affairs Division only which is the focal point for Gender and Development. Gender is cross cutting and the budget extends to all stakeholder agencies of government as well as those NGOs which support gender and is funded by other governmental agencies. At the OPM the proportion of expenditure invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women is outlined in the Annual National budget of Trinidad and Tobago. The allocation to the Gender Affairs Division, OPM in fiscal 2019 – TT \$7.5 million and fiscal 2020 - TT\$11.5 million. In 2016 the sum was TT\$36 million and this figure was associated with the construction of two Domestic Violence Shelters for women. Construction was completed in 2018. This allocation has increased over the years and varies depending on the infrastructure needs. The areas in which these resources have been invested included:

- a) Development and implementation of programmes and project to promote gender equality and equity;

- b) Targeted Programming for Males and Females;
- c) Recruitment of Staff to the Gender Affairs Division;
- d) Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives such as Capacity Building Training; and
- e) Public Awareness and Education initiatives
- f) Construction of new buildings and the refurbishment of acquired existing buildings for use as domestic violence shelters for women and men.

22. Tracking Donor Country Official Development Assistance

As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

Yes, through the UN Reports and the Ministry of Planning and Development.

23. National Strategy for Gender Equality?

Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?

Yes.

- **National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGD): A Green Paper** seeks to promote gender equality and equity, social justice and sustainable development. The NPGD establishes guidelines for addressing issues across various thematic areas such as Labour and Employment; Domestic and Family Life; Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection; and Climate Change and Natural Resource Management, among others. This Policy is now in the final stages of receiving approval. In March 2018, the Draft National Policy on Gender and Development in Trinidad and Tobago (NPGD) was laid as a Green Paper in Parliament by the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister.
- **Draft National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP) on Gender Based Violence (GBV).** The NSAP on GBV will be the primary policy tool of the State in the implementation and coordination of policies and programmes aimed at reducing gender based violence in Trinidad and Tobago. The nature of gender based violence demands a participatory multi-sectoral approach to policy development, which strengthens the State's capacity to implement and adapt policies and programmes with support from key civil society organizations to suit the current local context of GBV. The NSAP was submitted to Cabinet for approval. During the period July to September 2018, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) conducted a Readiness Assessment exercise with key Ministries/Departments whom lead roles were assigned for the implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP) on Gender Based Violence (GBV). This Report on the Readiness Assessment was forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.
- **National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2030 (Vision 2030):** Trinidad and Tobago's strategy for achieving gender equality is also guided by this country's development framework, the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2030 (Vision 2030). This NDS which has been developed to take Trinidad and Tobago to developed country status by 2030, highlights gender as an issue that cuts across all sectors. As such, the NDS, speaks to the integration of gender concerns into the analyses, formulation, implementing and monitoring of policies, programmes and projects. The objective of this is to ensure that inequalities between males and females are reduced and that all benefit equally from this country's national

resources. Noteworthy, the five (5) Development Thematic areas of Vision 2030 incorporates all the SDGs goals, including those pertaining to gender equality. This integration enables Trinidad and Tobago to meet the obligations of both agendas as well as other multi-lateral agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Development Themes of Vision 2030 are:

- Theme I: Putting People First: Nurturing Our Greatest Asset;
- Theme II: Delivering Good Governance and Service Excellence;
- Theme III: Improving Productivity Through Quality Infrastructure and Transportation;
- Theme IV: Building Globally Competitive Businesses; and
- Theme V: Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development.

Specifically, SDG 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” has been aligned with Development Theme I of Vision 2030 which allows the monitoring of progress on achieving gender equality goals and targets such as:

- Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, thereby putting the necessary legal frameworks in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex;
- Eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; and
- Adopting and strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels. Meeting this goal requires systems to track and make public allocations for gender women’s empowerment.

The monitoring indicators include:

- ensuring legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex;
- Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location;
- Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments;
- Proportion of women in managerial positions; and
- Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Resources: A total of TT\$29.5 M, representing 0.06% of total public expenditure, was allocated in Fiscal 2017 to gender-responsive policies and/or programs, as recorded in the 2018 Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) 2018 Monitoring Round.

24. Country Action Plan on CEDAW Recommendations

Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?

Yes. Trinidad and Tobago has a Draft Action Plan to implement the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee. This is managed with stakeholder participation.

25. National Human Rights Institutional Arrangement

Is there a national human rights institution in your country?

No. However, under the purview of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs (MAGLA), there is an International Law and Human Rights Unit (ILHRU). The ILHRU was established with the responsibility for drafting Trinidad and Tobago international human rights reports. As such, the ILHRU collects data relating to the implementation of human rights conventions and the advancement of human rights initiatives. This data is collected from Government Ministries, other Government institutions and civil society. There also exist the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Equal Opportunity Tribunal.

Peaceful and inclusive societies

Critical areas of concern:

- E. Women and armed conflict
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

26. Actions to Build & Sustain Peace and Security

Actions taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda.

Trinidad and Tobago comes from a region where there is no significant impact from by situations of armed conflict.

27. Actions to Increase Women's Participation in Conflict Resolution

Actions taken in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings.

- **Promoted and supported women's meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements**
The WINAD 2017 research to promote and advance women's leadership can be sourced: http://www.tt.undp.org/content/dam/trinidad_tobago/docs/A%20Pilot%20Study%20on%20the%20Role%20of%20Women%20in%20Communities.pdf
- Trinidad and Tobago is represented by the Commonwealth Network of Women Mediators. This Network leverages on the expertise of women mediators to enhance the success and longevity of peace agreements brokered in conflict-stricken Commonwealth regions particularly those affected by violent extremism. The Network is a platform for women mediators to link their skills, abilities, personalities and their achievements of building peace and overcoming challenges and bridges the gap between the voices of women and decisions, and enhances spaces for their participation for a lasting peace.

28. Judicial & Non-Judicial Accountability re: Conflicts

Actions taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response.

The following laws have been passed in an attempt to combat illicit arms trafficking and to combat the production, use of and trafficking in illicit drugs with the period.

- a) Miscellaneous Provisions (Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago and Anti-Terrorism) Act, 2018;
- b) Anti-Terrorism Act Chap 12:07, (as amended by Act nos. 13 of 2018; 20 of 2018 and 121 of 2018);
- c) Financial Intelligence Unit Act Chap 72:01 (as Amended by Act No 20 of 2018);
- d) Proceeds of Crime Act, 2000 as amended by Act No. 20 of 2018; and
- e) Legal Notice 49. Of 2016 Proceeds of Crime (Amendment to Second Schedule) Order 2016.

The combined purpose of these acts is to find, investigate and prosecute the sources of terrorist funding, money laundering and related illicit activities such as human trafficking.

- Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls.
Key Pieces of Legislation include: Minimum Wages (Catering Industry) Order, 1991; Minimum Wages (Shop Assistants) Order, 1991; Minimum Wages (Household Assistants) Order, 1991; Minimum Wages (Security Industry Employees) Order, 1995; Minimum Wages (Petrol Filling Station Employees) Order, 1982; The Wages Regulation (Agricultural Undertakings) Order, 1964 and the Wages Regulation (Laundry Undertakings) Order, 1962. These pieces of legislation cover issues which include Minimum Wage and Rate of Pay; Hours of Work and Overtime; Public Holidays; Meal and Rest Periods; Vacation and Sick leave.
- **Taken measures to combat trafficking in women and children**
See information on the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) on pg. 37.

29. Actions to Eliminate Discrimination against the Girl Child.

Actions taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child.

The Children's Authority is a statutory body that promotes the welfare, care and protection of all children in Trinidad and Tobago, to safeguard them from all forms of abuse and neglect and in particular, to provide care and protection for vulnerable and at risk children. The Authority is staffed with a complement of child psychologists, social workers, and other child care professionals who are deployed, *inter alia*, to assess children, develop care plans, monitor community residences, and remove children in need of protection to safe places. The Authority investigates complaints of staff, children and parents of children, with respect to any child who is in the care of a community residence, foster home or nursery.

- **Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children**
The Child Affairs Division (CAD) seeks to coordinate a holistic and integrated programme on child development and child rights nationally. Its overarching objective is to manage, coordinate and develop policies, strategies, initiatives, and programmes geared towards child development in Trinidad and Tobago. The vision is that all boys and girls are happy, healthy

and confident that their rights are respected, protected and promoted to facilitate their holistic development towards achieving their fullest potential as active contributors to society. The consultations on the National Child Policy was completed and the Policy is scheduled to be laid in the Parliament as a Green Paper in fiscal 2019/2020. This Policy support the right of all children as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child.

- **Child Abuse & Child Rights Awareness Initiatives**

The child abuse awareness initiatives seek to sensitize the public on strategies to prevent and reduce child abuse in Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, the child rights awareness initiatives seek to educate adults and children on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These initiatives are done in collaboration with UNICEF, the Children's Authority of Trinidad & Tobago, NGOs, Faith Based Organizations and other stakeholders. These initiatives include, training workshops, communication strategies and information fairs. The National Child Protection Plan will go before the Government along with the National Child Policy in 2019/2020.

- **The Child Right's Ambassadors Programme**

The Child Rights Ambassadors (CRA) Programme seeks to provide a platform upon which children are given the opportunity to be ambassadors for their rights, and to speak out on issues that affect them. Sessions are held with the children educating them on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) using creative expression techniques (spoken word, music and drama). The children then go back to their schools and communities and do presentations on children's rights which are video recorded and submitted to the Child Affairs Division. The children are then commemorated for their work at an award ceremony held for World Children's Day.

- **Implemented policies and programmes to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage**

See the Miscellaneous Provisions (Marriage) Act, 2017 on pg. 8.

- **Implemented policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices**

The Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) is committed to reducing the incidences of child abuse throughout Trinidad and Tobago through extensive awareness and educational campaigns and child protection initiatives. The following measures have been taken to ensure that children's protection rights are upheld:

- a) Publishing of 20,000 Child Abuse prevention Workbooks to be administered to every form one student in T&T by Student Support Services Officers;
- b) Training of 115 Student Support Services Officers (Guidance Counsellors, Social Workers, Psychologists, Special Education Teachers etc.) on child abuse prevention, intervention and reporting. Additionally, the officers were trained on the use of the Child Abuse Prevention Workbook;
- c) 84,600 anti-child abuse text messages with reporting contact numbers were sent to mobile devices throughout the nation during the carnival season;
- d) Anti-Child Abuse Educational Trivia Videos featuring interviews with the public were posted on social media and shared to educate individuals on sexual abuse reporting;
- e) Installation of 41 billboards/signs (with contact numbers) against child abuse throughout Trinidad and Tobago in each Regional Corporation and specially identified communities based on research;

- f) Anti-Child Abuse advertisements on social media posted and shared on a regular basis; and
 - g) The Installation of two anti-child abuse buses and two anti-child abuse murals in Tobago.
- **Implemented policies and programmes to eradicate child labour and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children**
The MoLSED has been at the forefront of the fight to eliminate all forms of Child Labour in Trinidad and Tobago. In 2017, there was an extensive Campaign on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Trinidad and Tobago which included radio advertisements and an art competition. A Television Feature on Child Labour was also aired through the Government Information Services Limited (GISL) in June 2017.

On February 27, 2019, a National Steering Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Trinidad and Tobago was appointed. This Steering Committee is intended to develop a National Policy for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Trinidad and Tobago. While the policy is not geared specifically to girls, it will benefit both girls and boys.

Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

Critical areas of concern:

- I. Human rights of women
- K. Women and the environment
- L. The girl child

30. Actions to Integrate Gender into Environmental Policies.

Actions taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies.

Socially constructed roles and existing inequalities disproportionately affect women more than men. Often, rural women are disproportionately dependent on ecosystem services yet, are insufficiently involved in environmental decision-making, management and land ownership. As ecosystem services decline, the rights and opportunities of women are disproportionately affected. This simultaneously reinforces the drivers of poverty and conflict towards further environmental decline.

The National Environmental Policy (NEP) mainstreams gender equality by advocating the following: All development be guided by the principle of “Good governance” which, *inter alia*, calls for the meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making; Calling for “all environmental, or environmental-related laws, policies, programmes, actions and institutions” to be guided by the NEP’s principles. Therefore, all efforts towards policy statements must consider gender equality and meaningful participation of all marginalized groups in design and execution; emphasizing the empowerment of women as small-scale food producers through “improving secure and equal access to: land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment; and Calling for the National Council For Sustainable Development (NCSD), an oversight body for the development and implementation of the NEP Action Plan, to have meaningful representation of women in its composition.

The Environmental Management Authority (EMA) sits on the steering committee for the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Support Programme chaired by the Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit of the Environmental Policy and Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development. A key deliverable for this program is the undertaking of a gender analysis in the context of implementing Trinidad and Tobago's NDC. Through the NDC Support Programme, this initiative is being undertaken by a consultant and aims to enable a more gender-responsive approach to the NDC planning and implementation processes, and the mainstreaming of gender into climate action in Trinidad and Tobago. The assessment would entail an analysis of gender programmes within institutions, including the EMA, and to date, the EMA has further supported the programme by completing an initial gender analysis questionnaire on the topics of capacity and data sources.

31. Actions to Integrate Gender into Climate Resilience & Mitigation

Actions taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) is a division of the Ministry of National Security, whose focus is based on a comprehensive and multi-hazard approach which considers all elements of the Disaster Management Cycle: Preparedness, Mitigation, Response, Recovery and Rehabilitation phases. The ODPM strives to provide the public with up to date public advisories, speeches and resources such as information on hazards to which our region is prone, policies, plans, shelter listing, maps and relevant links and tools. The ODPM provides information about different types of natural and man-made disasters, including hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tropical cyclones, storm surges and tsunamis, forest fires and chemical emergencies. The Office also publishes:

- Emergency plans to increase your family's and community's level of disaster preparedness; and
- Emergency guides on what to do in each type of disaster.

**SECTION THREE:
NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES**

32. National Machinery for Gender Equality

Current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Gender Affairs Division, Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) is the national focal point for gender and development in Trinidad and Tobago. The Division's mandate includes the promotion of principles of gender equity and gender mainstreaming in all government policies, plans and programmes, as well as in private sector institutions. The Gender Affairs Division's (GAD) work is aligned to Vision 2030 ideals and the Strategic Plan of the Office of the Prime Minister and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Division collaborates with local and international partners to execute regional and international mandates. The GAD promotes gender equality and equity through Gender Mainstreaming.

The Gender Affairs strategic objectives are to:

- a) Improve the quality of life of men and women and boys and girls, at all levels of society through the promotion of gender equity and equality;
- b) Research and disseminate information on gender specific issues;
- c) Promote change in gender discriminatory social consciousness and traditions;
- d) Build consultative mechanisms within government, international and regional agencies, academia, NGOs and private sector partners in advancing gender equality; and
- e) Develop gender policies to promote the equitable advancement of women and men, and boys and girls in all spheres of development.

As part of the Gender Mainstreaming initiative, the OPM led by the GAD collaborated with Government Ministries and State Agencies in 2017 and 2018 and established Gender Focal Points (GFPs) and Alternates in Ministries and State Agencies respectively. The role of the GFPs is critical to the development of capacities within their respective Ministries, Departments and Organizations to advise and treat with issues and policies affecting women, men, boys and girls. This will promote and ensure equality of opportunity and reduction of discriminatory practices through the identification and implementation of appropriate equity measures. One of the roles and functions of the GFPs is to identify gender issues that may exist in the organisation and bring them to the attention of the organisation and the OPM, Gender Affairs Division for guidance and support for a holistic approach to address those issues.

In Tobago, the Gender Affairs Unit is integrated within the various units in the Division of Health Wellness and Family Development (DHWFD), Tobago House of Assembly (THA) to implement a comprehensive programme that will effectively address the needs of women and girls through gender mainstreaming.

33. The Head of National Machinery & SDG Implementation

Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)?

Yes. The OPM has the sector lead for gender equality. The Ministry of Planning and Development in Trinidad and Tobago has the lead responsibility to collaborate with stakeholder agencies to ensure that agencies lead, strategize, implement, measure the SDG's which fall directly within their purview.

34. Formal Mechanisms: Participation & Implementation

Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Yes. This is outlined in the National Strategic Plan: Vision 2030 and establishes a formal mechanism for participation, monitoring and evaluation. Gender Equality is captured under the first theme, which seeks to 'Putting People First'. This National Strategic Plan seeks to collaborate with all stakeholders nationally, regionally and internationally and in particular individuals, civil society and the private sector by establishing successful partnerships and building on the strengths of all its stakeholders including forming relationships with its diaspora.

The implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and CEDAW is achieved by engaging stakeholders via meetings, consultations, voluntary inter-agency committees and informal networking among the Government, Civil society Organizations (NGOs, FBOs, and CBOs), Academia and the UN System. The GoRTT, formally engages various stakeholders as partners to focus on specific areas. For example, the Government established the Inter-ministerial Committee to coordinate strategies that serve to reduce Domestic Violence. This Committee has representatives from three (3) civil society organisations working in the field of Gender-based Violence. Stakeholders are also engaged for the implementation of specific programme, projects and activities including commemorating International Day, the preparation of critical reports and planning community and public awareness and education activities.

Preparation of this Comprehensive National Review on Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:

The Gender Affairs Division of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), as the national focal point for gender and development issues, was tasked with completing the National Report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In preparation of the National Report, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) [OPM (GCA)] established a Steering Committee with the mandate to draft, oversee and finalize the Report. This Steering Committee led by the OPM (GCA) consisted of representatives from Government Ministries/Agencies, Civil Society Organizations and Academia. An Internal Drafting Team under the purview of the OPM (GCA) provided administrative and technical support for the national review process.

Additionally, to encourage multi-stakeholder participation and contributions, various stakeholders were approached to provide pertinent information in specific areas to populate the Report. These Stakeholders included Government Ministries, Statutory Bodies, as well as non-governmental organisations, women serving organisations, men serving organisations, rural organisations, business and trade organisations, faith-based organisations, media, trades unions, community-based organisations, academia and private sector bodies. The Report process included:

- Review of previous Beijing Reports;
- Research of laws, policy documents, reports and statistical data;
- Receipt of information from various stakeholders;
- Preparation of a draft Report by the Drafting Team;
- Steering committee meetings held to review drafts of the report;
- Review of the draft report and preparation of the final draft report by National Gender Machinery; and
- Obtaining approval from Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago before submission to UN ECLAC.

35. Gender Equality & the National Strategy for SDG implementation

Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?

Yes. It forms part of the National Strategic Plan: Vision 2030. In that National Plan, the key theme under which gender equality is captured is ‘Putting People First’. Vision 2030 underscores the importance of mainstreaming gender related issues in the development agenda and calls for consideration of issues related to gender and equality to be undertaken across all sectors. The Ministry of Planning and Development in Trinidad and Tobago has the lead responsibility in addressing all the SDGs and their realisation by 2030.

SECTION FOUR: DATA AND STATISTICS

36. Gender Statistics at the National Level:

Top three areas of progress over the past five years in gender statistics at the national level:

- Promulgated laws, regulations, or statistical programme/strategy setting out the development of gender statistics.
 - Identified shared and reported on the gender related data to be collected by the National Statistical Institute to measure gender and development.
- Established an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee)
 - See Central Registry on Domestic Violence (CRDV) on pg. 41.
- Conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
 - See National Women’s Health Survey (WHS) on pg. 41.
 - See GBV in Trinidad and Tobago Qualitative Study on pg. 41.

37. Priorities for Strengthening National Gender Statistics

Top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years.

- Establishment of an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee);
- Conduct new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability); and
- Statistical capacity building of users to increase statistical appreciation on and use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars).

The GoRTT is committed to utilizing and improving the collection of data to address gender data gaps. The use of data will also assist the government with introducing evidenced-based gender responsive policies and programs that seek to address the needs of vulnerable populations. To this end a National Statistical Institute is being established to replace the Central Statistical Organisation. This institute will, *inter alia*, collect, compile, abstract and analyse statistics and disseminate official statistics, disseminate or authorise the dissemination of official statistics, conduct censuses and surveys and promote, develop and maintain a National Statistical System.

38. National Indicators for Monitoring Progress on the SDGs

Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

Yes. Trinidad and Tobago has begun the process of defining a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs, commencing with SDG 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17 performance indicators which are to be reported on as part of its Voluntary National Review in 2020.

39. Data Collection & Compilation on SDGs

Has data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs begun?

The process of data collection and compilation on SDG 5 has not begun, except for limited data capture on SDG 5c during the country's participation in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC's) 2018 Monitoring Round exercise. Trinidad and Tobago was assessed as "Approaches Requirements" on this SDG, based on the Indicator 8: Countries have systems to track and make public allocations for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

The Global Partnership is a multi-stakeholder platform endorsed by 161 countries and 56 International Organisations that aims to advance the effectiveness of development efforts by all actors to contribute to the achievement of national objectives and the SDGs. It is the official data source for SDGs target 5c.

In 2020, Trinidad and Tobago will be presenting the Voluntary Nation Review (VNR) on the SDGs at the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at UN Headquarters in NY. Eight SDG goals have been identified to be reported on and Goal 5 is included. For the VNR in 2020, prioritization will be given to the CARICOM Recommended Core set of indicators. The indicators for Goal 5 are as follows:

- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Indicators:
 - 5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age;
 - 5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence;
 - 5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age;
 - 5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments;
 - 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions; and
 - 5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care.

40. Routine Disaggregations⁶ Provided by Major Surveys

Which of the following disaggregations⁷ are routinely provided by major surveys in your country?

- ✓ Geographic location
- ✓ Income
- ✓ Sex
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Marital status
- ✓ Race/ethnicity

**This Report is submitted by
Government of Trinidad and Tobago
Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs)
October, 2019**