PUBLICATION

Situation Analysis of Citizen Security in The Caribbean: A Spotlight on Gender Based Violence and Family Violence.

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List of Acronyms

ACCP	Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police
ACCP	Regional Association of Commissioners of Police
CAJO	Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARICOM IMPACS	Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
CariSECURE	Strengthening Evidence-Based Decision-Making for Citizen Security in the Caribbean
CATT	Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
CAWP	Caribbean Association of Women Police
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CCSCAP	CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan
CCSS	CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy
CDERA	Caribbean Disaster Response Agency
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFYR	Community, Family and Youth Resilience Programme
COHSOD	Council for Human and Social Development
CONSLE	Council for National Security and Law Enforcement
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CRF	Canada Caribbean Resilience Facility
CSDP	Caribbean Action Plan for Social Development and Crime Prevention
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTS	Crime Trends Survey
CTU	Counter Trafficking Unit
DPP	Director of Public Prosecution
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	European Union
FV	Family Violence
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
GRENCODA	Grenada Community Development Agency
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IISD	Institute for Sustainable Development
IMPACS	Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
JCF	Jamaica Constabulary Force
JJRP	Juvenile Justice Reform Project
JURIST	Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening Project
LACC	Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NPGE	National Policy for Gender Equality
NPSV	Net Present Social Value
NSP	National Security Policy
OCNFB	Organized Crime, Narcotics and Firearms Bureau of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Force
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PFM	Public Financial Management
RAPC	Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Caribbean
RFAC	Regional Framework of Action for Children
RGPF	Royal Grenada Police Force
RSS	Regional Security System
SARC	Support and Referral Centre
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEPAC	Security Policy Advisement Committee
SI	Spotlight Initiative
SITAN	Rapid Situational Analysis on GBV
SMS	Short Message Service
SVU	Special Victims Unit
TOR	Terms of Reference
TTPS	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
UN	United Nations
UN ESP	UN Essential Services Package
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	US Agency for International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WHO	World Health Organization
YES	Youth Empowerment Services

Definitions and Terms

Essential Services encompass a core set of services provided by the health care, social services, police and justice sectors. The services must, at a minimum, secure the rights, safety and well-being of any woman or girl who experiences gender-based violence.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed gender differences between males and females. Central to this definition is an understanding of gender, gender relations and the power that is exercised primarily between men and women and can lead to the perpetuation of harm.

Health Systems refers to (i) all activities whose primary purpose is to promote, restore and/or maintain health; (ii) the people, institutions and resources, arranged together in accordance with established policies, to improve the health of the population they serve.

Intimate Partner Violence is "the most common form of violence experienced by women globally […] and includes a range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by a current or former intimate partner, without her consent. Physical violence involves intentionally using physical force, strength or a weapon to harm or injure the woman. Sexual violence includes abusive sexual contact, forcing a woman to engage in a sexual act without her consent, and attempted or completed sex acts with a woman who is ill, disabled, under pressure or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Psychological violence includes controlling or isolating the woman, and humiliating or embarrassing her. Economic violence includes denying a woman access to and control over basic resources ."

Justice Systems are the responsibility of the State and its agents. They include government-supported laws, and institutions such as police, prosecutorial divisions, courts and prisons that have the responsibility to enforce and apply the laws of the State and administer the sanctions imposed for violations of the law.

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a manifestation of the historical relations of unequal power between men and women. Violence against women and girls is violence that is carried out because they are women and girls, and because of society's perception of the roles that women, girls, men and boys play. VAWG includes: a) violence that occurs within the family or domestic unit or within any other inter-personal relationship, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the woman, including but not limited to rape, battery and sexual abuse; b) violence that occurs in the community and is perpetrated by any person, including but not limited to rape, sexual abuse, torture, trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as in educational institutions, health facilities or in any other place; and c) violence that is perpetrated or condoned by the State or its agents regardless of where it occurs.

Victim/survivor refers to women and girls who have experienced or are experiencing gender-based violence and is used to reflect both the terminology employed in the legal process and the agency of these women and girls in seeking essential services.

The justice continuum extends from a victim/survivor's entry into the system until the matter is concluded. A woman's journey will vary, depending on her needs. She may pursue a variety of justice options, ranging from reporting the incident or lodging a complaint which initiates a criminal investigation and prosecution, seeking protection, and/or pursuing civil claims including divorce and child custody actions and/or compensation for personal or other damages.

Social services that respond to violence against women and girls specifically focus on the victims/survivors of violence. They are absolutely necessary in order to assist in women's recovery from violence, their empowerment, and to prevent the reoccurrence of violence. In some instances, social services may work with particular sections of society or the community to change attitudes and perceptions towards violence. Social services may include, but are not limited to, providing psycho-social counselling, financial support, crisis information, safe accommodation, legal and advocacy services, housing, employment support and other assistance, to women and girls who experience violence.

Executive Summary

The present **Situation Analysis Report** focuses specifically on the assessment of existing CARICOM regional citizen security frameworks from a gender equality perspective, with a view to integrating the issue of violence against women and girls. It has been developed against the backdrop of the Spotlight Initiative in the Caribbean, a joint initiative of the European Union and the United Nations that aims to eliminate violence and harmful practices against women and girls (VAWG) with a particular emphasis on gender-based violence (GBV) and family violence (FV), and the ongoing work on citizen security issues within the region carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The gender analysis, within this broader context, will focus on the scope for a comprehensive appreciation of how the life experiences and general safety needs of women and girls can be better integrated into the conceptualization, development and implementation of citizen security policies and procedures. The necessity for such a focus is underscored by the reality that citizen security has traditionally been male-centred, primarily addressing male involvement in criminal activities and the implications of such gendered dynamics.

This report aims to analyse and assess gender mainstreaming, VAWG and FV in regional citizen security frameworks, national development plans and general approaches, and determine to what extent existing policies and strategies align with regional and international instruments on gender. Furthermore, the report gives critical space to exploring the frequently overlooked connections between established perspectives on citizen security and the actual safety and security of the women and girls in the region.

The research approach taken was comprised of a series of stakeholder interviews and an extensive desk review that facilitated the critical analysis of relevant research reports, policy documents and legislation. The main areas of inquiry included: (i) understanding the connections between gender, security and crime in the region; (ii) examining the operation of current security frameworks, with a view to achieving better integration of gender, VAWG and FV within their policies and processes; (iii) reviewing legislation and policies related to crime and security to improve their alignment with the principles of gender equality and address VAWG and FV consistently; (iv) reviewing existing projects or initiatives aimed at tackling VAWG and FV, including UNDP initiatives such as CariSECURE; (v) identifying strategic entry points

for the Spotlight Initiative to support more inclusive, gender-responsive regional citizen security frameworks; and (vi) providing recommendations that offer both short-term and long-term actions to integrate gender perspectives and address VAWG and FV in regional citizen security frameworks.

The report captures innovative practices as well as lessons learned from across the region. Encouraging good practices, such as the creation of the regional *Partnership for Peace* (PfP) violence intervention programme for men, or the foundation of targeted legal aid services for intimate partner violence, as shown by the Grenada Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic, are described here. Lessons learned are intentionally shared to facilitate the efforts made by Caribbean States to address identified gaps and deficiencies proactively. Examples of scope for improvement include weak and under-resourced attempts to set up specialized policing units to address gender-based violence, as well as compromised capacity-building initiatives for police and justice service providers that do not sufficiently adhere to the existing Model Training Curriculum developed by UN Women Caribbean Multi-Country Office.

Our analysis and findings have been organized into a number of thematic areas which form the basis for our evidence-based recommendations throughout the report. The key areas of analysis included an exploration of the role of gender mainstreaming in citizen security, the importance of VAWG in achieving a meaningful gender analysis of the threats to the region's security, the scope for increased recognition of gender equality in existing regional citizen security frameworks and lastly, the gendered dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters in the Caribbean region, with an emphasis on the specific threats posed to the safety and security of women and girls.

In its exploration of the **relationship between gender mainstreaming and citizen security**, the report highlights several entry points for building a robust connection between VAWG and citizen security. These range from enhanced access to justice, progressive law and policy reform, better representation in security roles, to the intentional reframing of the very notion of citizen security to include broader socioeconomic and politico-cultural themes. This section of the report underscores the finding that traditional approaches to citizen security have large-

ly focused on criminal behaviours or insecurity issues that fall within the public sphere, marginalizing questions that are within the private realm. It paves the way for more effectively integrating gender issues, promoting the equal participation of men and women in society and encouraging a shift in the traditionally male-centred framing of citizen security, while broadening the scope for an engendered analysis of the security of women and girls in the Caribbean.

The section of the report that addresses how **gender inclusion with an emphasis on VAWG and FV** may be achieved reviews the way national and regional legal, policy-making, legislative, institutional, and security frameworks and bodies draft and enforce gender inclusion. It uses a thematic approach to identify the opportunities, best practices and lessons learned that will enhance the integration of a gender perspective in strategic areas of citizen security reform. The findings demonstrate the scope that exists for a much greater emphasis on VAWG in current citizen security approaches, policies, projects and frameworks and offers tangible examples of the limitations that may compromise the central role that VAWG and FV should be given as threats to the region's safety and security.

Existing regional citizen security frameworks were reviewed and analysed to establish entry points for strengthening the implementation of a gender equality perspective. This strategic review of policies and procedures found a number of gaps and shortcomings in regional efforts to integrate a gender equality perspective, including the lack of capacity and resources allocated to Gender Units, as well as missed opportunities to better integrate a gender perspective in existing citizen security projects and other initiatives. The review resulted in tangible recommendations for integrating a gender-responsive and gender-inclusive approach in a number of key citizen security frameworks and initiatives, including the **CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy, the Caribbean Action Plan for Social Development and Crime Prevention (CSDP)** and the ongoing **CariSECURE Project**.

Given the frequency and often devastating consequences of pandemics and national disasters in the Caribbean, special consideration was given to natural disaster events and a section of the report is specifically devoted to **examining citizen security and its gendered impacts on women and girls within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters** in the region. It highlights the hi-

gher level of risks that women and girls face during and after a natural disaster. Pandemics and national disasters not only exacerbate pre-existing inequalities but may also create new ones, thus worsening the situations of women and girls already exposed to intersecting forms of violence, discrimination, and oppression. The chapter addresses the weakening of the State's ability to secure citizen security in the aftermath of national crises and the impact that this has on those living on the margins of economic, political, and social security.

The findings underline that although the prevalence of VAWG in all its forms, whether sexual assault or intimate partner violence, is high in the region and constitutes perhaps the most notorious source of danger, harm and insecurity for large sectors of Caribbean society, it has not been adequately framed as a citizen security concern. Against this backdrop, the report makes several recommendations for reform at both the regional and national levels. Recommendations include the need for national governments to **adopt a more gender-responsive approach to budgeting for citizen security**, with the support of all relevant line ministries. At the regional level, it is important that relevant agencies encourage and facilitate gender-sensitive budgeting at the country level as well. The report also underscores the importance of developing **National Security Action Plans** as an effective strategy to ensure that issues relevant to the safety and security of women and girls are given their full place, especially as they pertain to women's experience of victimization through the use of violence. A gender-responsive, participatory approach to security policymaking processes that mirrors the diversity of the population will help to ensure equal access by a variety of groups, both to the policy itself, and to the processes underlying its development, implementation and evaluation. The inclusion of civil society organizations and state gender mechanisms is critical to this process. Lastly, the pivotal role of **legislative and policy reform** is closely examined, and here, a series of recommendations are also directed at both the national and regional levels. These include strengthening relevant legal frameworks and bolstering policing and prosecution responses so as to institute specialized intervention procedures for VAWG, improving service and programme delivery in areas identified as weak, such as legal aid services and psychosocial support, and relying on well-designed model training curricula for Caribbean-wide capacity-building of the police and justice sectors.

Chapter 1:
Background

1.1 Background and Rationale

The present Situation Analysis Report focuses specifically on the assessment of existing CARICOM regional citizen security frameworks from a gender equality perspective, with a view to integrating the issue of violence against women and girls. It has been produced in the framework of the Caribbean Spotlight Initiative Regional programme, and in particular activities led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which advocates and supports the interventions required to address the continuum of violence faced by women and girls in the region, with the goal of ensuring that all women and girls, especially the most vulnerable, can live a life free of violence.

UNDP programmes and ongoing work on citizen security issues in the Caribbean operate within a broader context of existing initiatives and seek to build on that work and sharpen the focus on gender equality, particularly as it relates to violence against women and girls (VAWG) and family violence (FV). A number of organizations, including UNDP, USAID and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), have expressed their commitment to citizen security and have invested resources in projects across the Caribbean in their efforts to ensure effective citizen security for all. Among these initiatives, **CariSECURE**, implemented by UNDP, stands out as a leading programme. Through data collation and analysis at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, CariSECURE aims to strengthen capacity in evidence-based decision-making for citizen security. UNDP has also invested in several projects centring specifically on Jamaica, such as the **Amplifying Youth Voice and Action Project**, designed to contribute to the empowerment of at-risk youth and encourage their active participation in the island's citizen security governance and policymaking mechanisms. The project was launched in October 2020 with completion foreseen in 2022. IDB has invested in the **Jamaica Citizen Security and Justice Programme**, comprising four components, including building the capacity of the Ministry of National Security and Justice, community action and strengthening the criminal justice system. USAID supports both the OECS **Juvenile Justice Reform Project** (JJRP) and the **Community, Family, and Youth Resilience** (CFYR) Programme, which focuses on youth and recognizes the critical importance of crime prevention in younger demographics.

Citizen security is crucial to building prosperous and secure nations and is a key pathway towards securing human development. Criminal activity, including gender-based violence (GBV), not only undermines efforts to promote gender equality, but also undermines women's full participation in all aspects of civil, social, political, and economic activity. Violence against women and girls directly impacts citizen security, including the stability and health of Caribbean families and communities. Prevalence surveys conducted in Grenada, Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago during the period 2016-2018 confirm that approximately 46% of women in these five participating countries have experienced at least one form of violence, which demonstrates the extent and gravity of VAWG in the Caribbean region (Contreras-Urbina et al., 2020, p.16). Furthermore, according to Contreras-Urbina et al. (2020), among the countries studied, rates of violence range from 39% in Grenada and Jamaica, to 44% in Trinidad and Tobago and 48% in Suriname (p.16). In addition to direct experiences of violence, the fear or threat of gender-based violence further impacts mobility, productivity, national prosperity and regional stability. The framing of VAWG as a citizen security issue encourages the integration of a comprehensive rights-based and gender equality approach to the promotion and protection of security, strengthening the capacity of the security sector to respond effectively to these threats, within a framework of human rights and the priorities and demands of different groups.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places gender equality at its core to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the elimination of violence against women and girls as a crucial component. Despite those goals, reports confirm that the main feature of crime in the Caribbean today is the high level of violent crime. Homicide rates, for example, have been rising rapidly in most Caribbean countries, with countries such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago recording homicide rates per capita that rank them as two of the most violent countries in the world (Bailey, 2016, p.13). This inevitably has implications for women, as was found by one Barbadian study that confirmed that one-fifth of all murders committed between 2000 and 2007 in Barbados were acts of domestic violence (Bailey, 2016, p.23). Gender-based violence, and in particular VAWG, is one of the most common forms of insecurity facing citizens in the Caribbean. Citizen insecurity can be deemed an urgent challenge of human development in the Caribbean, with gender seen as *"the strongest predictor of criminal behaviour and criminal victimization"* (Zimmermann et al., 2012, p. 33).

According to the Organization of American States (n.d.), citizen security concerns, regardless of gender, may include human trafficking, sexual exploitation, homophobic and transphobic violence, incest, and kidnapping (Table1). However, the UN Women Caribbean MCO (n.d.) made the valid observation that *"while traditional gendered roles inform male vulnerability to involvement in violence and organized crime, women and girls are made vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse"* (par. 1). Citizen security concerns therefore manifest differently for men and boys than for women and girls, where evidence suggests that women and girls are far more likely than men to suffer violence at the hands of a family member or intimate partner, and women experience far more sexual aggression and exploitation than men (Kennedy et al., 2014, p.1). One report speaks of these gendered dimensions to citizen security in the following terms: *"Although citizen insecurity is a problem that affects the entire population, women experience violence, dispossession, trafficking, and other security problems differently than men — a difference that results mainly from the construction of gendered social roles"* (OAS/CIM Technical Note, n.d., p. 1).

As a result of specific gender roles, women, men, boys, and girls have different security experiences, needs, priorities and roles. What is needed then is a gender perspective that accounts for the different experiences of those living at the intersections of varying identities and oppressions and seeks to ensure that the security needs and capacities of women are not excluded.

Gender-based violence, in particular violence against women and the sexual abuse of both girls and boys, is one of the most common forms of insecurity facing citizens in the Caribbean region. The available empirical data is cause for concern, revealing particularly alarming rates of sexual violence. Data from the UNODC Crime Trends Survey (CTS), based on police statistics, indicated that all the countries in the Caribbean for which comparable data were available (Bahamas, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, St. Kitts/Nevis, Dominica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago) experienced an incidence rate of rape that surpassed the average rate of the 102 countries in the CTS. Equally alarming was the finding that three of the top ten recorded incidence rates of rape in the world occur in the Caribbean (UNODC, 2007, p. 12). Domestic violence is also a major obstacle to the security and integrity of women in the Caribbean. The National Prevalence Surveys on Gender-Based Violence confirm that nearly one out of two ever-partnered women aged 15-64 have experienced one or more forms of intimate partner violence (IPV) in their lifetimes (physical, sexual, psychological and/or economic violence). More specifically, on average, nearly one out of three or 32% of ever-partnered women aged 15-64 have experienced physical and/or sexual IPV in their lifetimes and 7% experienced physical and/or sexual IPV in the 12 months prior to the survey (Contreras-Urbina et al., 2020 p. 16).

It should also be noted that not only do women experience high rates of intimate partner and sexual violence, but also live more in fear of being victimized than do men. According to the UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report on Citizen Security (2012), women demonstrate higher levels of fear and report gender differences in fear of crime in the Caribbean (p. 33). Furthermore, *"women indicated higher levels of fear of sexual assault (30.4% compared to 11.1% among men), of being killed (35.4% compared to 32.8% among men), and of being beaten by a spouse or partner (11.5% compared to 8.6% among men)"* (Zimmermann et al., 2012, p. 39).

Despite an emphasis on legislative and policy reform to improve security system responses to VAWG, studies confirm that Caribbean women not only continue to experience high levels of violence but are also discouraged by what is perceived as the ineffectiveness of law enforcement and justice responses to sex offences and other forms of gender-based violence. Baseline studies on the policing and prosecution of sexual offences were conducted in seven countries of the Caribbean region by UN Women MCO in collaboration with the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police. These studies brought to light deficiencies in the administration of justice for victims of sexual violence, while confirming that over a two-year period, sexual offences had represented as much as 30% of all criminal offences. Shortcomings reported in the prosecution of sexual offences included inadequacies in legislative provisions, poor police response and investigation, delays in trial processes and inefficiencies in related administrative procedures.

1.2 Scope and Methodology

The primary purpose of the present Situation Analysis is to carry out an analytical assessment of gender mainstreaming, VAWG and FV in regional citizen security frameworks, approaches and national development plans, and to assess the extent to which

national policies and strategies are aligned and in harmony with regional, continental and international instruments on gender. The major subjects of inquiry include, but are not limited to:

01. Understanding the links between gender, security and crime in the region;

02. Examining the operation of current security frameworks, with a view to achieving better integration of gender, VAWG and FV within their policies and processes;

03. Reviewing legislation and policies on crime and security to improve consistency with the principles of gender equality and how VAWG and family violence are addressed.

04. Reviewing existing projects and initiatives addressing VAWG and FV including UNDP ongoing initiatives, such as CariSECURE;

05. Identifying strategic entry points for the Spotlight Initiative to support and incorporate more inclusive and gender-responsive regional citizen security frameworks;

06. Providing recommendations that offer both short-term and long-term actions to integrate gender perspectives and address VAWG and FV in the region's citizen security frameworks.

The research approach adopted was primarily qualitative, involving a series of stakeholder interviews as well as an extensive desk review that facilitated the critical analysis of relevant research reports, policy documents and legislation. Stakeholder engagement was pivotal to the research methodology and targeted a range of entities that play a role in ensuring the safety and security of the region's citizenry, particularly as regards violence against women and girls. Interviews with stakeholders were aimed at validating the extensive desk review. A particular effort was made to solicit the views of a varied cross section of agencies, ranging from civil society organizations (CSOs) to regional and international entities. The list of stakeholders interviewed can be found in **Appendix A** to this report. Because the very nature and objectives of the report underscore the importance of working closely with regional entities, this prompted the formation of a strong alliance with CARICOM, and in particular with the Crime and Security Desk

(CONSLE) and the Gender Unit.

An Interview Guide was developed to assist in identifying areas of focus for each stakeholder group, ensuring that the interviewing process was premised on carefully considered areas of inquiry. Stakeholder feedback ensured that the Report remains sufficiently grounded in the practical experiences and views of those who work in citizen security, whether at the regional or national level.

The desk review was extensive and sought to accurately evaluate the breadth of research and inquiry that has already been conducted into a gendered analysis of citizen security policies and procedures. The review focused on existing regional citizen security frameworks, with special reference to both the **CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy (CCSS) 2013** and the **Caribbean Action Plan for Social Development and Crime Prevention (CSDP) 2009-2013**. The proposed Gender Policy commissioned by CARICOM was another essential framework examined, in light of its critical importance as an entry point for bringing a gender equality perspective to the region's citizen security mandate.

As part of our focus on gender equality and citizen security, the authors carefully reviewed legislative frameworks relevant to VAWG. The status of the region's criminal codes, domestic violence legislation, child protection and child justice laws was evaluated to assess both substantive and procedural deficiencies in the law. Recognizing the role played by policy in effectively implementing the law and ensuring that the justice system functions optimally, our assessment also incorporated a review of corollary policy frameworks. Protocols, standard operating procedures, model guidelines and other strategy documents are referenced.

The report was guided by a number of overarching research considerations, including:

01. **Ensuring a rights-informed analysis rooted in the international standards applicable to gender equality**. Key instruments such as CEDAW, Belem do Pará and the Convention on the Rights of the Child were reviewed.

02. **Reflecting on best practices and lessons learned from across the region**. This facilitated a more prescriptive analysis that helped to inform actionable recommendations.

03. **Recognizing the issues faced by girls**. This was critical in light of the inclusion of family violence in the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme and the need to place child protection issues firmly in the region's citizen security mandate.

04. **Emphasizing Prevention Strategies**. Prevention is an essential element in reducing VAWG and was therefore an integral part of the methodological approach adopted for this Analysis.

05. **Deliberately incorporating both regional and national perspectives**, given the significance of both levels of action to the effectiveness of citizen security in the Caribbean.

Strong links were established with the *Regional Guidelines to Integrate Gender Perspectives, Gender-Based Violence Minimum Standards and Practical Solutions for Responding to Violence Against Women Girls and Family Violence*, another knowledge product developed by the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme. This product focuses on developing common standards at the regional level to guide police and justice responses to VAWG and FV. There is obvious overlap between the present report and that product and so it was both strategic and efficient to consult and collaborate wherever it was feasible to do so. One significant methodological overlap between the two activities is their shared focus on law enforcement and justice, with a particular emphasis on utilizing the **UN Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence** (Skinnider and Watt, 2015) as a guiding framework for the inquiry.

It is important to note that, despite conducting comprehensive research that greatly informed the scope and findings of this report, Caribbean-specific information was somewhat limited. Data relating to VAWG and to many of the citizen security topics central to our analysis are scarce in comparison to that available on these issues in Latin America. This is a recurring challenge for the Caribbean and cannot be disregarded, particularly in those circumstances where the Latin American experience of violence is not entirely applicable to the Caribbean context. Our research confirmed that Citizen Security Reports for Latin America and the Caribbean particularly emphasize Latin American countries, with comparatively little reference to Caribbean States. The dearth of Caribbean-focused information, especially in comparison to Latin America, is cause for concern and further underscores the relevance and importance of the present report.

1.3 Structure of the Report

This Situation Analysis Report has been carefully structured to ensure ease of access to information and general reader friendliness. Best practices and lessons learned are presented throughout, as are actionable recommendations. The analysis progresses from broad-based contextual considerations to substantive, very specific issues.

Table 1: Structure of the Situation Analysis Report

COMPONENT	SCOPE OF INQUIRY
Introduction	This chapter covers important aspects of the report, including background, rationale, scope, methodology and structure.
Setting the Context: Gender mainstreaming and citizen security	This chapter explores citizen security through a gender lens. It examines the "maleness" of the traditionally established parameters of citizen security, and how male-centrism influences a number of pervasive issues that underpin citizen security, including the very scope of the region's citizen security mandate. It shows the close connection between VAWG, family violence and citizen security and sets the stage for a thematic analysis of systemic responses to these forms of violence.

Achieving Gender Inclusion with Emphasis on VAWG and FV	This section uses a thematic approach to examine the mainstreaming of gender in citizen security frameworks, with a focus on VAWG and FV. It presents strategic areas within which the region's citizen security mandate can be strengthened to better address gender inequalities and to confront gender violence. The areas covered include i) legal and policy frameworks ii) institutional strengthening iii) services and programmes iv) capacity-building.
Existing Regional Citizen Security Frameworks: Creating entry points for enhancing a gender equality perspective	This chapter provides a brief overview of key regional citizen security frameworks, outlining the nature and objectives of each of the documents identified. The section begins the process of examining how current security frameworks have incorporated a gender perspective and will determine possible entry points for effectively integrating gender, VAWG and FV in their policies and processes.
Special Considerations: Pandemics and natural disasters	This section highlights the citizen security implications for the region stemming from current security issues such as COVID-19 and natural disaster events, with emphasis on the significant impact that these citizen security threats have on VAWG and FV.

Source: Self-created, UNDP RBLAC.

Chapter 2:
Setting the Context: Gender Mainstreaming and Citizen Security

2.1. Gender Mainstreaming as a Reform Strategy for Citizen Security

Two complementary strategies have been identified as crucial to the integration of gender issues into citizen security reform: gender mainstreaming and the promotion of equal participation by men and women (Valasek, 2008, p. 4). Achieving the equal participation of both genders within the citizen security sector is a significant issue, particularly in light of the historical underrepresentation of women in policing, the military and related service sectors. Gender mainstreaming as an aspirational concept has the potential to reshape and transform both the conceptualization and the practical implementation of the region's citizen security agenda.

What is Gender Mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming is "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated" (Valasek, 2008 p. 4).

Examples of gender mainstreaming in the citizen security sector:

- Integrating gender issues into the core training of justice sector personnel, including lawyers, judges and administration staff;
- Initiating a gender-responsive budget analysis of government public security spending to ensure that funds are allocated equitably;
- Supporting a code of conduct for the armed forces that explicitly prohibits and sanctions GBV;
- Assessing measures to prevent and respond to violence involving young males;
- Encouraging collaboration with women's organizations to improve services provided to trafficked women and girls (Valasek, 2008, p. 4-5).

In light of the Spotlight Initiative's focus on achieving gender equality and protecting women and girls from violence, it is appropriate to guide gender mainstreaming assessments accordingly.

This section of the Situation Analysis begins the process of exploring the traditionally male-defined and male-centric nature of citizen security policies and procedures with the aim of examining the scope for an engendered analysis centring on the security of women and girls in the Caribbean. The discussion will cover contextual issues, ranging from the definition and scope of citizen security as a concept to methodological issues such as data management. Additionally, it will provide and analyse concrete examples that show the potential for a more robust gender equality perspective in this area of work.

Given the significant role played by VAWG in undermining the safety and security of women and girls across the region, successful gender mainstreaming should prioritize issues such as sexual assault, domestic violence and child sexual abuse and maintain them at the centre of the citizen security agenda.

2.2. The Connection between Citizen Security and VAWG

VAWG is the most widespread form of abuse worldwide, affecting one-third of all women in their lifetimes. VAWG limits progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, violates women and girls' human rights and can have a negative impact on long-term peace and stability. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is the most common form of VAWG. It has been described as catalytic for sexual and other violence, while often being transmitted from generation to generation. Moreover, VAWG in private settings such as families or between intimate partners may also increase the likelihood of violence within the public realm (Kennedy et al., 2014, p. 1).

Caribbean States have made positive strides in their adaptation of national legislation to meet the requirements of the international and inter-American legal frameworks on women's rights, which place particular emphasis on the **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women (Belem do Pará Convention, 1994).**

Regrettably however, citizen security approaches in the Caribbean too often fail to take gender into account or to consider gender-based and sexual violence as serious citizen security concerns in comparison to issues such as drug interdiction and small arms control.

As one respondent in the stakeholder interviews so eloquently stated:

> " Violence against women and girls is definitely a citizen security issue for the Caribbean region because it is one of the leading causes of violence and it affects the safety of so many people. However, citizen security to date has focused on organized drug and gun violence as though that defines what citizen security is.

Violence against women (intra-family or domestic violence) is still considered by society as a private problem that should be resolved between individuals, as opposed to a threat to women's security. The OAS/CIM Technical Note (n.d.) makes the point that in many countries in the region, this perspective paves the way for the exclusion or marginalization of VAWG as a public policy issue within the security sector's protection mandate (p. 3).

Consciously and deliberately including VAWG on the citizen security agenda is therefore critical to the recognition of this form of violence as an issue that has public significance and is very much a determinant of citizen security.

In addition to the lack of a sufficiently entrenched gender perspective in the very framing of the notion of citizen security, women for the most part have not been sufficiently integrated into the "*discussion, formulation and implementation of security policies and programmes*" (OAS/CIM Technical Note, n.d., p. 4). Women have traditionally been excluded from citizen security institutions, both as front-line service providers and as decision makers able to influence women's representation in security roles.

There are a number of entry points where a stronger connection between VAWG and citizen security can be established. This can involve improving access

The Technical Note states:

> " Women are of course victims – as well as perpetrators – of crimes and violence in public spaces. However, as victims and as perpetrators, insecurity also exists for women in the private sphere. In dividing our consideration of security to the public sphere, and women to the private sphere, we limit our understanding of the relationship between women, criminality and violence and we create significant gaps in public policy and attention to this issue.

(OAS/CIM Technical Note, n.d., p. 3).

to justice, developing progressive laws and policies, ensuring better representation of women in security roles, or even redefining the concept of citizen security to encompass broader socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects. Regardless of the chosen entry point, the overarching aim is to adopt a more inclusive perspective that promotes gender equality.

2.3. The Nature and Extent of VAWG in the Caribbean

While prevalence surveys have been widely conducted in Latin America, they have not generally been carried out in the Caribbean, leaving that sub-region with a limited understanding of the nature and extent of VAWG. However, even before the recent surveys were conducted in a number of countries, the UN Women Caribbean Portal described VAWG as "pervasive" (UN Women, n.d., par. 1). In the absence of formal survey results, both administrative data and social norm surveys provided evidence indicating that VAWG was a significant issue that warranted urgent attention.

It is widely recognized that there is a high correlation between norms and attitudes justifying wife-beating and actual levels of intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetration. A 2016 study conducted by IDB that examined levels of   acceptance of IPV against women in six Caribbean countries found that Caribbean adults tended to demonstrate higher levels of tolerance for IPV than their peers in Latin American society (Sutton and Álvarez, 2016, pp. 6-7). For example, in the Caribbean, one in four adults (27.5% of men and 22.6% of women) reported that they would approve or understand a husband hitting his wife if she neglected household chores (Sutton and Álvarez, 2016, p. 6). Tolerance for hitting a woman was found to be even greater if the woman was unfaithful, with one in three Caribbean residents stating that they would approve or understand this behaviour (39%t of men and 30% of women) (Sutton and Álvarez, 2016, p. 7).

Violence against children is widely accepted as a form of discipline. The same underlying logic of dominance is often applied and framed as "educating", or correcting defiance of male or parental authority. It is therefore not surprising that the same study found that the majority (66%) of Caribbean respondents (65% of men and 68% of women) said that it was necessary to physically discipline a child who misbehaves (Sutton and Álvarez, 2016, p.11).

The administrative data presented in the *Review of Policing and Prosecution of Sex Offences* commissioned by the Regional Association of Commissioners of Police and UN Women Caribbean MCO also reflected high levels of VAWG during the period 2010-2012. **The Trinidad Report, for example, showed that an average of over 1100 domestic violence cases were processed through the Magistrates Court** in the same year that the research was conducted. **In Grenada, another Spotlight Initiative country, a Situation Analysis revealed that the total number of domestic violence and sexual offence cases reported to the Royal Grenada Police Force averaged almost 1400 cases per year. The Guyana Police Force recorded 1672 reports of domestic violence in 2020.** These figures are based on reported cases only and therefore do not reflect the actual incidence of violence, indicative of a Caribbean region that is a violent space for women.

The baseline reports commissioned by Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP) and UN Women showed that girls were even more vulnerable to high levels of sexual violence than adult women. The rates of sexual abuse of children, including rape,

incest, sex with a minor and indecent assault, are disproportionately high. Child protection assessments conducted across nine Caribbean countries confirmed that children in the Caribbean are vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation and alarmingly, a significant proportion of these cases involve violence within the family (OECS and UNICEF, n.d.). Many adult respondents in the prevalence surveys disclosed that they had experienced childhood sexual abuse. As the qualitative research report for Grenada observed:

Data on corporal punishment further illustrate the violence and insecurity that children experience in their own households, with one study reporting that 60 to 70 percent of children had experienced some form of physical and/or psychological violence in the month prior to the survey, and 50 percent of parents or caretakers had reported using physical punishment as a disciplinary measure. Younger children and male children were more vulnerable to corporal punishment (UNICEF, 2019, p. 87).

Prevalence Surveys conducted from 2016 to 2019 were welcomed as a significant step forward in gathering data on VAWG in the Caribbean region. As previously mentioned, these surveys were the first of their kind in the Caribbean: despite the availability of crime and victimization surveys and some police administrative data, no Member State had previously generated regular, comprehensive national data on the prevalence, characteristics and response to GBV, including sexual violence. The CARICOM *Model on National Prevalence Surveys on Gender-Based Violence* was developed based on the original WHO global model for assessing the prevalence of intimate partner violence, with a specific focus on women as the most affected group (Watson Williams, n.d., p. 14).

To pilot the model in the region, a partnership was developed among several pilot country governments, UN Women, UNDP, USAID, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). Jamaica was selected to be the first nationally-led Prevalence Study on GBV in CARICOM and pilot surveys were subsequently fielded in Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Guyana, and Suriname. (Watson Williams, n.d., p. 16)

The following table presents some of the key findings on the nature and extent of violence across all five participating countries.

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There were significant reports of NPSV in the form of child sexual abuse, with fewer reports of rape against adult women by a non-partner. Survivors of child sexual abuse reported that perpetrators were male relatives, in-laws, neighbors or friends of the family. The levels and nature of sexual violence in these accounts provide serious cause for concern with regard to how exposed girls are to extreme forms of sexual exploitation. These reports of child sexual abuse support findings from earlier research in the Caribbean that found high levels of sexual violence against girls.

Table 2: Key findings on the nature and extent of violence across all five participating countries

Finding	Grenada	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad and Tobago
46 % of women have experienced some form of violence in their lifetimes.	39%	55%	39%	48%	44%
Emotional violence: The most prevalent form of IPV is emotional violence. As many as one in three (34%) ever-partnered women aged 15-64 have experienced emotional IPV in their lifetimes.	30%	40%	29%	35%	35%
Physical violence: Across the five countries, more than one in four (29%) ever-partnered women aged 15-64 have experienced physical IPV in their lifetimes.	27%	35%	25%	27%	28%
Sexual violence: An average of 11% of all women aged 15 to 64 have experienced sexual IPV in their lifetimes.	10%	14%	8%	13%	11%
Economic violence: An average of 13% of ever-partnered women aged 15-64 across the five countries have experienced economic IPV in their lifetimes.	6%	22%	9%	16%	11%

Non-partner sexual violence: Across the five countries, levels of non-partner sexual violence averaged 21%.	24%	20%	23%	17%	19%

Other Notable Findings

- Among ever-partnered women aged 15-64 in the five-country analysis, those in relationships with men who held attitudes and behaviours reinforcing male dominance and gender inequality were more likely to experience both lifetime and current IPV.
- In both Jamaica and Trinidad, just over one-third of survivors suffered injuries because of physical and/or sexual partner violence.
- In Guyana, women who experienced physical and/or sexual IPV were twice as likely to report difficulties walking, undertaking everyday activities, memory and concentration when compared to women who did not experience such violence. They also reported having suicidal thoughts or attempting suicide at three times the rate of women who had never experienced IPV.
- In Suriname, sexual harassment (at work, on public transport and in virtual spaces) was experienced by 25% of women, with the highest prevalence taking the form of electronic messages with sexual content (19%) and being molested in a public space (9%).
- In Trinidad and Tobago, research showed that education, employment status, alcohol and drug use were all significant factors in IPV.
- In Grenada, the survey confirmed that in terms of coping strategies and support services, survivors relied primarily on close family members and friends for support. With regard to seeking help from service providers, women who experienced abuse were most likely to go to the police, followed by the hospital and health care facilities. Grenadian women who had sought help from service providers were least satisfied with the courts, followed by the police.

Source: Data collated from Country Reports Women's Health

2.3.1 Data Management Remains a Challenge

The above data on VAWG across selected Caribbean countries is critical to the effective formulation of informed, evidence-based policy development. Nevertheless, the systematic collection and analysis of accurate data on VAWG in the region remains elusive. From a citizen security standpoint, the absence of efficient data collection and management is a major drawback and inevitably compromises necessary prevention and intervention actions.

A *Citizen Security Report for Latin America and the Caribbean* (n.d.) documented the many challenges related to data management in the region, including the lack of quality information, limited depth and representativeness of available information, minimal transparency in sources, delays in making public data accessible and improper storage of data in government archives, as well as little coordination between the different institutions involved in data collection and management (PADF, n.d., p. 14). That report also observed that the gaps and deficiencies

increased when it came to identifying and documenting the differentiated needs of women and girls, with the lack of information described as increasing as the levels of vulnerability and their intersections rose. Interviews with officials from the judiciary in Guyana revealed that a significant proportion of data collection across the justice system is paper-based, there being no integrated data management system and only a limited level of technical capacity in data analysis across the system. Employees from the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Policy Unit at the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security in Guyana also cited data analysis as a key challenge, with a lack of staff available for timely data analysis and drafting national reports.

Although government agencies responsible for gender equality, health sector surveillance units and the police have made efforts to record and track the incidence of gender-based violence in the Caribbean, the lack of comprehensive, systematic, nationally-owned data has frequently been identified as a serious bottleneck for the region (Watson Williams,

n.d., p. 7). Consequently, the region has been unable to assess its progress in meeting international and national commitments to ensure population-based data on the prevalence, incidence, type and scope of the most common forms of GBV and the administrative or service-based data on sectoral responses.

Some common challenges encountered in efforts to manage VAWG-related data effectively have been outlined in regional and international data-focused studies. The following table summarizes some of the most pervasive difficulties.

One of the notable challenges for the police and justice sector is the under-reporting of domestic violence cases due to the absence of a specific category of charges or offences entitled 'domestic violence'. Given the absence of such a category, a thorough examination of the context of a charge for assault, causing harm, wounding, or other type of criminal offence is required in order to determine whether the offence occurred within the context of domestic violence.

Recently conducted prevalence surveys have provided much-needed data, but as one of the UN respondents in the stakeholder interviews appropriately noted: *"[...] we shouldn't have to wait for five years for a prevalence survey"*. That observation places increased pressure on Caribbean Member States to implement enhanced approaches to the collection, disaggregation, analysis and general use of service-based data in an active, timely manner. Pillar 5 of the Spotlight Initiative specifically addresses data availability and utilization, and began the process of building capacity to analyse and disseminate both prevalence and administrative data. This effort, combined with a large number of regional initiatives spearheaded by other agencies, lays the groundwork for significantly improving the management of VAWG data.

Table 3: Summary of common challenges to the effective management of VAWG data.

Prevalence Surveys	Service Based and Administrative Data
• **Under-reporting** • **Ethical and safety issues in conducting the surveys** • **Accessing hard-to-reach populations.**	• Gaps in definitions and disparities, particularly as regards domestic violence. • Paper-based data collection systems and lack of integrated data management systems. • Since service agencies do not have data collection as their primary responsibility, the data available through these agencies may not have been collected in a systematic way and consequently may exist in non-standardized forms. • Double counting is a common problem: women seeking services from the same agency or from more than one agency may be counted more than once over time, resulting in an inaccurate estimation of the total number of women seeking assistance. • Poor coordination and a lack of information-sharing protocols between service agencies, as well as a general lack of training in data management.

Source: Self-created, drawing on data challenges identified both from the desk review and interviews with respondents.

CariSECURE, VAWG and Data Management

From a citizen security perspective, it is of utmost importance that existing crime-focused projects, including CariSECURE, address data management. Data on VAWG, its relevance to citizen security and its adequate inclusion in current citizen security frameworks in the region has not received due attention. The CariSECURE project, which focuses on crime-related issues, has the potential to address and resolve these data deficits. However, Phase 1 of the project, although it has invested significantly in a Police Records Management System, does not specifically address the challenges related to VAWG data. While the system can generate information on the number of female victims by using International Classification Systems of Crime, this will not currently provide better data on the current incidence or nature of VAWG. The CariSECURE project team recognized the issue, but rationalized it by citing the focus of the project, which did not build in specific measures for domestic violence or other types of VAWG. As a result, the project cannot currently provide updated disaggregated data on VAWG, unfortunately.

In response to the major challenge that domestic violence is not categorized as a specific offence and consequently is not consistently recorded in police data, stakeholder interviews emphasized that *"creating systems to further interrogate the data was not specifically within the scope of the CariSECURE project."* This potentially limits the capacity of the project to examine the trends and the resulting implications of VAWG in the Caribbean comprehensively.

Guidelines for VAWG and Data Management

In support of the specific recommendation that all relevant citizen security projects in the region, including CariSECURE, actively prioritize the improvement of VAWG data collection, it is advisable that they adhere to all guidelines designed for this purpose. These include the following recognized principles:

- National statistics agencies or relevant ministries such as the Ministries of Health or Justice, have an important role to play in setting standards, ensuring consistency of concepts, ensuring that data are collected at regular, defined intervals, and ensuring that data are widely disseminated in a timely fashion. National mechanisms for the advancement of women, which serve as the central policy-coordinating units on gender equality inside governments, should be closely associated with such efforts.

- Data collection and methodology should be developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including data suppliers, advocates and agencies providing services to women, policymakers, legislators, and researchers to ensure that the data are relevant to stakeholders. This will necessitate multi-sectoral, inter-agency coordination of the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of data-collection initiatives.

- Data collection and dissemination must be transparent. Data should be disseminated as widely as possible in aggregate format.

- The safety of women is a priority and must not be jeopardized at any point during data collection.

- Confidentiality and privacy are of utmost importance both during data collection and during the processing and storage of data. Safe storage of data to protect the respondents must be a priority.

- Comprehensive data collection on all forms of violence against women should be carried out in accordance with the mandate of the Beijing Platform for Action and the WHO Ethical and Safety Guidelines for Researching Violence against Women (UN Division for the Advancement of Women, 2005, p. 19).

2.4. Equitable Funding of Citizen Security to Facilitate the Safety of Women and Girls

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a strategy to achieve gender equality by ensuring that interventions required to eliminate inequalities between women and men and boys and girls are adequately financed (Budlender and Hewitt, 2003). Moreover, **gender budgeting has been described as the application of gender mainstreaming to the budgetary process because the budget process** is the gateway for resource allocation as well as a key determinant of the standards and qualities of public policy formulation. GRB enhances the oversight and accountability role that parliaments play in national planning and budgeting processes and the integration of this approach is one of the key entry points for increased gender mainstreaming in the citizen security sector.

A report that studied budget responsiveness for the security sector primarily in Latin American countries found that although there are positive examples of strategic budgeting for citizen security in some countries, this area remains a challenge for many others (FLACSO, 2007). The lack of policy continuity and sustainability in the long term because of changes in the composition of the government in office was identified as one of the most pressing challenges, due to the attendant budget cuts that occur when discretionary changes are made to programme priorities. Stakeholders cited this as a major issue for the Caribbean, where budget cycles are significantly influenced by the government of the day, without adequate attention being given to longer-term planning objectives, including gender equality.

As a result, progress in gender-sensitive national budgeting is an ongoing challenge for the Caribbean. Budget information on the disparate impacts that an expenditure may have on women and girls, as distinct from other groups, is still notably deficient, a shortcoming that characterizes many citi-

> **The budget reflects the values of a country – who it values, whose work it values and who it rewards [...] and who and what and whose work it doesn't [...] Budgets are clear reflections of the priorities of government [...] It is the most important economic policy instrument of government, and as such it can be a powerful tool in transforming a country**
>
> Budlender and Hewitt, 2003, p. 8

zen-security-related issues. However, the need for both increased and gender-sensitive budgeting of resources for disaster recovery is perhaps one of the most powerful examples of how profound the consequences of budget planning for citizen security can be on achieving gender equality. Natural disaster events disproportionately affect women, both in terms of their economic vulnerability and in terms of their safety and security (UN Division for the Advancement of Women, 2005). When a natural disaster event occurs, the tourism and hospitality industries are often seriously affected, and women, who form the majority of the workforce in those sectors, face unemployment and economic fragility. In addition, women are also exposed to higher levels of sexual and gender-based violence during and after a natural disaster.

Table 4: Integrating gender in budget policies for disaster management in the Caribbean

Case Study: The Importance of Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Integrating Gender in Budget Policies for Disaster Management in The Caribbean

In 2019, the Government of Canada, the World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) launched the **Canada Caribbean Resilience Facility** (**CRF**) to support more effective, coordinated, gender-informed and climate-resilient preparedness, recovery and public financial management in the Caribbean. This is a regional mechanism that can certainly be used to enhance gender equality in the Caribbean's approach to citizen security.

The CRF initiative uncovered several promising examples of gender-responsive budgeting as it relates to climate resilience in the Caribbean, including:

- In **Antigua and Barbuda**, the Ministry of Works Project Implementation Management Unit has issued guidelines for infrastructure projects which require that investment proposals be appraised from a gender equality, social inclusion and climate change perspective.
- In **Saint Lucia**, some line ministries collect sex-disaggregated data and present this data in their budget documents and sector plans.
- In **Grenada and Guyana**, the Parliament conducts policy discussions on the gender impacts of the budget to ensure that budget allocations are gender-informed and consider the needs of various vulnerable groups.

However, CRF identified scope for improvement in the budgeting responses in this critical area of planning. *The extent to which gender considerations are integrated into budgeting for disaster management were assessed across several Caribbean states. They were assessed across the following five categories: Low (0—0.2), Basic (0.2—0.4), Moderate (0.4—0.6), Advanced (0.6—0.8), and Full (0.8—1).*
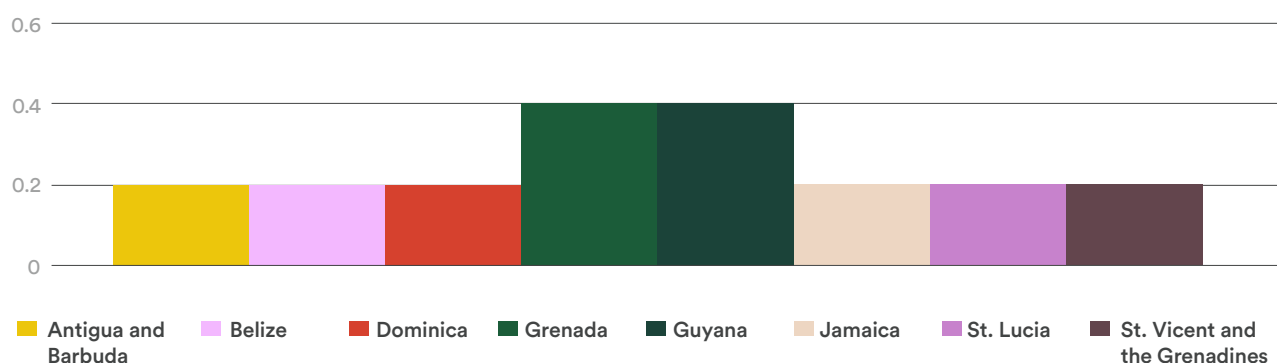
Source: PD-PFM Reviews and PEFA Gender Responsive PFM assessments.

The results demonstrated that many States were operating well below satisfactory levels of gender-responsive budgetary allocations. CRF has made a commitment to provide both continued and scaled-up technical assistance to selected countries in the region that have expressed their own commitment to designing more inclusive budget policies. That support will include strengthening the capacities of Ministries of Finance and line ministries, including national disaster management agencies, to conduct policy impact assessments, using the findings to redesign budget policies, and presenting quality data in a transparent, open manner for review and discussion by the legislature and public agencies (GFDRR, 2021). Such support is certainly a step in the right direction to advance gender-responsive budgeting in an area pivotal to the region's citizen security and should be vigorously encouraged (GFDRR, 2021).

Source: GFDRR, Integrating Gender in Budget Policies for Disaster Management in the Caribbean: Lessons Learned and Next Steps, February 2021.

Recommendations: Adopting a Gender-Responsive Approach to Budgeting for Citizen Security

National governments, supported by their relevant line Ministries, should ensure that budgetary allocations to citizen security issues are sufficiently gender-responsive. Such an approach should include:

- Strengthening the collection and analysis of age and sex-disaggregated data and including such data in budget documentation so as to form a basis for discussion and decision-making on the gendered impacts of programmes;
- Promoting the approval of multiannual, outcome-based budgets that are subject to evaluation and accountability;
- Raising awareness of the importance of prioritizing prevention and ensuring that it plays an active role in budget debates and discussions;
- Developing the capacity of decision makers at all levels, including in programming, evaluation and budget analysis, to incorporate a gender perspective in the budgeting process.
- Ensuring full participation of women in the budgeting process and the active engagement of women's organizations in the development and evaluation of budgets.

At the regional level, it is important that relevant agencies encourage and facilitate gender-sensitive budgeting at the country level. Possible entry points include:

- Ongoing investment in building the awareness and capacity of relevant stakeholders. Developing Model Guidelines, holding training workshops and other capacity-building initiatives are areas of potential support.
- Institutionalizing a gender-sensitive budgeting approach in regional gender equality policy development. The importance of this approach should be reinforced in the CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy, with specific mention of its relevance to citizen security objectives.

2.5. Gender Representation in the Security Sector

Promoting equal participation of men and women is another crucial strategy in the effort to achieve meaningful gender equality. Globally, citizen security sector institutions, from relevant ministries to the armed forces, police and correctional facilities, are known to be male-dominated. Even in countries where women have an equal right to participate in all positions within the security sector, including combat roles, they continue to be underrepresented and are often relegated to low-status administrative positions (Valasek, 2008, p. 7). A truly representative security institution is one that reflects, at all levels of the organization, the diversity of the population it seeks to serve, including gender. A representative security sector has a number of advantages, including the ability to provide security and justice to a diverse public, increased civilian trust and local ownership. In the Caribbean, this is particularly relevant in policing, where public confidence levels have generally been quite low, as UN Women/ACCP Baseline As-

sessments have shown, particularly as regards police responses to sex offences and other forms of GBV.

The Caribbean, like other regions worldwide, has been grappling with how to achieve equal representation and treatment of women within police and other security sector institutions. In fact, the inadequacy of available Caribbean-specific data on this issue in itself reflects the lack of attention that gender representation has received in the region's security sector. Gender balance within the sector has not been sufficiently explored and there is only limited access to studies and data. However, the existing research, although scarce, suggests that female police officers in the Caribbean have faced the same challenges as their counterparts in North America and other democratic nations. Sexual harassment, gender discrimination and organizational reluctance to assign females to many patrol or investigative assignments or to promote them to decision-making and executive positions continue to hinder women law enforcement officers in this region (Lancaster-Ellis, 2013, p. 21).

Despite the paucity of literature with respect to Caribbean women in policing, there is data that show that the first intake of women police officers occurred during the 1950s and 1960s in police departments in the Caribbean region. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) recruited its first group of 12 women police officers in 1955. In Jamaica, the recruitment of women police in the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) began in 1947 (Lancaster-Ellis, 2013, p. 23). The available data suggest that in Barbados, approximately 16 percent of police officers are women (RBPF, 2013). The increasing representation of women in police forces is encouraging and paves the way for a policing culture that is less male-defined and potentially more embracing of the positive values associated with diversity in the workforce.

In November 2005, at the **Regional Association of Commissioners of Police** (ACCP) Intersessional Meeting, the Association unanimously endorsed the establishment of an association of female police officers in the region, under the auspices of the ACCP. The **Caribbean Association of Women Police (CAWP)** was founded in March 2006. Such a regional-level policing entity is a step in the right direction and sets the stage for the compilation and analysis of much-needed data on women in policing in the Caribbean. In light of the current lack of readily accessible data, such a measure should receive strong support at the regional level, with buy-in from all the relevant agencies, including the **Council for National Security and Law enforcement (CONSLE)** and the **Regional Security System (RSS)**.

2.6. Conceptualizing Citizen Security: From Definitions to Substantive Content

The very conceptualization of citizen security can determine whether it will encompass or marginalize VAWG within its scope. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has provided a working definition of citizen security that ensures it is firmly rooted in protecting and preserving human rights against crime and violence. The Commission has called upon States to recognize that the "*concept of citizen security involves those rights to which all members of a society are entitled, so that they are able to live their daily lives with as little threat as possible to their personal security, their civic rights and their right to the use and enjoyment of their property.*" The Commission holds States responsible for fulfilling their citizen security mandate, which includes providing protection against crime and social violence,

and recognizes the importance of both prevention and control, activities that involve a range of actors from the public sector and civil society (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, n.d.).

UNDP articulates citizen security in a manner consistent with a human rights perspective and grounds citizen security within the broader framework of human security. It fully recognizes that where women and girls are subject to gender-based violence in their communities, on their streets and in public places, their fundamental right to security is violated. It provides as follows:

> **What is Citizen Security?**
>
> ISSUE BRIEF: Citizen Security UNDP
>
> Citizen security is the process of establishing, strengthening and protecting democratic civic order, eliminating threats of violence in a population, and allowing for safe and peaceful coexistence. It means effectively safeguarding inherent human rights, especially the right to life, personal integrity, inviolability of the home and freedom of movement. *Citizen security is not simply the reduction of crime, but a comprehensive and multi-faceted strategy for improving the quality of life of a population, community action for crime prevention, access to an effective justice system, an education that is based on values, respect for law and tolerance* (UNDP, n.d.).
>
> Citizen security is a fundamental aspect of human security.

Although the lack of citizen security is cross-cutting and affects the entire population, it is widely recognized that women experience violence and other security threats differently than men (OAS/CIM Technical Note, n.d.). **This difference is primarily a result of the social construction of gender roles and the association of women with the private sphere. Traditional approaches to citizen security have largely focused on types of criminal behaviour or insecurity that fall within the public sphere.** As one study expresses it, the traditional citizen security focus has been "*limited to either external threats to national borders or ill-defined threats of "terrorism" or to crime and delinquency in the public sphere. These*

approaches limit both our understanding of violence as a social phenomenon and our ability to address it in an integral and effective way through legislation or public policy" (OAS/CIM Technical Note, n.d., p. 3). This perspective on insecurity ignores the fact that most women experience violence and a diminished sense of safety in their own homes.

The public/private sphere dichotomy has been criticized for its limited understanding of the complex relationship between women, men, criminality, and violence, which in turn has resulted in significant gaps in public policy. Consequently, not only has the victimization of women often been misconstrued as a primarily private sphere issue, but the role of women as perpetrators of criminal conduct has not been sufficiently explored. Women not only commit crime within the private realm but are also capable of criminal behaviour within the public sphere, including serious, organized and transnational crime. The private/public divide has also prevented sufficient exploration of how women are impacted by crime, whether as active participants or through secondary involvement. There is thus ample scope for a gendered analysis of traditional areas of citizen security. The following case studies provide two examples of key security areas where the implications for women have not been sufficiently identified or examined.

Drugs

The Caribbean region serves as a major transit area for illicit drugs originating in South America and destined for markets worldwide. International drug trafficking in the region has contributed to local drug abuse, and has escalated local crime and heightened violence at the local level. Moreover, small Caribbean jurisdictions are particularly vulnerable to the risks posed by drug trafficking at the political, economic, and social levels. (UNODC, 2002, p. 1).

Despite this, the region has allocated only limited time and resources to investigating the nature and extent of women's involvement in the illicit drug trade and very few studies have focused on two key aspects: i) women incarcerated for drug trafficking and distribution offences; and ii) women who use drugs and their access and response to harm reduction and drug dependence treatment programmes. However, research on these topics remains scarce (Jenna Pieris, 2014, p. 21).

Men and women are involved very differently in drug-related activities, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. For instance, drug users and individuals incarcerated for drug offences are predominantly male. Men more often achieve leadership status in drug trafficking organizations and are more likely to hold leading roles in institutions responsible for efforts to control drug demand or supply. One report observes that "*women's participation in the cultivation of crops deviated to illicit markets and the production of illicit drugs*" is almost non-existent. However, the lack of a robust, comprehensive gender analysis of the drug trade in the Caribbean hinders the ability of law enforcement to take the differential impacts of current drug policies on women sufficiently into account, from both a gender and a human rights perspective (Giacomello, 2020). Differential impacts include:

- The assignment of women to the lowest positions in the criminal chain with little possibility of becoming leaders;
- The use of intimidation tactics to ensure women's continued involvement and conformity, and the dynamics of gendered violence associated with that coercion;
- The tasks women are induced or forced to perform put them at greater risk of arrest.. As a result, while the absolute number of men in detention for drug trafficking is high, the proportion of individuals incarcerated for drug trafficking-related convictions is higher among women;
- Drug policies that rely unduly on law enforcement and punitive measures to the detriment of health-centred approaches exacerbate gender inequalities. This approach often leads to the incarceration of poor, uneducated women who themselves are frequently also the victims of violence.
- Criminal punishment may involve the separation of families, the incarceration of babies and young children and the abandonment of incarcerated women by their families.

Despite the limited information available, a few Caribbean-based studies carried out on the topic show that a disproportionate percentage of women in the region are incarcerated due to drug-related offences. For example, a study using information from Trinidad and Tobago found that out of a total of 114 inmates of the women's prison, 41 (46.74%) had been incarcera-

ted for drug-related offences. It should be noted that the data provided for the above study by the **Organized Crime, Narcotics and Firearms Bureau of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service** were not disaggregated by level of participation in the illicit drug trade and thus could not provide any information as to whether these women had played leading or significant roles, as opposed to lesser roles such as providing courier services (Jenna Pieris, 2014, p. 40).

Deportation

CARICOM recognizes that policymakers in the region are increasingly concerned by the rising number of deportations of Caribbean nationals convicted of criminal offences in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. These deportations, primarily due to drug-related offences and illegal firearms possession, have significant social implications for the region, and it is widely acknowledged that the reintegration of these individuals is relevant to national and regional security (Barnes and Seepersad, 2008).

While the overwhelming majority of deportees to the region are men, with an IMPACS report confirming that on average, over 86% of deportees are male, it is essential to recognize the implications of deportation for women and children (Barnes and Seepersad, 2008).

A gender equality perspective that both acknowledges and integrates the consequences of criminal deportation policy and practice on the lives of women and their families should necessarily consider issues such as the separation of family members and the resulting financial hardship of female-headed households in the deporting country. The IMPACS Report highlighted a number of findings relevant to the Caribbean:

- 97% of parents with children born overseas had left their children behind in the deporting country.
- On average, more than half (52%) of respondents had not seen their children since their deportation to their country of birth.

Table 5: Deportation to Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Antigua by Offence

	Jamaica (1990-2005)	Trinidad and Tobago (1993-2005)	Guyana (2000-2005)	Antigua (1998-2006)
Drugs related offences	46.9	43.0	51.0	40.6
Illegal firearms	5.0	4.0	4.6	6.0
Murder/manslaughter	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.6
Illegal alien	20.0	14.0	0.0	15.7
Robbery/burglary/larceny	4.0	14.0	13.5	14.9
False documents/fraus	6.0	4.0	2.0	1.6
Wounding/assault	4.0	8.0	14.8	8.0
Rape/indecent assault	0.9	4.0	3.0	5.2
Kidnapping	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.8
Money laundering	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.0
Other	1.5	6.1	7.7	3.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Sample size	**33268**	**2455**	**932**	**249**

Source: Beyond Boundaries a Comparative Study on Criminal Deportation in Antigua, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago (Barnes and Seepersad, 2008).

- Moreover, more than three-quarters (77%) of deported parents had been unable to provide financial support for their children left overseas.

These data serve as compelling evidence of the critical need for a more comprehensive gender analysis of deportation. Such an analysis was notably absent from the very research study that provided these insightful statistics.

Another important entry point to consider when analysing the impact of deportation on women and their security, particularly in relation to VAWG, is the increased risk of violence in the receiving or destination country. Studies have explored the connection between deportation and crime in the destination countries, such as, for example, a case study on deportation and its influence on organized crime in Jamaica. That study found direct links between deported criminal offenders and a rise in the number of local criminal gangs (Burt et al., 2016, p. 10). Statistics on the causes of deportation suggest that criminal deportees from Canada to Jamaica include individuals who have been sent back to Jamaica due to a range of violence offences, including assault, assault with weapons, sexual assault, weapons possession, kidnapping, attempted murder, manslaughter, and murder (Burt et al., 2016, p. 11).

The IMPACS study also confirmed that deportation of criminal offenders exacerbated the problem of crime and violence in the region, with data from Trinidad and Tobago indicating that deportees were arrested at a rate more than three times that of the general population.

The continued involvement of deportees in violent crime upon their return to the Caribbean region has clear implications for women and girls. Mandatory deportation policies for certain crimes, such as the automatic deportation of all convicted foreign child sex offenders from the USA and UK unless exceptional circumstances apply, further complicate the situation (Nijholt, 2015, p. 4).

Deportation is a citizen security issue that warrants increased gender analysis, particularly due to its impact on the increased exposure of women and girls to violence. While there is compelling evidence of its harmful ramifications for both the expelling country and the receiving country, there is ample latitude for further review and analysis.

Table 6: Deportee Criminal Convictions by Type, 2012 and 2013

Crime Commited	Number
Assault (including causing bodily harm)	52
Assault with a weapon	16
Sexual assault/rape/interference	13
Uttering threats	9
Possession of a weapon/fire arm	36
Obstructing police	30
Break, enter, theft/burglary/ribbery	41
Drugsimportation	12
Drugs trafficking	46
Drugs possession	54
Kidnapping/forcible confinement	8
Murder	2
Manslaughter	5
Attempted murder	5
People smuggling	3
Personation/fraud document/misrepresentation	10
Others	104

Source: Data provided by Canada Border Services Agency, November 2015

Facilitating a gender equality perspective within the region's citizen security agenda requires undertaking strategic, gender-informed analyses of areas that contribute to perpetuating violence, particularly VAWG. **Human Trafficking** and **Cybercrime** are widely recognized citizen security challenges that warrant greater investment on the part of national and regional authorities in terms of attention, time and resources, in light of their role to protect women and girls from falling victim to violence.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking has been described as a modern-day form of slavery, involving victims who are typically forced, defrauded, or coerced into various forms of exploitation. It is ably defined by the United Nations *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*.

The relevance of this form of exploitation to the Caribbean region is increasingly recognized and a number of studies, including an assessment conducted in eight Caribbean countries, have documented the nature and extent of human trafficking in the region. The ground-breaking assessment, commissioned by IOM, covered The Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname. The victims of human trafficking in the participating countries included men, women, boys and girls, both from inside and outside the region. While women and girls were found to be vulnerable to human trafficking due to gender-based violence, discrimination and sexual exploitation, boys were found to be increasingly at risk of forced sexual relationships with older men as a means of survival for themselves or their families (IOM, 2010, p. 5). Men, on the other hand, were typically at risk of falling victim to human trafficking for labour exploitation in the industrial sector (IOM, 2010, p. 5).

While human trafficking may take on many forms, the primary trends identified in the eight countries participating in the assessment were human trafficking for forced labour, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.

The specific vulnerability of women and girls in the Caribbean to sexual violence and exploitation associated with trafficking in persons has been clearly documented. The IOM report found that:

"*Common to all the participating countries was the deception of migrant women and girls who were offered work as waitresses, cashiers, bartenders, dancers, salesclerks, or masseuses, only to be forced into prostitution after arrival at the destination point. Others were aware that they would be employed in the entertainment industry or even as prostitutes but were not aware of the full working conditions in which they later find themselves. Sexual exploitation was found among those involved in prostitution, exotic dancing, massages, and other related activities. While knowledge about persons forced into prosti-*

tution varied between the different countries in this research, all countries attested to having some cases of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. This included some knowledge of people being trafficked internally and externally for the purposes of sexual exploitation" (IOM, 2010, p. 36).

While domestic servitude is fertile ground for both physical and sexual violence against women and girls, sex tourism is another source of exposure to sexual exploitation. Research uncovered actual Internet listings in both Jamaica and Barbados advertising those countries as destinations for sex tourism (IOM, 2010, p. 42).

Recent human trafficking trends in Trinidad, largely the result of refugee migration from Venezuela, have attracted the attention of key stakeholders. These trends have particularly affected refugee women and girls, who are often forced into prostitution. Brothels, mainly located along the south and southwestern coasts of Trinidad, became human trafficking centres, leading to investigations and subsequent arrests overseen by the Ministry of National Security's Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU). Between 2013 and 2020, CTU received 563 reports, with the highest number (120 reports) occurring in 2015. Over that seven-year period, CTU carried out 263 investigations and confirmed 126 victims, laying charges against 58 people for human trafficking and related offences. The majority of the confirmed victims of sexual exploitation (80%) were of Venezuelan nationality (Williams, 2022).

Common characteristics of victims of human trafficking include poverty, lack of educational opportunities and limited employment prospects, underscoring the intersectional nature of this source of insecurity.

Once again, there is significant scope for improvement in both regional and national responses to human trafficking. Gaps and challenges include:

- Inadequate data collection: Most Caribbean countries have little empirical data to support policy planning;
- Limited awareness: Some stakeholders still underestimate the prevalence of trafficking in persons in the region, believing that it is not an issue in the region;
- Insufficient legislative frameworks: Existing laws often fail to adequately address the unique nature of this type of exploitation, and in those

instances where laws have been put in place, implementation is weak;

- Need for Comprehensive Training: There is an urgent need for increased and enhanced training for police, justice professionals, Customs officials and other relevant service providers. Training should focus on the prevention of human trafficking, the prosecution of traffickers and the protection of the rights of victims, including child victims.

Cyber crime

Gender shapes and influences behaviour both online or offline, affecting vulnerability and impacting access to justice for victims of cybercrimes. Online gender dynamics may reinforce or even intensify the gender inequalities existing in the offline world. Like any crime, cybercrime impacts people differently, based on their gender identity or expression, making it essential to address these disparities (Kiener-Manu, 2019). While cybercrime has traditionally been largely male-defined, the Internet has increasingly become a platform where cyber violence and online abuse often target women and girls. Considering cybercrime from a gender-based perspective is important for developing gender-sensitive crime prevention strategies (*Gender equality and cybercrime/ cyber violence, n.d.*).

An increasingly hostile ICT environment has exposed women and girls to threats of sexual and physical violence, along with sexist, misogynistic and prejudicial comments. Globally, there is growing recognition of gendered forms of violence, such as **cyber stalking and cyber harassment**. These forms of cyber violence have expanded to encompass other gender-based offences:

- **Online child grooming:** Online grooming occurs when an individual befriends a child online and builds their trust, with the intention of exploiting them and causing them harm. The harm may be sexual abuse, both in-person and online, and exploitation to obtain sexually explicit images and videos of the child.
- **Morphing:** Morphing involves seamlessly changing one image into another image without making any corrections. The practice often targets girls who share their pictures on social websites. Cybercriminals download the girls' pictures using fake or real profiles and then morph them.

- **Sextortion:** Sextortion is a form of online abuse in which the cybercriminal uses various channels, such as instant messaging apps, SMS, online dating apps and social media platforms, to lure users into participating in intimate video or audio chats. Cybercriminals coerce their victims into posing nude or giving them revealing pictures of themselves, which the criminal can then use for extortion.

The region's citizen security responses should pay increased attention to emerging forms of cyber-crime. Recognizing these new forms of violence against women and girls should trigger reforms in legal, policy and institutional arrangements. For this reason, the newly developed **CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan**, still in draft form at this writing, should explicitly address the gendered nature of these crimes, giving specific mention to their implications for VAWG.

2.6.1 Achieving More Child-Centred Citizen Security

The Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme covers family violence, which by definition encompasses child abuse within families. Child protection issues, including the physical and sexual abuse of both boys and girls, are an integral part this Situation Analysis and should be addressed accordingly. It is crucial to shift towards a more child-centric approach to citizen security in the region. While we will delve deeper into this perspective in subsequent stages of this analysis, **it is essential to begin by reconceptualizing citizen security to ensure that it comprehensively addresses the safety, security and overall well-being of the region's children**.

During stakeholder consultations, UNICEF representatives from the Eastern Caribbean Office were emphatic in their criticism that traditional notions of citizen security have focused more on children in conflict with the law than on the equally disturbing levels of child abuse, as evidenced by the region's especially high rates of child sexual victimization. The issue of **corporal punishment**, which is a violation of a child's right to live free of violence, has not been placed appropriately on the citizen security agenda, where most child protection advocates would argue passionately that it belongs.

Child protection may be defined as any measure that addresses or protects children from situations of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

It refers to protecting children from or against any perceived or real danger or risk, and contributes to mitigating their vulnerability in harmful situations. These objectives are consistent with citizen security objectives. The intentional inclusion of child protection as a citizen security issue can be justified by the very strong connection between child protection and child justice matters.

The OECS/UNICEF Child Protection Assessments, conducted between 2015 and 2016, emphasized the interconnectedness of child justice and child abuse and highlighted a critical point: many children involved in criminal activity have experienced child abuse and there is a strong likelihood that victimization significantly contributes to many children becoming juvenile offenders. Despite this recognized connection, it should be noted that even major regional initiatives like the **USAID/OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project** have not adequately focused on child protection research despite the close connection between issues of diversion, rehabilitation and reintegration and child protection policies and procedures. The missed opportunities for joint treatment of child protection and juvenile justice reform within existing regional citizen security frameworks are further discussed in the OECS Report (OECS, 2015).

Fortunately, a number of senior policymakers across the region have begun to recognize the often-overlooked correlation between these two populations of children, as evidenced by comments such as the following made by the Honourable Melanie Griffin, then Minister of Social Services and Community Development in the Bahamas:

Despite the evident alignment between the region's child protection and citizen security mandates, child protection has not been firmly integrated into that framework. Recognizing the citizen security dimension of child abuse and exploitation at both regional and national levels can very positively impact child protection reform in many ways, including improving data collection and management systems. Currently, the administrative data available from across sectors regarding the incidence rates of child abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation are severely limited, as are data on child victims and perpetrators of violence against children (VAC). The available administrative data are also marred by inaccuracies and inconsistencies, and in any event only capture reported cases of violence, not overall prevalence. Prevalence surveys, however, are almost non-existent in this area. The existing administrative data regarding VAC, even with their limitation, paints a concerning picture of the rates of child abuse.

The data gap in child abuse information for the Caribbean has been extensively documented. The most recent **UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children in the Eastern Caribbean** explicitly mentions this gap and notes that although most countries have made efforts to collect and compile administrative data related to child protection and children in conflict with the law, the data are inconsistent or not readily disaggregated (UNICEF, 2019, p. 156). The report specifically points out that, even when data are collected, the result is often outdated and unvalidated. Moreover, data collection is poorly coordinated and disseminated among relevant ministries, agencies and service providers (UNICEF, 2019, p. 113).

"

I have said on several occasions that children subjected to violence in the home go on to become violent teens or adults. The launch of the Citizen Security and Justice Programme comes at an important time for the Ministry of Social Services and Community Development and indeed The Bahamas

Then Minister of Social Services and Community Development the Hon. Melanie Griffin.

Table 7: Cases of physical, sexual and emotional violence and neglect by country or territory

Country/territory	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Emotional violence	Neglect	Total
Anguilla	7	15	0	6	28
Antigua and Barbuda	37	34	1	92	164
British Virgin Island	25	32	1	28	86
Dominica	45	129	6	9	189
Grenada	91	121	37	86	335
Montserrat	30	38	0	48	116
Saint Lucia	73	84	12	61	230
Saint Kitts and Nevis	32	44	29	109	214
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	50	42	10	80	182

Source: Sealy-Burke, J., OECS Assessment of Child Protection Services (2016-2017 data).

National Security Action Plans: A Key Ingredient in the Development of Inclusive Citizen Security Approaches

Recommendations:

Expanding the concept and understanding of citizen security is itself an effective strategy for ensuring that it includes issues pertinent to the safety and security of women and girls, particularly in the context of their experience of victimization through violence. This objective may be achieved through a range of possible actions:

- Developing regionally defined guidance on the importance of gender-responsive and inclusive citizen security, as advocated in this report;
- Adopting a comprehensive approach to national security policies, addressing external and internal threats to security as well as VAWG. The approach should align with a human security perspective, focused on meeting the security needs of individuals and communities;
- Encouraging donor support to develop inclusive citizen security, recognizing the ongoing resource challenges Caribbean countries face;
- Building capacity at the regional and national levels to raise awareness of the importance and need for gender inclusivity in shaping the region's citizen security agenda;
- Recognizing that appropriate policymaking should include gender specialists and advisers;
- Increasing the participation of women in official positions and strengthening their capacities to increase their influence on security issues;
- Expanding the debate on what national security is, encouraging space for public participation and engagement in defining national security needs.

A key recommendation for achieving a broad, comprehensive security agenda that adequately reflects the needs of **all** citizens is to implement participatory policymaking processes that deliberately draw

on the diversity of the population destined to benefit from these policies. Globally, women continue to face exclusion from decision-making processes, especially in traditionally male-defined domains such as citizen security. A gender-responsive, participatory approach to security policymaking processes will ensure equal access by a wide range of groups, both to the policy itself and to the process of its development, implementation and evaluation.

Addressing VAWG requires the deliberate, intentional inclusion of women and young people, not only in identifying issues that threaten their security, but also in formulating more effective responses to those challenges. This process underscores the critical need for the active inclusion and engagement of civil society organizations and state gender mechanisms (Albrecht and Barnes, 2008, p. 5).

The **development by the Government of Jamaica of a National Security Action Plan** has been heralded as a positive practice for the Caribbean region (Albrecht and Barnes, 2008, p. 13).

Jamaica: The National Security Policy is Evidence of a More Inclusive Process

In mid-2007, the Government of Jamaica adopted a comprehensive National Security Policy entitled **Towards a Secure and Prosperous Nation** (NSP). This policy stemmed from a National Security Strategy Green Paper initially presented in Parliament in January 2006, and a subsequent National Security Strategy White Paper. The White Paper was developed after extensive consultations with Jamaican communities, stakeholders and CSOs. The NSP aligns with the holistic, sector-wide policy objectives of current security sector reform, thinking and initiatives, and was the result of collaboration between the Government of Jamaica and Canadian, UK and US advisers.

Initially, the Jamaican Government planned to conduct a defence review. However, the government quickly realized that a more comprehensive approach was needed to address the existing range of potential threats to national security, including organized crime, gang violence, socioeconomic concerns and environmental disaster. **A broadly based consultation was initiated, with the participation of all potentially relevant branches of government, state agencies and CSOs, including women's groups.** The resulting national security policy addresses all the key security and justice institutions, including the armed forces, the police, the Ministry of Justice and non-state stakeholders. It integrates the country's major security policies, goals, and responsibilities into an overarching 'National Vision' for Jamaica.

The NSP advocates the combined use of political, economic, social, information and security instruments to increase security and justice. It institutes an institutional framework within which the armed forces and civil institutions of the state will coordinate their activities to create an integrated, cohesive security network to safeguard national interests. It also addresses the complementary roles and responsibilities of the public and private sectors, as well as CSOs.

Under the heading *The Effects of Violence on Communities*, the NSP calls for close attention to the impact of violence on individuals, communities and society. "*Domestic violence*," it notes, "*is one of the more pervasive and common forms of violence plaguing the society. It contributes to the overall pattern of crime and violence due to its debilitating effects on the social fabric and its role in socializing the youths to violence as a means of dispute resolution. Women and children are disproportionately at risk from domestic violence.*"

Now the challenge lies in its implementation. To facilitate this, **a National Security Strategy Implementation Unit has been established**, working on behalf of the National Security Council. This unit is responsible for coordinating the efforts and work of the relevant ministries.

Chapter 3:

Achieving Gender Inclusion in Citizen Security with an Emphasis on VAWG

3.1. Strategizing for Increased Inclusion of a Gender Perspective: A Thematic Approach

Citizen security initiatives at both the regional and national levels are well positioned to tackle the prevention and reduction of VAWG. Confronting the many forms of violence that continue to affect the women, girls and families of the Caribbean region is fully consistent with the region's citizen security objectives. From the evidence gathered, women are far more likely than men to suffer violence at the hands of a family member or intimate partner, and women experience far more sexual aggression and exploitation than men (Kennedy et al., 2014, p. 1). Women are also more exposed than men to gender-related violence in the public sphere when in dark or isolated places or when using public transportation. Such social realities are well documented and should serve as the foundation for all aspects of citizen security planning and execution.

This section of our Situation Analysis uses a thematic approach to identify opportunities for enhancing the integration of a gender perspective in strategic areas integral to citizen security reform. Although many of the actions to be taken to improve the security of the region's women and their families will require commitment at the national level, Caribbean regional entities and organizations such as the CARICOM Secretariat, OECS Commission, UWI, PAHO and the regional offices of UN agencies such as UN Women and UNICEF, play a critical role in guiding national priorities and in steering the direction of reform for Member States. Systemic strengthening of citizen security responses to VAWG and FV can only be achieved through well-considered planning that deliberately and effectively uses the various opportunities for meaningful reform. As law enforcement and the justice sector are central to the prevention and prosecution of gender-based violence, these sectors are critical to the reform of citizen security in the region and will be given particular focus in this section of the present SI.

Integrating a gender equality perspective that fully acknowledges the importance of VAWG and FV into the region's security objectives can be achieved through reform at several points in the system. To better clarify those entry points, the scope of inquiry of this section will include an analysis of i) legal and policy frameworks ii) institutional arrangements iii) services and programmes and iv) capacity-building.

3.2. Legal and Policy Frameworks

Law and policy are instrumental to effective implementation of citizen security measures, including violence prevention. Given the leadership role of legal and justice institutions in safeguarding the public's security, it is clear that this area of work relies heavily on the development of sound law and policy to be effective. Both international and national law shape legal and policy responses to VAWG and ensure accountability.

3.2.1. International and Regional Legal Frameworks

Protecting survivors of violence and preventing future acts of violence require legislation and policies that recognize all forms of VAWG as crimes, and actively prosecute the perpetrators. International and regional legal standards have been developed to guide the development and implementation of individual national legal responses to VAWG, and these are also important sources of law.

Under international law, States are required to take measures to protect women and girls from violence, to prosecute acts of violence and to prevent further acts of violence. This is referred to as the "**due diligence obligation**". Under that principle, which is articulated in both **CEDAW and Belem do Pará**, States are required to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women and girls whether those actions are perpetrated by the State or by private persons. An effective criminal justice response prioritizes victim safety and offender accountability. It includes the opportunity for victims to access redress for violence in a timely manner, the avoidance of re-victimization and the enforcement of legal remedies, including appropriate punishment for perpetrators (Skinnider, 2014, p. 23).

Although the original **CEDAW** document does not explicitly address gender-based violence against women, subsequent actions by its monitoring body, **the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**, make clear that addressing this issue is central to achieving the goals of CEDAW. The most significant of these actions is **General Recommendation 19**, adopted by the Committee in 1992. **General Recommendation 19 (1992)** provides that:

> **01.** *"State parties should establish or support servi-*

ces for victims of family violence, rape, sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence, including refuges, specially trained health workers, rehabilitation and counselling".

02. *"State [parties should] take all legal and other measures that are necessary to provide effective protection of women against gender-based violence, including, inter alia [...] protective measures, including refuges, counselling, rehabilitation, and support services for women who are the victims of violence or who are at risk of violence".*

The **Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women**, known as the **Convention of Belem Do Pará**, asserts that, based on the historically unequal power relations between women and men, violence against women violates fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In light of Spotlight Initiative's inclusion of violence against girls and family violence in its mandate, reference to the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, the international instrument setting out the rights of children that are to be protected by States or countries, is also appropriate here. **Article 19 (1)** of the Convention stipulates that states:

"

...take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Other key international guidance, such as that offered in the **UN Women Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women** may be used as established sources of legislative guidance on effective legal responses to violence that affects women.

It is against this backdrop of regional and international legal standards that Caribbean Member States should evaluate their national laws, policies, institutional arrangements, services and programmes to ensure compliance. Knowledge and application of these key frameworks should not only guide the passage of law within individual Caribbean countries but should also form the framework for all relevant regional citizen security initiatives. Regional institutions and the citizen security projects that they commission should reflect the established international legal standards for ensuring the safety and security of women, girls and their families (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, p. 7).

3.2.2. National Laws

The legislatures of member states in the Caribbean region have done relatively well in enacting laws to redress VAWG. In addition to international law, other sources of law include the member states' own constitutions, acts of parliament; and common law (UN Women, n.d., par. 1).

The constitutions of Caribbean countries generally encapsulate the State's obligation to respect human rights as established in their **Bill of Rights** provisions. Case law has interpreted that obligation to include a positive duty to protect women and girls from gender-based violence. See, for example, *Francois versus Attorney General of St. Lucia*.

Legislation is the source of law most relied upon in the Caribbean region and countries have enacted laws to address domestic violence and sexual offences. A major gap for the region, however, is the enactment of legislation concerning sexual harassment that fully acknowledges and sanctions violations of the right to live and work in environments free of sexual discrimination, intimidation or exploitation. UN Women Caribbean MCO has charted the development of protective laws across the English-speaking Caribbean and a sample of such laws is given in the table below.

Table 8: Sample of protective laws across the English-speaking Caribbean

COUNTRY	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	SEXUAL VIOLENCE	SEXUAL HARASSMENT
Antigua and Barbuda	*Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act* 1999	*Sexual Offences Act* 1995	-
Barbados	*Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act* 1992	*Sexual Offences Act* 1992	-
Belize	*Domestic Violence Act* 2007	*Criminal Code "2000 Rev"*	*Protection against Sexual Harassment Act* 1996 "2000 Rev"
Dominica	*Protection Against Domestic Violence Act* 2001	*Sexual Offences Act* 1998	-
Grenada	*Domestic Violence Act* 2010	*Criminal Code* Cap. 1 (Continuous Revised Edition) Criminal Code Amendment Act (2012)	-
Guyana	*Domestic Violence Act* 1996	*Sexual Offences Act* 2010	*Prevention of Discrimination Act* 1997
Jamaica	*Domestic Violence Act* 1995	1. *Sexual Offences Act* 2009 2. *Child Pornography (Prevention) Act* 2009	-
Saint Kitts-Nevis	The *Domestic Violence Act* 2000	1. *Offences against the Person Act Cap 4.21 21* (Amended by the Offences Against the Person (Amendment) Act 2008) "2002 Rev" 2. *Criminal Law Amendment Act* Cap. 4.05 "2002 Rev"	-
Saint Lucia	*Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act* Chapter 4.04 "2005 Rev"	Criminal Code Chapter 3.01 "2005 Rev"	1. *Criminal Code* Chapter 3.01 "2005 Rev" 2. *Equality of Opportunity and Treatment in Employment and Occupation Act* 2000
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	*Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act* 1995	*Criminal Code* Cap. 124 "1990 Rev"	-
Trinidad and Tobago	*Domestic Violence Act* 1999	*Sexual Offences Act* Chap. 11:28 "2006 Rev"	*Offences Against the Person (Amendment) (Harassment) Act* 2005

Source: UN Women Caribbean Gender Portal

However, the development of law in the region is inconsistent, with some countries making more progress in legislative reform than others. The advancement of citizen security measures in the entire region should benefit from positive examples of law reform in any one country. **Pillar 1 of the Spotlight Initiative** specifically addresses law reform and presents participating Spotlight Caribbean countries with an opportunity to review and strengthen their laws pertaining to VAWG.

Examples of Good Practices

- Expanded legal definitions of domestic violence to include issues such as stalking and property destruction;
- Broadened categories of protected persons to include visiting and dating relationships;
- Increased range of orders that can be sought. This includes ancillary orders for child maintenance and compensation from the abusive person for losses incurred because of violence;
- Mandating mandatory response by police to reports of domestic violence;
- Increased powers of entry and arrest by police;
- Encouraging referrals to appropriate batterer intervention programmes modelled to ensure perpetrator accountability;
- Broadened categories of sex offences that recognize non-traditional forms of sexual violence, including forced oral sex and forced penetration with the use of an object;
- Recognizing marital rape as an offence;
- Criminalizing the non-disclosure of sexually transmitted infection;
- To protect children from sexual violence, expanding the Criminal Code to cover new categories of offences, including sexual grooming and child pornography;
- Criminalizing the failure to report child abuse by a parent or guardian;
- Strengthened penalties for sexual offences;
- Increased Special Measures for tendering the evidence of vulnerable witnesses including screens and video-linked technology;
- Developing of up-to-date child protection and child justice legislation.

Notable Gaps and Lessons Learned

- Weak or non-existent legislative responses to sexual harassment;
- Limited recognition of same-sex relationships in legislation to protect against domestic violence
- Continued use of outdated provisions in domestic Violence Acts that encourage "counselling" victims and perpetrators, and result in the Court using referrals to counselling services that facilitate inappropriate partner reunification;
- Lack of legislated timelines for court proceedings involving vulnerable witnesses, resulting in inordinate delays in adjudicating sex offences and other forms of VAWG;
- Weak evidentiary laws that still do not sufficiently address the inappropriate admissibility of evidence such as prior sexual conduct, or the need for corroboration of children's evidence;
- Ongoing legislative endorsement of Preliminary Inquiries which require a physical hearing on the sufficiency of evidence before the actual trial. Many states have retained this procedural requirement, as opposed to using paper committals, a more efficient procedure;
- Widespread lack of legislative provisions addressing legal aid.

It is important to recognize that the significant short-comings in legal responses addressing VAWG in the Caribbean more often result from the weak, inadequate enforcement of the law than from the need to reform existing substantive laws. The "Review of Policing and Prosecution of Sex Offences", a research report commissioned by the Regional Association of Commissioners of Police and UN Women Caribbean MCO and carried out from 2010 to 2012, found that provisions within existing law for the protection of women and girls are not always efficiently or effectively implemented. One notable example of compromised implementation of the law is the handling of breaches of Protection Orders. The report found that in many States, breaches of these court orders, although specifically aimed at ensuring protection from domestic violence, go unsanctioned.

Policy-making for effective legislation should feature prominently in efforts to secure the safety of the region's citizenry, particularly as regards protecting them from violence. Citizen security measures have traditionally relied on robust legal frameworks to support their effectiveness, and comprehensive legislation that can be applied effectively must be seen as the cornerstone of citizen security efforts if women and families are to be kept safe from violence and its destructive implications.

3.2.3. The Critical Role of Policy Development

Meaningful, consistent enforcement of the law should be supported by other equally important ac-tions, including the development of comprehensive policy. **The Belem do Pará Convention** urges State parties to adopt, by all possible means and without delay, policies that are aimed at the prevention, punishment, and eradication of violence against women.

Whereas subsequent chapters on existing regional citizen security frameworks will further analyse the issue of entry points for ensuring a gender equality perspective, it is also helpful for regional work to recognize and take into account national efforts at promoting gender equality. Practical citizen security frameworks will necessarily require strong national and regional engagement facilitated by exchanges of information. Improving citizen security in the region and implementing a more comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing VAWG requires coordinated policy development at both the regional and national levels, emphasizing the strategic interplay between them.

Despite the scope for continued growth, policy development aimed at the prevention and redress of VAWG has gained commendable momentum in the region. There are a number of examples of good practices that should be used as a basis for strategizing citizen security regionally. The following case studies offer positive examples of policy development that bolster the capacity of Caribbean countries to safeguard the security of its citizens who are vulnerable to VAWG and FV.

Belize: Development of a Gender-Based Violence Action Plan

A National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action (2010-2013) was commissioned by the Belize Women's Department within the Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation. In addition to offering some helpful guiding principles, the Plan also established clear goals. These included:

Goal 1: There is zero-tolerance for gender-based violence in Belize.

Goal 2: Survivors of gender-based violence in both urban and rural areas are provided with adequate services and support.

Goal 3: Gender-based violence in Belize is reduced, and ultimately eliminated.

Goal 4: It is possible to measure both the extent of gender-based violence in Belize and the effectiveness of strategies to respond to it.

Each goal was accompanied by measurable indicators. The Plan also incorporated an estimate of the resources necessary to carry out the recommended activities, set time frames and clearly identified the entities responsible for implementation.

Between 2012 and 2015, the Women's Department of the Belize Ministry of Human Development, Social Development and Poverty Alleviation received support from the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women for the Project "Implementation of National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action." Project implementation was subsequently assessed (Tzec, 2015).

Grenada: Development of Standard Operating Procedures and a Victims Rights Policy

An integral feature of the Grenada Spotlight Initiative is an activity to advance the objectives of **Pillar 4** of the SI programme, namely, to achieve a situation in which *"women and girls who experience family violence use available, accessible, acceptable and quality essential services, including for long-term recovery from family violence"*. The activity was designed to promote greater access to a coordinated set of essential, quality, multi-sectoral services for all women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence. *Inter alia*, it involved the development of standard operating procedures (**SOPs**) guided by the internationally established standards set out in the **Essential Services Package (ESP)**.

The development of SOPs for the health, social services, justice and police sectors to guide the provision of quality services is another positive step for Grenada in its commitment to ending violence against women and girls. The purpose of the SOPs is to improve the quality and consistency of services countrywide for victims/survivors and to standardize the response to violence against women and girls. The procedures offer clear directives for stakeholders involved in the support and assistance of victims/survivors and aim to improve partnership and coordination between the essential sectors. The SOPs that apply to the police and justice sector are particularly helpful in supporting the country's broader citizen security objectives.

Under Pillar I – Legislation and Policy Frameworks -- of the Spotlight Initiative, the Government of Grenada commissioned the development of a **Gender-Based Violence Victims' Rights Policy**. The purpose of the Victims' Rights Policy is to consolidate the existing legal and policy frameworks in Grenada that relate to the provision of essential services for victims of gender-based violence, so that victims and essential service providers are aware of the rights of victims to enforcement, accountability and empowerment.

The specific functions of the Rights Policy are:
- to enable the elimination of secondary victimization in the essential service sectors;
- to ensure that victims of GBV remain central to a coordinated approach within and between the essential service sectors;
- to clarify the expectations of victims whenever they encounter the essential service sectors;
- to give direction for capacity-building in conjunction with the National GBV Standard Operating Procedures;
- to make provisions for victims' recourse when rights are violated.

The Policy adopts a **rights-based approach** to providing services to victims/survivors. It addresses i) the right to non-discrimination ii) the right to be treated with dignity and respect iii) the right to privacy iv) the right to security of the person v) the right to be kept informed vi) the right to participation vii) the right to competent service delivery, and viii) the right to lodge a complaint.
These Rights apply to each of the essential services sectors, including police and justice. In each instance, the policy specifically outlines the expected outcomes for victims.

Jamaica: National Gender Policy

The **National Policy for Gender Equality** (NPGE) in force in Jamaica was developed in 2011 by the Bureau of Women's Affairs (Gender Affairs) and the Gender Advisory Committee.

Developed "*to propel the historical and political movement for gender equality by providing a policy framework of professional analysis, implementation and monitoring*" (Bureau of Women's Affairs, 2011, p. 6), the policy's vision statement presents a rights-based approach to achieving gender equality and identifies programmes which must be developed in keeping with the country's understanding of its international commitments.

The NPGE is described as "a cross-cutting policy" that aligns with a number of policy and legislative actions undertaken by the Government of Jamaica and reflects the Government's guiding principles of social justice, human rights, equality and equity, good governance, accountability, transparency and participation. The goals and objectives are:

GOALS

01. To use the policy document as a strategic tool to guide a multi-faceted and multi-sectoral approach to gender equality;

02. To transform prevailing gender ideologies, inequitable gender relations and gendered governance practices at all levels of public sector organizations;

03. To create a socioeconomic, political and legal environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex, where females and males, at all stages of the life cycle, can enjoy their full human rights and develop their full potential as citizens.

OBJECTIVES

04. To reduce all forms of gendered discrimination and promote greater gender equality and social justice;

05. To strengthen institutional mechanisms and develop the skills and tools required to mainstream gender in cultural, social, economic, and political institutions, structures, and systems;

06. To promote sustainable behaviour change, improve organizational effectiveness and strengthen the capacity of public sector entities to develop, implement and monitor gender-responsive plans, projects, programmes, and policies

Trinidad: National Child Policy (2020-2030)

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in its commitment to advancing children's rights and ensuring their well-being, has developed its first ever **National Policy for Children**. The Policy provides long-term guidance and lays down the framework to support suitable legislation, interventions and infrastructure designed to ensure the well-being of the country's children.

While the policy focuses on achieving outcomes for all children equally, it acknowledges that some children require additional support, namely teenaged mothers and fathers, children who exhibit hypersexual behaviour, victims of sexual and other abuse and domestic violence, child offenders, children in need of supervision, homeless and orphaned children, children in gangs, children who live in poverty and/or disadvantaged socioeconomic circumstances and children with disabilities.

The Policy mandates the establishment and strengthening of mechanisms to give effect to the successful mainstreaming of children's unique needs, the overall coordination and integration of child services, and the cementing of cross-sectoral commitment towards the achievement of policy outcomes and objectives.

The National Child Policy is expressly designed to:

01. Provide a comprehensive framework to guide all stakeholders towards achieving optimal well-being of children;

02. Provide a framework for the development and coordination of policies, programmes and legislation that promote the rights of all children;

03. Ensure sufficient, effective, and sustainable resource allocation for services that directly impact children;

04. Provide a gauge for stakeholders to position and align their strategies, resources, and mobilization efforts over the long term;

05. Create the blueprint through which the government encourages all duty bearers, guardians and the like to shift from viewing and treating children as passive objects or possessions to seeing them as valuable human beings.

The Policy includes an implementation plan, a communications strategy and a monitoring and evaluation framework. A comprehensive review of the Policy is to be undertaken every five years beginning in 2025 with consultation among all stakeholders.

Policy development, whether in the form of protocols, action plans or operating procedures, is commendable but policy formulation without effective implementation is counterproductive. In the Caribbean, weak policy implementation is seen as a major constraint and has been identified as one of most significant challenges impeding both national and regional efforts to confront violence, including VAWG and FV (CDB, 2017). Ongoing citizen security projects face the same challenges, as the best laid plans will invariably be undermined by weak implementation.

Policies are only as effective as their implementation, and without other key components such as capacity-building and political will, policy implementation will not reach its full potential, ultimately compromising the Caribbean region's ability to offer meaningful responses to the many threats to citizen security that it faces.

3.3. Institutional Strengthening

Strengthening institutional responses is a key component of the broader systemic response to VAWG and FV. Strong, appropriate institutional arrangements across all the essential sectors, including health and social services, are critical to addressing and preventing VAWG and FV effectively. Within the law enforcement and justice sectors, moreover, particular emphasis should be given to the institutional arrangements in force, given the overarching focus on citizen security and the pivotal role of these sectors in the delivery of citizen security services.

The institutional arrangements in place at the regional level to meaningfully address VAWG are particularly relevant to this report. Regional organizations such as CARICOM, the OECS Commission and the regional Association of Commissioners of Police all play a prominent role in the security and protection of the region's women, children, and families. In that regard, it is key that this section also consider the institutional capacity of regional entities to advance citizen security, with specific emphasis on VAWG and FV.

3.3.1. Regional Institutional Capacity

Regional organizations play a vital leadership role in shaping policy priorities for Caribbean Member States. Regional entities have the advantage of working outside the narrow and sometimes politically motivated agendas that may influence policymaking at the national level. This creates space for envisioning and framing model approaches to tackling a range of social and economic issues. Potentially, regional organizations can draw on the collective experiences of their member countries, adopting their best practices and cautioning against common pitfalls. As citizen security has a transnational dimension, they reinforce the importance of establishing a unified front among member countries in the struggle to combat crime.

Regional organizations have made and continue to make compelling contributions to the region, with a number of them directly or indirectly working to strengthen the safety and security of the entire Caribbean region. These include, but are not limited to, the following bodies:

Name of Organization	Relevance to the Region's Citizen Security Objectives
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	The mission of CARICOM is to provide dynamic leadership and service, in partnership with community institutions and groups, towards the attainment of a viable, internationally competitive and sustainable Community, with improved quality of life for all. There are recognized institutions within CARICOM that were established to foster greater cooperation among member states, particularly with regard to issues of crime and security. The Management Framework that has primary responsibility for the implementation of the Regional Crime and Security Agenda is made up of: The Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE). The Security Policy Advisement Committee (SEPAC). The Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)

Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ)	CCJ adjudicates disputes arising between CARICOM Member States and serves as the highest court of appeal for civil and criminal matters for the national courts of Barbados, Belize and Guyana.
Caribbean Disaster Response Agency (CDERA)	CDERA is a regional intergovernmental agency established in September 1991 under an Agreement of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM to take responsibility for disaster management. The agency's main function is to respond immediately and in a coordinated manner to any disastrous event affecting any participating state, at the request of the affected state.
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)	OECS contributes to the sustainable development of its Member States by assisting them to maximize the benefits of their collective space, facilitating their integration in the global economy, contributing to policy and programme formulation and implementation with respect to regional and international issues, and facilitating bilateral and multilateral cooperation. OECS has been the regional implementing agency for the Juvenile Justice Reform Project and other projects relating to citizen security.
Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP)	ACCP is the principal regional organization for promoting and facilitating collaboration and cooperation in the development and implementation of policing strategies, systems and procedures, the development of police officers' professional and technical skills and the implementation of proactive measures to prevent crime and improve police relations with the community.
Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO)	CAJO is a Caribbean association of judicial officers. Members include the region's chief justices, judges, magistrates, tribunal members, registrars and executive court administrators. The Association hosts regional conferences to explore the role of judicial officers in the administration of justice.
University of the West Indies (UWI)	UWI is the Caribbean's primary university. It has three campuses, located in Barbados, Trinidad, Guyana, and a combined student body of over 50,000. The University's stated mission is to advance learning, create knowledge and foster innovation for the positive transformation of the Caribbean, producing critical thinkers and leaders who will meet the needs of twenty-first century society.

Regional organizations play a critical role in promoting the well-being of the people of the Caribbean and thus it is vital that their institutional capacity be of a standard that enables them to fulfil their respective mandates. However, some regional organizations suffer from the same institutional challenges that plague the security sector of member states at the national level. These challenges may hinder their ability to carry out robust, sustained interventions relating to gender equality and the struggle to end VAWG and family-based violence.

The Case for Building Caricom's Capacity to Deliver on its Gender Mainstreaming Mandate

CARICOM, at the forefront of Caribbean regional organizations, should take the lead in promoting gender equality across all aspects of Caribbean development. Cross-cutting and powerfully transformative, gender equality has the potential to reshape the region's human and social landscape and thus the Unit responsible for this issue should be given the resources it needs to achieve its objectives.

However, a Gender Audit Report commissioned by the CARICOM Secretariat noted that *"despite efforts to integrate gender into its programmes for the last three decades, including policy documents which speak to mainstreaming of gender, there has been no overarching strategy or framework"* (CARICOM, n.d., 3) and called for a strengthening of the CARICOM Gender Unit with increased capacity and authority to carry out its functions (CARICOM, n.d., 3). Although the Audit Report dates to 2008, feedback from stakeholder interviews corroborated its finding that CARICOM's capacity to oversee gender mainstreaming in the region remains quite weak. Stakeholders reported that the Gender Unit had gone for extended periods of time with no one assigned to lead its work and lamented the current lack of human resources that were hindering the Unit's ability to carry out its functions in a meaningful way. The Deputy Programme Manager said candidly that the work produced by the Gender Unit would be unsustainable unless its human resource capacity was built. As it currently stands, the Unit functions almost as a one-person operation, with the support of a single consultant who cannot take on the entire daily workload alone. The Deputy Programme Manager estimates that a bare minimum of three additional personnel must be hired for the Unit, including a Programme Officer, a Programme Coordinator, and an administrative assistant who would be assigned exclusively to the Unit.

With gender equality objectives in mind, CARICOM spearheaded an initiative entitled **Stepping it Up**, a strategy to achieve gender equality in the Caribbean Community and referred to here as the CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy. The Strategy provides a framework for action to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, any comprehensive implementation of the Strategy should arguably start with internal action to build CARICOM's own ability to oversee the framework and create momentum for gender equality across the region.

3.3.2. Institutional Capacity of the Police and Justice Sectors

An effective criminal justice response prioritizes victim safety and offender accountability. It includes access to redress for violence in a timely manner, the avoidance of re-victimization, and the enforcement of legal remedies, including appropriate punishment for perpetrators. The criminal justice system is intended to hold perpetrators accountable for violence, while also ensuring victim safety and conveying the unequivocal societal message that violence against women will not be tolerated.

Despite global recognition of the pivotal role played by justice systems in responding to GBV, these types of crimes continue to be severely underreported across the globe. Much to the dismay of policymakers, even when women and girls do file a complaint, the charging and conviction rates are very low, and complaints are withdrawn at very high rates as well (Johnson et al., 2007).

When low reporting, charging and conviction rates are juxtaposed against the alarmingly high global rates of violence against women and girls, the resulting tableau strongly underscores the importance of improving justice sector service delivery. It is no different in the Caribbean, where evidence confirms that reporting and conviction rates for VAWG are alarmingly low. For example, a Barbadian Crime survey revealed that the second lowest rate of reporting for criminal acts was for sex offences, at 46% (Nuttall et al., 2003). Furthermore, according to the ACCP/UN Women Baseline Assessments, in Guyana, one of the few Caribbean countries with an established conviction rate, the latter was found to be less than 1%.

The **UN Essential Services Package** provides General Principles that should guide the police and justice sectors. These core principles include:

- Recognizing that the dynamics of inequalities between women and men create gender-specific vulnerabilities, such as economic and legal dependency, that inevitably impact women's access to justice;
- Incorporating a gender transformative approach that should neither compromise the rights of women and girls nor be coercive;
- Adopting a women-centred approach to justice and policing service delivery that places the needs and realities of women and girls rather than the goals of the justice institutions at the core of any justice service;

- Recognizing that perpetrator accountability requires that justice and policing services support and facilitate the rights of victims/survivors while ensuring that the burden of seeking justice is placed on the state, not on the victim/survivor.

The ESP also identifies the core components of essential actions that should be taken by the police and justice sector (table 9).

Despite these principles, research in the Caribbean region has brought to light the lack of confidence that victims/survivors of gender-based violence have in the justice system. On the specific question of sex offences, the Barbados Crime Survey found that public confidence in the police response was very low, with only 16% of victims reporting that they were satisfied with the response they had received. Of the 84% who were not satisfied with the way the police had dealt with their complaint:

- 85% said the police did not do enough.
- 85% said the police were not interested.
- 51% said the police did not treat them properly.
- 25% said the police did not keep them informed.
- 12% said that the police did not catch the offender.

Table 9: Core components of the essential actions that should be taken by the police and justice sector

Service Action	Core Component
Prevention	- Support efforts to raise awareness and promote the unacceptability of men's and boys' violence against women and girls.
Initial Contact	- Availability - Accessibility - Responsiveness
Investigation	- Cases of violence against women are given high investigation priority - Relevant information and evidence are collected from the victim/survivor and witnesses - A thorough investigation is conducted
Pre-trial Processes	- Primary responsibility for initiating prosecution - Prioritization of cases - Readiness for trial
Trial or Hearing Process	- Safe, friendly courtroom environment - Opportunity for full participation - Justice outcomes are commensurate with the gravity of the crime and focused on the safety of the victim/survivor - Available, accessible options for reparations
Post-trial Processes	- Interventions that prevent recidivism focus on victim/survivor safety
Safety and Protection	- Access to immediate, urgent and long-term protection measures - Enforcement of protection measures - Risk assessment - Coordinated protection measures - Coordinated protection and support services

Support and Assistance	• Practical, accurate, accessible and comprehensive information • Legal services • Victim and witness support services • Referrals to health and social service providers
Communication	• Ongoing communication with the victim/survivor • Communication by justice agencies with other agencies
Coordination among justice agencies	• Coordination among justice sector agencies

Source: UN Essential Services Package

A similar general dissatisfaction with both police and justice responses was highlighted in the ACCP/UN Women Baseline Assessments commissioned by the Regional Association of Commissioners of Police and UN Women Caribbean MCO on policing and prosecutorial responses to sex offences. Respondents offered several reasons for their dissatisfaction, including but not limited to:

- Delayed responses to reports of violence
- Insensitive interaction with victims/survivors
- Protracted, incomplete investigations
- Compromised access to prosecutors
- Insufficient witness preparation
- Hostile courtroom environments
- Dissatisfaction with outcomes

Many of these concerns are linked to the limited institutional capacity of the police, the prosecution and the judiciary to carry out specialized interventions. That lack of specialization is one of the most challenging factors undermining the current institutional arrangements within the police and justice sectors.

3.3.2.1. Lack of Specialization and Its Implications

It has been well established that specialized law enforcement and justice interventions can facilitate increased access to justice and positively change the way that cases are handled (Thomas et al., 2011, p. 111).

Experts have identified the need for dedicated, well-trained, experienced officers and adequate resources to proactively respond to VAWG at the stage of police interventions (Malefy et al., 1998, p. 46). The police, in conjunction with progressive policies and actions addressing VAWG and FV, play a critical role that leads to a range of positive outcomes: greater protection and support for victims, including those from underserved communities, increased officer accountability for effective intervention, increased reporting by victims and increased likelihood that offenders will be successfully prosecuted. As Malefy observed in the study cited above:

"Developing officer specialization, or other means of giving special attention to these crimes, can expand the ability of police forces to:

- *Increase victim protection and assistance;*
- *Promote consistent intervention in all cases;*
- *Ensure cases do not "fall through the cracks";*
- *Improve the quality and timeliness of investigations;*
- *Consistently gather evidence which supports successful prosecutions;*
- *Provide other officers with support and assistance in responding to these cases*
- *Provide a resource to the community;*
- *Facilitate a coordinated response with other justice agencies and victim service providers.*

Despite the well-established benefits of specialization, law enforcement in the Caribbean has struggled to achieve it. The ACCP/UN Women Baseline Assessments confirmed that many Caribbean countries aspire to specialized responses to VAWG but cite the ever-present issue of resources as the main challenge to the effective creation of specialized units.

A powerful example of the critical role played by specialized units in ensuring that police forces have the institutional capacity to deal with VAWG effectively is the gender-based violence unit in Trinidad and Tobago presented below.

"

This practice will provide police managers and supervisors an opportunity to evaluate departmental needs for specialized officers to handle violence against women cases and explore other methods of giving special attention to these cases. It will provide information on ways to build departmental and community support for these initiatives.

(Malefy et al., 1998, p. 46)

Trinidad Establishes a Gender-Based Violence Unit: Moving from the lack of specialization to specialized law enforcement interventions

In early 2020, NGOs working in Trinidad and Tobago launched an urgent appeal to strengthen the police response to domestic violence. That appeal and the rationale behind it were reported in the Trinidad Express, one of the country's national newspapers (Trinidad Express Newspapers, 2020):

[…] a survey done in 2018 […] revealed that only five per cent of women who have experienced domestic violence go to the police for protection and response. That survey demonstrated that significantly fewer women go to police than apply on their own for protection orders. Over 8,000 applications are made annually for protection orders. Yet between 2013 and 2018, only 997 reports were made to the police across Trinidad and Tobago. In this period, reports to the police declined by 49 per cent despite increased violence across Trinidad and Tobago. Much less is known about the reporting practices of gender-diverse persons and persons in same-sex relationships."

The article went on to explain why women, gender-diverse and non-heterosexual individuals are not "turning to the police" for help, blaming it on a "lack of confidence in the provision of an effective response":

"[…] Notwithstanding comprehensive standing orders and […] the Domestic Violence Act, many women fear the consequences of increased violence against them which police reporting may trigger; victims feel stigmatized and ashamed; and they also are fearful that the police response will be slow, inadequate and insensitive."

The NGO sector welcomed the "soon to be established" Gender-Based Violence Unit, cautioning that the Unit should be equipped to meet its mandate, as well as possess the authority to monitor and supervise police stations. The monitoring requirement was perceived as necessary because of the need to ensure the decentralization of reporting of domestic violence. This was seen as important given the sheer scale of GBV incidence in the country.

Shortly after the article appeared in the Trinidad Express, the Gender-Based Violence Unit was set up. A 2021 news clip reported on the Unit's accomplishments, which included not only increased numbers of arrests for sex offences, but also an increased number of prosecutions. The number of cases dismissed by the courts because of police absence dropped significantly, from 1943 cases in 2018 to 380 in 2020 (Doodnath, 2021). The article also mentioned the specialized training police officers assigned to the Unit were receiving.

Even in those places where Specialized Units have been set up, the challenge of under-resourcing remains and may prevent the units from fulfilling their mandates effectively, as was the case for the **Special Victims Unit in Grenada**. A Situation Analysis conducted under the country's national Spotlight Initiative brought to light the gaps in service delivery experienced by the new law enforcement unit. The analysis provided the following relevant feedback on the operation of the special unit:

Establishing a Special Victims Unit: the Experience of Grenada

Up until 2018, there was no specialized response to GBV within the RGPF and cases were routinely handled at the District Police Station level by officers not specifically trained to do so. In September 2018, the RGPF established the Special Victims Unit, responsible for all domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assaults across the entire island. However, the SVU has not been able to fulfil its mandate due to its current capacity constraints. It is operating with insufficient resources although the Commissioner of Police maintains that ultimately the Unit is to be able to carry out its full mandate, shouldering responsibility for **all** GBV-related cases, and handling all aspects of every case from beginning to end.

The SVU staff have made it emphatically clear that they are unable to handle all cases from the initial stage of reporting through investigation, charging and preparation of the case files for court. At present its role is largely advisory, ensuring that police interventions across Grenada are sufficiently responsive and carrying the Unit's files, which mainly originate in the St. George catchment area.

The data clearly shows that SVU is currently responding to only a small fraction of the cases that are expected to fall under its mandate. If that unit were to respond to all sexual offences, incidents of domestic violence and child abuse, the following data would provide valuable insights into its staffing requirements.

Table 10: Disparity in the number of cases currently dealt with by SVU versus the overall number of cases reported to RGPF 2018-2019

Year	Sexual violence cases handled by SVU	Sexual violence cases handled by RGPF	Domestic violence cases handled by SVU	Domestic violence cases handled by RGPF	Total GBV cases handled by SVU	Total GBV cases handled by RGPF	Percentage of GBV-related cases handled by SVU
2018	58	294	20	1070	78	1364	5.7 %
2019	60	174	34	304	94	1478	6.4 %

Source: Royal Grenada Police Force (2018-2019).

The feedback quoted above suggests that although specialization within police forces to better handle VAWG has been recognized as an effective tool, and is even sought after, Caribbean governments will have to allocate the requisite resources to make it a truly workable solution in the struggle to combat VAWG and FV.

The case for specialization is equally compelling during the subsequent stages of the justice continuum and is strongly recommended during court processes, especially as concerns prosecution. Specialized prosecution units, as well as specialized courts, are widely recognized as instrumental to building the institutional capacity needed to address VAWG and FV.

3.3.2.2. Specialized Prosecution and Court Responses

Cases of violence against women and girls call for prosecutors with particular empathy for victims, experience and training on the specific issues inherent to these cases and sufficient time to prepare the often complex case files. There is strong support for creating specialized units or assigning specialized personnel to ensure that these cases are handled by trained, experienced, and professional staff. In many jurisdictions, the focused attention of specialized staff has resulted in strengthened victim safety and increased victim participation both during case preparation and at trial.

As Malefy (op. cit. 1998, p.138) argues, *"Specialized approaches can result in:*

- *increased expertise and knowledge on the part of prosecution staff;*
- *increased number of charges issued in sexual assaults involving offenders known to victims;*
- *more comprehensive victim services provided by motivated staff;*
- *increased collaboration between prosecutors and advocates;*
- *improved services to victims, including increased victim involvement in case decisions;*
- *increased efficiency in the handling of violence against women cases; and*
- *more successful case outcomes."*

The current lack of specially assigned prosecutors in the regional Offices of the Director of Public Prosecutions was noted in a Caribbean UNDP Assessment (Hurwitz, 2014, p. 92). That report identified, among other deficiencies, the recurring challenge of heavy rotation between prosecutors for a single case, which can prove disruptive and disturbing to the victims, who would benefit from a single point of interface.

Involvement in court proceedings can be a frustrating and potentially dangerous experience for victims/survivors of VAWG and FV. Judges and court administrators can ensure that courts respond swiftly and fairly to victims/survivors, and also play a critical role in facilitating access to justice. The well-known Caribbean JURIST project, a five-year regional Caribbean judicial reform initiative funded under an arrangement with the Government of Canada, recognized the importance of specialized courts in handling sex offence cases. These courts have been perceived as a progressive step to establish a more effective and efficient justice system.

The JURIST Project has been implemented on behalf of Global Affairs Canada and the Conference of Heads of Judiciary of CARICOM (the Conference), by the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). A regional initiative, the project aims to improve court administration and the administration of justice in the Caribbean region by strengthening the ability of the courts and the judiciary to adjudicate cases efficiently and fairly. Both Guyana and Antigua have heeded the call and instituted specialized sex offence courts.

Guyana Leads the Way with Establishment of Specialized Sex Offence Courts

Under the direction of the JURIST Project, Guyana established a Sex Offence Court in Georgetown in 2017, followed by the opening of another such Court in Berbice in 2019. Both courts follow the JURIST sex offence model guidelines to ensure that they operate in line with the Sexual Offences Act and meet best practice guidelines (Government of Canada, n.d.). The country's specialized Sex Offence Court is reported to be the first of its kind in the Caribbean and was inspired by the recognition of the need to adjudicate these sensitive matters in a safe atmosphere for survivors while ensuring fair and speedy trials.

The Head of the Judiciary commended the court, citing several positive developments:
- An integrated approach among all stakeholders in the criminal justice system;
- Faster disposal of cases in an environment that respects the privacy and the dignity of victims, using special measures to aid witnesses giving evidence;
- Special measures to reduce victim traumatization, such as using screens, video-link testimony and anatomical dolls;
- Enhanced data collection (Kaieteur News, 2020).

These positive yet limited examples of specialization in the Caribbean have prepared the terrain for expanded efforts across the region. There is significant scope for progress in this area of institutional strengthening, and regional citizen security initiatives are strategically positioned to chart the course at national levels. Regional justice reform projects such as JURIST present the advantage of developing regional models and guidelines that can serve as templates to help improve justice responses to VAWG and FV at all levels.

Regional organizations engaged in planning and delivering citizen security policies and procedures are encouraged to support the momentum for strengthening police and justice institutional responses to VAWG and FV and effectively integrate these objectives into their own agendas for enhancing regional security and sustainable development.

3.3.3. Achieving Citizen Security through Effective Services and Programmes

Citizen security in the Caribbean region is closely connected to the effectiveness of existing programmes and services. While this is true with respect to all aspects of citizen security, it takes on increased significance regarding VAWG and FV. The increased vulnerability of half the population to violence necessarily calls for greater attention to interventions that can mitigate the harm caused to victims/survivors as well as carry out the rehabilitation of offenders. While a number of services address the safety and security of women, children and families experiencing violence, the following services and programmes are particularly significant:
- Social safety net services
- Legal aid services
- Court-connected victim support services
- Child protection services
- Psychosocial services, including Batterer Intervention Programmes

3.3.3.1. Social Safety Net Services

Although police and justice interventions figure prominently in the citizen security sector, a broader systemic approach is required to more effectively ensure the safety and well-being of those affected by crime and violence. For individuals experiencing IPV and other types of VAWG, financial vulnerability is a major factor. Being able to satisfy basic needs such as food and housing greatly contributes to a victim's sense of security. If access to social safety net programmes that can offer much-needed support is compromised, citizen security goals are undermined.

Social safety nets are an important component of social protection systems in Caribbean States. Spending on safety nets in the Caribbean region approaches the global average of 1.9% of GDP: Jamaica, 1.8%; St. Lucia, 1.3%; Grenada 3.2%; and Belize 2.9% (CARICOM, 2020). These figures are encouraging and provide helpful context for advancing the argument that those who are poor and vulnerable require support from the State. Unfortunately, the region's high levels of poverty, combined with its feminization, render female-headed households even more susceptible to impoverishment and create serious obstacles for women trying to escape violence. Quantitative data obtained from Country Poverty Assessments indicate that women heads of households may be more vulnerable to poverty, although in some countries poverty levels for both male and female heads of households are comparable.

Gender-responsive social protection requires that women with families to care for are offered protection that is reflective of the inequalities they experience, including their increased vulnerability to specific forms of violence.

In the Situation Analysis of GBV in Grenada, commissioned under that country's Spotlight Initiative, victims cited financial hardship and the lack of housing and other basic commodities as serious obstacles to leaving abusive relationships. This is a real issue for women throughout the region, who are forced to weigh protecting themselves and their families from violence against the relative security of having shelter, food and the necessities of life. This harsh reality powerfully underscores the intersecting nature of women's vulnerability.

Social safety net programmes must take into account and reflect the security needs of women and girls experiencing gender-based forms of violence. The complex, intersecting nature of VAWG, economic vulnerability and general social instability should influence citizen security policy frameworks throughout the Caribbean region, at both the national and regional levels.

3.3.3.2. Legal Aid Services

Access to justice is an essential feature of sound citizen security policy and procedures. Both victims of crime and offenders are entitled to access the justice system and should be able to make informed decisions based on sound legal advice and representation. For those who cannot afford privately retained lawyers, they should be afforded these services through State-supported legal aid services.

International legal frameworks have long provided for the right to legal representation, with the United Nations *Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems* (2012) reaffirming that legal aid is an essential element of a fair, humane and efficient criminal justice system based on the rule of law. Despite international standards on this issue, in general, the Caribbean region does not have robust legal aid systems that are adequately equipped to meet the security needs of its citizenry.

A UNDP needs assessment of the judicial system in nine Caribbean countries found that:
"*In the Caribbean, most jurisdictions have legal aid only for the most serious offences and the system is overwhelmed*" (UNDP, 2020, p. 36). Even more importantly, the assessment made the explicit observation that "[…] *specific emphasis is not placed on women and other vulnerable groups. This is critical to reduce some of the other social ills such as domestic violence, suicide, divorce, etc.*" (UNDP, 2020, p. 37).

Legal aid in the Caribbean region is based largely on the demands of criminal justice and thus access to legal aid for non-criminal matters is much more restricted. This results in limited options for women to pursue protective, empowering legal redress in areas such as protection orders, child maintenance, divorce and ancillary relief. Although some Caribbean countries such as Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago do offer relatively comprehensive civil and family law-related legal aid, this is not the situation in most Caribbean countries. This results in a legal aid system that was not designed with women and children in mind.

The inadequacy of legal aid systems was noted in another UNDP assessment focusing more specifically on legal aid services for victims of gender-based violence (Hurwitz, 2014, p. 103). In its examination of legal aid in a number of countries, the assessment report noted the following:
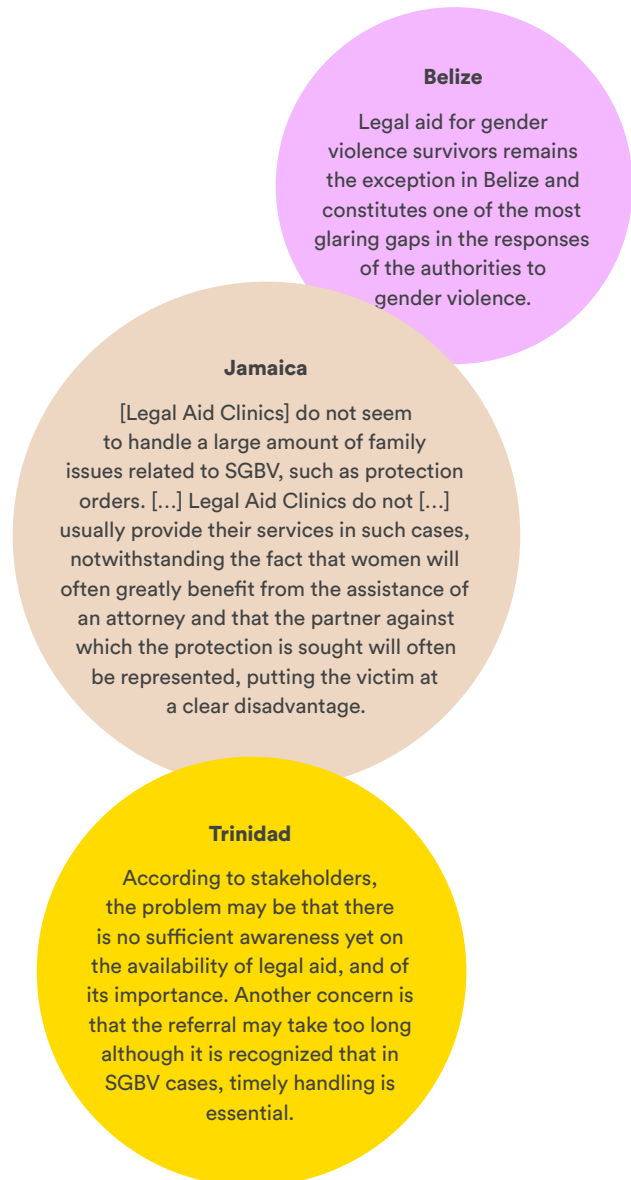
Belize

Legal aid for gender violence survivors remains the exception in Belize and constitutes one of the most glaring gaps in the responses of the authorities to gender violence.

Jamaica

[Legal Aid Clinics] do not seem to handle a large amount of family issues related to SGBV, such as protection orders. […] Legal Aid Clinics do not […] usually provide their services in such cases, notwithstanding the fact that women will often greatly benefit from the assistance of an attorney and that the partner against which the protection is sought will often be represented, putting the victim at a clear disadvantage.

Trinidad

According to stakeholders, the problem may be that there is no sufficient awareness yet on the availability of legal aid, and of its importance. Another concern is that the referral may take too long although it is recognized that in SGBV cases, timely handling is essential.

The Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic (LACC) in Grenada provides evidence of a promising practice designed to strengthen access to justice in cases of VAWG. Standing out among legal aid services in the Caribbean region often beset by systemic gender inequalities, the Grenada Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic was recognized as a good practice in the UNDP assessment of Caribbean justice systems and in stakeholder interviews.

In light of the Spotlight Initiative focus on violence against girls as well as family violence, the availability of legal aid services for children who need care and protection, including those in conflict with the law, is also relevant. **A regional OECS/UNICEF Assessment of legal representation of children** confirmed that legal aid services are sadly lacking for chil-

dren and young people (UNICEF, 2019, p. 150). This is an area deserving of specific attention and redress as part of the region's citizen security mandate, not only because of Member States' obligation to respond to youth violence and victimization, but also the solid recognition that violence against children is a serious citizen security issue.

3.3.3.3. Court-Connected Victim Support Services

Victims/survivors of VAWG and FV confront many obstacles as they navigate their way through the justice system. These include lack of information, re-traumatization because of the non-victim-friendly court-

room procedures and the often lengthy, unwarranted delays in legal proceedings. The ACCP baseline assessments confirmed the need for increased access to victim support services across the region. As victims navigate the justice system, the need for support grows, particularly as regards child victims and especially sexual abuse victims. Children are less able to understand the complexities of legal procedures and are more easily intimidated by the justice system. Situation analyses of child victimization in the region have also identified a gap in child-friendly victim support, resulting in children being reluctant to proceed to the final stages of proceedings.

Existing research, together with feedback from stakeholder interviews, offers compelling evidence of the acute need for victims to have well trained, dedicated support to assist them in preparing and carrying out their court appearances. Stakeholders gave a number of powerful examples, including:

- Victims going to court without ever seeing the physical courtroom environment and without being briefed on what the process would involve;
- Lack of transport to attend their court appearances and limited assistance to ensure that victims do not miss court dates;
- Victims experiencing emotional "meltdowns" when giving evidence and having no one present to offer moral support;
- Victims and their families being approached by the accused seeking to "settle" their cases with bribes and feeling pressured to do so.

All the experiences described above could have been prevented, or at least mitigated, had court-connected victim support services been available and actively involved. Fortunately, the value of these kinds of interventions is increasingly being recognized and some States are actively putting victim-support measures in place, although they are not always sufficiently resourced.

In Grenada, the recently endorsed Standard Operating Procedures to guide the Essential Services Sectors have expanded the role of victim support personnel, moving beyond the current ad hoc services offered by the Gender-Based Violence Unit within the Ministry of Social Development. This is a positive step, and it is hoped that the measure will be adequately resourced.

Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic in Grenada: Putting GBV at the Centre of Legal Aid Services

The Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic (LACC), operating under the auspices of the Grenada Community Development Agency, has provided legal aid, mediation and counselling services to the Grenadian public since 1987.

From its inception, the community-based legal clinic has focused not only on legal advice and representation, but also on **advocacy and public legal education**. The Clinic channels considerable expertise into facilitating public awareness of the legal responses to VAWG, including familiarizing the public with new legislation and policy.

LACC also avoids the pitfalls of providing legal representation in criminal matters. The Clinic explained that this decision was deliberately taken so as to ensure greater parity in the representation of men and women. LACC's focus on civil law removed the inherent gender bias that comes with ensuring defence services for those charged with criminal offences. The Clinic can boast a client gender distribution of approximately 55% females to 45% males, with a significant percentage of the female victims accessing services due to incidents of violence perpetrated within the context of intimate relationships, which have resulted in a need for protection from further harm to their emotional and physical well-being.

Jamaica established a Victim Support Unit in 1998 which is operated by the Ministry of Justice. Through its 14 parish offices island-wide, the Victim Support Unit, or SU, assists victims of crime in managing the emotional trauma associated with and caused by crime, including building their awareness of the justice system and their rights as victims. This is a good practice which should be further developed and rolled out across the Caribbean.

3.3.3.4. Child Protection Services

The documented rates of child victimization in the region are a cause for concern. Physical, emotional and sexual abuse coupled with neglect and exploitation are all manifestations of the harm to which children in the Caribbean region are exposed. UNICEF has led the way in strengthening the region's systemic responses to VAC, offering much-needed direction on strengthening laws, policies, institutions, services, programmes and building the capacities of service providers.

One of the recognized challenges for the region is the lack of specialized child protection services that are sufficiently equipped to manage child abuse, from the initial stages of reporting through investigation, development of care plans, placement and rehabilitation or reintegration of children (UNICEF, n.d.). It is common for child protection services to be provided by social workers who are responsible for a wide range of tasks, including addressing other forms of family violence, providing counselling, managing social benefits and preparing social inquiries. Recommendations have been put forward for specialized interventions to fulfil the region's child protection mandate, with dedicated, specially trained service providers to meet these requirements (UNICEF, n.d.).

There are positive developments in the region that are worthy of recognition, strengthening and replication across the region. These include the Child Protection Authority in Grenada and the Children's Authority in Trinidad. Both models recognize the importance of specialized services to address VAC and are taking positive steps towards better safeguarding the safety and security of the region's children.

3.3.3.5. Psychosocial Services and Batterer Intervention Programmes

Sexual and gender-based violence can have a profound, lifelong impact on the mental health of survivors, who are at increased risk of depression, anxiety

Trinidad Establishes a Children's Authority

The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT) became fully operational in 2015, and is tasked with promoting the welfare, care and protection of all children, supporting children in need of care and protection, licensing and monitoring community residences and nurseries, managing the foster care system and adoption process, providing support for children in conflict with the law and promoting child rights (Jaggernauth, 2020).

The Authority's mission is to promote the best interests of children through advocacy, prevention, intervention and collaborative strategies based on multidisciplinary approaches. In 2020, over 3500 cases of child protection were handled by the agency, averaging 440 cases per month. CATT operates with a staff of nearly 300, including professional and administrative personnel.

and post-traumatic stress disorder. Children exposed to violence and abuse are at risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence as adults. To mitigate the harmful mental health impacts of VAWG and FV, psychosocial interventions are pivotal. Such interventions may include counselling or therapeutic services for survivors, perpetrators and affected family members.

In most Caribbean countries, some form of counselling or psychosocial service delivery is available, whether offered through State agencies, non-governmental organizations or the private sector. However, high quality psychological services are not as readily available to address the more serious mental health issues that warrant well-trained and sufficiently qualified mental health professionals (Dudley-Grant, 2013, p. 257). For individuals who have been sexually victimized, whether as children or adults, this gap in service delivery is a major challenge because this type of victimization may trigger chronic mental health disorders.

A number of Caribbean countries have taken specific steps to address the psychosocial needs of victims/

survivors of VAWG and FV and there is evidence that there is a growing awareness of the importance of these types of services. Antigua, for example, has established a multiservice agency called the **Support and Referral Centre (SARC)** which operates within the Directorate of Gender Affairs. From one convenient location, the centre provides 24/7 care and services to all victims of gender-based and sexual violence. SARC offers crisis counselling and psychosocial support, court advocacy services, referrals, safety planning and protection orders. For counselling and crisis services, Jamaica draws on the abo-

ve-mentioned Victim Support Unit, whereas Guyana relies quite heavily on the NGO Help and Shelter. Grenada has also called on the NGO sector to provide psychosocial services, such as the Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic, a multidisciplinary agency that combines legal and psychosocial interventions for individuals experiencing intimate partner violence, sexual violence and child abuse.

In the past, the rehabilitation of those who perpetrate violence did not receive the same attention as the assistance needed for victims. However, through the

Partnership for Peace: A Violence Intervention Programme

To assist in ending violence against women in the Caribbean region, UN Women developed a standardized, court-based batterer intervention programme. Called Partnership for Peace, the programme has been introduced in Grenada, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Belize, the British Virgin Islands and Barbados.

The **Partnership for Peace** violence intervention programme is based on the premise that violence is intentional and that abusive behaviours are methods chosen in order to control persons and situations. The programme draws on a psycho-educational approach that aims to convey to participants that domestic violence has a social meaning, is grounded in gender inequality and is unacceptable, and that violence can be prevented through personal responsibility. Over the course of 16 sessions, the participants are taught concepts and techniques that help to replace violent and controlling behaviour with respectful, open communication and healthy, equitable relationships. The key message is that violence is a choice, and that the perpetrators alone are accountable for the consequences of the actions they take. The sessions are delivered by two facilitators, one male and one female, to create the opportunity for modelling healthy, respectful relationships.

The programme was developed by UN Women in response to the ineffective and often inappropriate "counselling" interventions to which both batterers and victims were being referred by the court. Such interventions were designed more to explore the potential for reconciliation than to address the actual violence and ensure accountability.

The 10 programme goals are:
- To help participants stop violence in their lives;
- To help participants understand that violence is a choice;
- To encourage participants to examine where their violent behaviour originated;
- To help participants accept responsibility for their behaviour and choose alternatives to violence;
- To help participants understand the costs of violence to themselves, their partner, their children and to society in general;
- To teach participants skills for addressing conflict and responding to stress;
- To establish and model an atmosphere of respect within the group and to challenge disrespectful behaviour;
- To promote self-sufficiency among participants by creating a supportive atmosphere and encouraging them to take steps towards improving their relationships and their lives;
- To create a network of men who will advocate for non-violent relationships;
- To prioritize the safety of victims.

launching of its **Partnership for Peace Programme**, UN Women has introduced the concept of batterer intervention programmes in the Caribbean region. This is a ground-breaking step for the region and opens perspectives for developing rehabilitative work with offenders as a strategy to prevent violence.

The development and implementation by UN Women of a model psycho-educational programme for the Caribbean is a powerful example of the role that international and regional organizations can play in fostering violence prevention approaches grounded in gender equality. The development of model approaches -- whether through legislation, policy or programming -- is critical to the prevention and redress of VAWG and FV.

3.4. Capacity-Building to Support Institutional Strengthening and Service Delivery

Professional competence, including gender equality awareness, is critical to both institutional strengthening and effective service or programme delivery. Training and capacity-building should therefore be integral components of both the national and regional crime and violence prevention efforts. Experts have recommended that training on VAWG be regular, updated and institutionalized. It should also be mandatory, sending the unequivocal message that VAWG and FV cases are part of core law enforcement and prosecution work, not something "*extraneous or special*" (Skinnider, 2014, p. 149).

UNODC has offered meaningful guidance on the key elements that should be covered in training curricula for police and prosecutors at both the national and regional levels. These elements include:

- Basic knowledge of the forms of violence used against women and the harmful impact and consequences they have on victims, families and society;
- All relevant laws, policies, and programmes. When new legislation is enacted or policies developed, a specific training session should be organized to familiarize personnel with the new legislation and/or policies;
- Knowledge of strategies and approaches for effective investigation and prosecution that support victim safety, such as conducting standardized safety assessments, using risk management tools, using and enforcing protection orders, and issues of confidentiality;

- Identifying and responding appropriately to the specific needs of women victims of violence such as victims of human trafficking;
- Effective prosecution strategies that avoid secondary victimization of victims at all stages of the criminal justice procedure;
- Gender sensitivity training, including cross-culture gender and child-sensitivity training.
- Challenging myths and stereotypes;
- Addressing the media, both on case-specific questions and when raising public awareness of VAWG and other forms of gender-based violence;
- Issues such as professional ethics, respect for human rights and anti-corruption principles (LaLonde, 2010).

UNODC also recommends that to ensure effective results, training, curriculum development and implementation should be carried out in close cooperation with women's rights groups, civil society organizations and providers of services for victims. Training supported by comprehensive protocols promotes a consistent, uniform approach to victim safety and offender accountability.

The scope for strengthening the capacity of police and justice service providers to be more effective in handling family violence, intimate partner violence, sex assault and child abuse also came under review in the ACCP Baseline Assessments of police and prosecution responses to sex offences. The assessment report for Grenada observed that "*[...] a review of the training programme for the Royal Grenada Police Force clearly indicated scope for development and improvement of the training offered on sexual offences.*"

The report went on to note that the training period for recruits is only six months and the time allotted to topics relating to sexual offences amounts to approximately 12 hours of theory and 6 hours of practical training.

Training for prosecutors on the issues of VAWG is also lacking, and this deficiency may have serious consequences since several Caribbean countries still rely on police prosecution for handling all matters in the summary jurisdiction of the Magistrates' Court, including preliminary inquiries. Whereas trained lawyers staff the prosecution departments of the Director of Public Prosecution and handle all indictable cases in the High Court, police officers are assigned to prosecute at the lower-level Magistrates' Court. Police assigned prosecutorial roles in OECS States

are only required to attend a short training course offered through the Regional Police Training School in Barbados. This course is perceived as quite basic and introductory in nature.

Comprehensive, systematic and effective training of prosecutors in VAWG and FV both at the level of the police and the DPP office is critical and yet remains a glaring gap in Caribbean judicial responses to gender-based forms of violence. With this challenge in mind, UN Women Caribbean Office commissioned the development of several model training tools to support the region in building the capacities of police, prosecutors and judicial officers. Two separate training manuals were developed for police and prosecutors. A third tool was developed to guide judicial decision-making on cases involving VAWG. The police and prosecution training manuals were piloted in Grenada although, regrettably, the training has not yet become a part of the Police Training School curriculum while the tool for training judicial officers was piloted in Trinidad and Jamaica in 2015 through their national Judicial Education Institutes. There is scope across the entire region for the adoption of these

model capacity-building tools, and yet the question remains: why are they not being used more widely?

Existing capacity-building tools such as those developed by UN Women, together with the benchmarks developed by UNODC for training police and prosecutors to handle cases involving VAWG, are readily available resources that can strengthen capacity-building efforts across the Caribbean. Harnessing these available resources, creating a repository of well-designed training tools and generally building awareness of existing training and capacity-building information is a strategic entry point for regional organizations, particularly those that have a citizen security mandate.

3.5. Improved Citizen Security with Greater Emphasis on VAWG and Family Violence: Key Recommendations

Table 11: Key Recommendations

Area of Focus	National-Level Recommended Actions	Regional Level Recommended Actions
Legislative and Policy Reform	Review and strengthen legislative frameworks to address VAWG and FV. Reform should specifically address areas that have been identified in this report as problematic across the entire region. Recognize the critical role of policy in supporting effective implementation of the law. Encourage development of protocols, standard operating procedures, action plans and other policy documents aimed at the prevention of VAWG and FV.	Support effective law and policy reform through the development of model laws and policies. Document and share good practices from across the region to assist member states in enacting legislative and policy reform at the national level.

Institutional Arrangements	Encourage specialization in policing responses to VAWG, including the establishment of Special Victim Units that handle cases involving vulnerable witnesses. Encourage specialization in prosecution and broader justice responses to VAWG, including the establishment of Special Prosecution Units, use of designated prosecutors and the establishment of specialized courts. Use the UN ESP package to guide police and justice institutional arrangements, complying with all aspects of the 11 service actions specified in that policy framework.	Strengthen the institutional capacity of regional organizations to promote their own gender equality mandates throughout the region, including gender mainstreaming. Special attention should be given to the Gender Programme developed by CARICOM, as the lead agency for human and social development in the Caribbean. Ensure that there are regionally established common standards that offer guidelines on required institutional arrangements at the national level. These should primarily address the police and justice sectors but should also recognize the importance of all the Essential Service sectors, including health and social services. The Common Standards should also address the issue of coordination between institutions and sectors.
Service and Programme Delivery	Improve service and programme delivery to victims/survivors of VAWG and FV. This should include the areas identified in this report as particularly important, including court-connected victim support services, psychosocial support, social safety net programmes and legal aid.	Document and disseminate good practices in the region, to ensure that Member States are aware of positive examples of available services and programmes. Promote regionally designed programmes or services that have been specifically conceived for implementation in the Caribbean, such as the Partnership for Peace Violence Intervention Programme designed by UN Women MCO.
Capacity-Building	Institutionalize training and capacity-building workshops for police and justice sector service providers, ensuring that the training content and approach are consistent with the internationally established standards outlined in this analysis.	Promote regionally designed training curricula specifically tailored for implementation in the Caribbean. One such example is the curriculum developed by UN Women MCO to train police and prosecutors on responding to sex offences. Solicit the involvement of regional police and justice organizations to assist in coordinating and implementing training workshops. This includes regional Judicial Education Institutes, the regional Association of Commissioners of Police and regional court systems such as the Caribbean Court of Justice or the OECS Supreme Court.

Source: Self-created, UNDP RBLAC.

Chapter 4:

Overview of Existing Citizen Security Frameworks: Broadening the Scope for the Integration of a Gender Equality Perspective to Effectively Address Violence against Women and Girls

4.1. Overview of Key Citizen Security Initiatives

There are already a number of initiatives currently working in the Caribbean region that aim to strengthen the region's capacity to respond to citizen security threats. These interventions take the form of projects, policy frameworks and procedural guidance, all intended to prevent crime and violence. Given the limitations of the traditional notions of citizen security and the limited integration of a gender equality perspective that would facilitate a focus on VAWG and FV, it is important to review existing citizen security initiatives and explore the scope for the increased integration of protective measures against these forms of violence.

Although recommendations have been made throughout the present report for enhancing national and regional citizen security responses to VAWG and FV, this section will more specifically address potential entry points within current regional citizen security policies and procedures. The review of existing citizen security frameworks is strategic because it presents an opportunity for regional organizations to specifically sharpen the gender equality perspective brought to these initiatives, while strengthening the protection of women, girls, and families from violence within their intimate relationships, their households and their communities.

4.1.1. CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy

At its Fifth Meeting, the Council of Ministers Responsible for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) mandated the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) to develop a **Regional Crime and Security Strategy**. The aim of the Strategy is explicitly set out: **"to significantly improve citizen security by creating a safe, just and free Community, while simultaneously improving the economic viability of the Region."**

One of the higher profiled strategy documents, it is guided by a number of important principles, including justice, **respect for territorial integrity and respect for and promotion of human rights and good governance**. It adopts a four-tiered system to identify and categorize current and projected threats to the Caribbean region:

- **Tier 1 -Immediate Significant Threats**. These are high-probability, high-impact events. They are the current and present dangers.
- **Tier 2 - Substantial Threats**. These are both li-

kely and high-impact but are not as severe as Tier 1 threats.
- **Tier 3 - Significant Potential Risks**. These are high-impact, but low-probability.
- **Tier 4 - Future Risks**. These are threats where the probability and impact cannot be assessed at this time.

The strategy places strong emphasis on law enforcement and security measures, and while recognizing the critical role of national efforts to ensure crime prevention, it underscores the value of a regional approach grounded in a strong regional security framework.

4.1.2. Caribbean Action Plan for Social Development and Crime Prevention (CSDP)

The main objective of the **Caribbean Community Action Plan for Social Development and Crime Prevention 2009-2013 (CSDP)** is to prevent and reduce levels of violence and crime in Member States. It underscores the need to integrate crime prevention considerations into all relevant social and economic policies and programmes, including those addressing employment, education, health, housing and urban planning, poverty, social marginalization and exclusion, with particular emphasis placed on communities, families, children and youth at risk. It proposes a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach, focused on:

- Groups at risk of engaging in violent behaviour and criminal activities, already exposed to high levels of violence and victimization, and groups in conflict with the law, in particular children and youth;
- Institutional responses to crime and violence from the perspective of prevention.

Despite continued reference to this framework on the CARICOM website and in other recent CARICOM documents, application of CSDP was limited to the period 2009-2013. Will it be updated or replaced and if so, what was the level of implementation achieved by the original framework?

4.1.3. Regional Framework for Action for Children (2002-2017)

The Regional Framework of Action for Children (RFAC) is the official guiding framework for the development of the infrastructure necessary to provide effective legal, educational, health and other social services to support the development of children aged

Table 12: CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy: Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal 1	Take the Profit out of Crime, Target Criminal Assets and Protect the Financial System
Strategic Goal 2	Crime Prevention - Addressing the Causes of Crime and Insecurity and Increase Public Awareness of the Key Risks
Strategic Goal 3	Establish Appropriate Legal Instruments While Ratifying Existing Agreements
Strategic Goal 4	Increase Trans-border Intelligence and Information-Sharing
Strategic Goal 5	Enhance Law Enforcement and Security Capabilities and Strengthen Regional Security Systems
Strategic Goal 6	Enhance Maritime and Airspace Awareness, Strengthen CARICOM Borders including Contiguous Land Borders
Strategic Goal 7	Strengthen the Effectiveness of Criminal Investigation Through Modern Technologies and Scientific Techniques
Strategic Goal 8	Strengthen CARICOM's Resilience to Cybercrime
Strategic Goal 9	Pursue Functional Cooperative Security Engagements to Tackle and Manage Shared Risks and Threats
Strategic Goal 10	Strengthen the Justice Sector
Strategic Goal 11	Modernize and Enhance Correctional Services and Institutions Management
Strategic Goal 12	Strengthen Mechanisms Against Human Trafficking
Strategic Goal 13	Improving Resilience to Natural and Man-Made Disasters
Strategic Goal 14	Promote Resilient Critical Infrastructure Management and Safety at Major Events

Source: CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy 2013

0-18, and to monitor the implementation of regional commitments in the areas of early childhood development, child protection, health, HIV and AIDS. These priority areas were established for the period 2002-2017 by the Council for Human and Social Development and a series of priority actions were set out for each. Of primary relevance to citizen security is the reference to actions to address the prevention of violence against children.

Although the framework's period of implementation is over, many of the challenges it seeks to address remain relevant. Setting new priority issues for the framework when its implementation is extended presents an opportunity to prioritize VAC on the CARICOM framework agenda.

4.1.4. Cyber Crime Strategy

The **CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan** (CCSCAP) was the primary result of the Caribbean Stakeholders Meeting II – Cyber Security and Cybercrime held in Saint Lucia in March 2016. CCSCAP seeks to address the cyber security vulnerabilities in participating Caribbean countries and to establish a practical, harmonized standard for cyber security practices, systems and expertise that Member States should aim for in the short and medium terms (IMPACS, 2016). The Action Plan seeks to build the required capacity and infrastructure to enable the timely detection, investigation and prosecution of cybercrime and its possible linkages to other forms of criminal activity.

To ensure the success of CCSCAP, mechanisms should be put in place to motivate countries to take action and to facilitate implementation, monitoring progress and providing strategic direction. The Action Plan highlights the important role that a Regional Cyber Committee will play in coordinating initiatives, sharing information, and exchanging lessons learned, resources and expertise.

4.1.5. UNFPA/CARICOM Integrated Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Caribbean (RAPC)

As its name would suggest, **RAPC** aims to reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies in every country in the Caribbean region. The Framework was developed with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean, with the stated goal of reducing adolescent pregnancy by 20 per cent by the year 2019.

The five expected outcomes of the Strategic Framework are: **Outcome 1:** greater access to responsive sexual and reproductive health services, information and commodities; **Outcome 2**: access to age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education; **Outcome 3**: social protection mechanisms for the prevention of all forms of violence against adolescent girls; **Outcome 4:** legal standards; **Outcome 5:** exchange of knowledge, information and good practices in addressing adolescent pregnancy.

In addition to the above-mentioned frameworks, frequently referenced in CARICOM citizen security-related strategy documents, there are other relevant initiatives deserving of special mention. These include: 1) the CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy 2) the CariSECURE Project 3) the Juvenile Justice Reform Project and 4) the UNDP ongoing regional efforts to develop Common Standards for the police and justice sectors.

4.1.6. CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy

The CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy **"Stepping it up"** is designed to accelerate the effective implementation of priority actions through a regional coordinated approach to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Although as of this writing it is still in draft form, the document provides a framework for strategic actions to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, the global development framework. It provides for

increased coordination to support Member States in reaching compliance with international conventions and commitments such as the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. The Plan reflects and concretizes CARICOM's Gender Equality Policy: *"to strengthen the capacity of CARICOM Secretariat to champion the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women while working with Member States, international and regional development partners to build economic, social, and cultural prosperity. The Policy also aims to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the work of the Community"*.

The Strategy is guided by the principles of human rights, good governance, the partnership of women and men, and systematic gender mainstreaming. Six thematic areas for action are identified, with the following strategic objectives:

01. **Equality and Social Inclusion:** Implementation of CEDAW and other human rights instruments, paying close attention to those most vulnerable or marginalized;

02. **Freedom from violence:** Increasing measures to prevent and address all forms of gender-based violence and violence against children and youth;

03. **Economic empowerment:** Expanding equitable access for women and men to decent work, economic opportunities, productive resources and trade;

04. **Good governance:** Strengthening good governance processes in the public and private sectors, including women's equal access to and participation in leadership and decision-making at all levels;

05. **Access to health services:** Taking steps to reduce risk factors related to maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy and the HIV and AIDS epidemics, particularly through increased access to sexual and reproductive health care services and information;

06. **Inclusive quality education:** Improving the quality of and access to education through human resource development and inclusive, gender-responsive learning environments.

The Plan is expected to be implemented by the CARICOM Secretariat working in conjunction with Member States, international agencies, civil society and the private sector.

4.1.7. CariSECURE Project

CariSECURE -- Strengthening Evidence-Based Decision-Making for Citizen Security in the Caribbean -- is a component of the USAID Youth Empowerment Services (YES) project supported by USAID and UNDP. The goal of CariSECURE is to improve youth crime and violence policymaking and programming in the Southern and Eastern Caribbean, using quality, comparable and reliable national citizen security information. CariSECURE is intended to improve the decision-making process in Caribbean public institutions by providing quantitative and qualitative analytic tools and supporting their incorporation into national citizen security policies and actions. The project has defined three key outputs:

- **OUTPUT 1:** Standardized and disaggregated crime data reporting within and among national authorities to foster the reliance on valid, reliable, and comparable data on citizen security.
- **OUTPUT 2:** Reliance on evidence-based analysis of crime and violence data to base national citizen security policymaking.
- **OUTPUT 3:** Targeted policymaking to reduce the likelihood of youth involvement in crime and violence, based on valid, reliable and comparable evidence at all levels.

CariSECURE is currently being implemented in eight Southern and Eastern Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, the Republic of Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Republic of Suriname. It is expected that target countries will allocate funds at the national level to support, develop and approve evidence-based decision-making policies and programmes which effectively target youth crime and violence risk factors, thereby contributing to the reduction of youth involvement in crime and violence.

Based on feedback provided in stakeholder interviews, CariSECURE is now transitioning into its second phase. It will continue to focus on data management but will also take up the specific issue of trafficking in persons.

4.1.8. Juvenile Justice Reform Project (JJRP)

The Juvenile Justice Reform Project has been implemented for over a decade in the OECS States, beginning in 2008 with Phase I and continuing in 2016 with Phase II. The beneficiary countries are six independent OECS Member States: Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The project was designed to strengthen juvenile justice systems through appropriate reform measures applied both nationally and sub-regionally so as to change the way children in conflict with the law are treated, moving from a punitive approach to a balanced rehabilitative and restorative justice model. The first phase of the programme had four objectives: (1) improving the legal and regulatory framework of the juvenile justice system; (2) building capacity for the effective administration of juvenile justice; (3) modernizing the diversion, detention and rehabilitative processes in the juvenile justice system; and (4) improving linkages with civil society and other supporting structures to strengthen the juvenile justice system.

JJRP Phase II deals specifically with youth in conflict with the law and the provision of diversion, rehabilitation and reintegration mechanisms. Accordingly, the three pillars of the second phase are:

01. Establishing an effective system of diversion for children in conflict with the law in the Eastern Caribbean by providing them with alternatives to arrest, prosecution or custodial sentences, and allowing justice officials to work with the youth, families, victims, community members and other stakeholders to address issues holistically;

02. Establishing a system of rehabilitation underpinned by evidence-based diagnosis and treatment for youth in conflict with the law in the Eastern Caribbean which will assist child offenders to grow, learn from their mistakes, accept responsibility, change behaviours and gain skills to become productive citizens;

03. Successfully reintegrating children in conflict with the law into society (OECS, n.d.).

Although the project is nearly completed, its scope and duration have transformed the sub-region's understanding and implementation of juvenile justice. It has created a firm basis for continued reform of the way in which justice systems in the OECS hand-

le young offenders, and in particular, it underpins the enactment of new child justice legislation in five of the six Member States. The new legislative framework is progressive and emphasizes the principle that imprisoning children who commit offences should only be used as a last resort.

4.1.9. The Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme in the Caribbean: Revising the Common Standards for Police and Justice Regional Institutions to Integrate Gender, VAWG and FV

This UNDP activity focuses specifically on supporting the revision of the Common Standards for Police and Justice regional institutions so that gender, GBV minimum standards and guiding principles regarding VAWG and FV are integrated in their procedures. The scope of work is as follows:

- Providing an analysis of current justice and policing frameworks at the regional level and their connection with national-level police and justice institutions;
- Identifying gaps in the coordination mechanisms between justice and policing departments regarding the processes used in VAWG and FV cases;
- Identifying training needs for the justice and police sectors to support VAWG and FV services;
- Providing an overview of existing projects or initiatives supporting justice and police sectors in their work related to VAWG and FV;
- Providing a suggested minimum standard of services and assistance to victims/survivors of VAWG and FV within the justice and police sectors as well as referral mechanisms to other services;
- Using and/or adapting the Essential Services Package, the GBV Minimum Standards and the Handbook on gender-responsive police services when developing standards;
- Identifying practical methods that will improve documentation, reporting, transmission and data analysis systems while ensuring that victims/survivors' data and identities are protected.

The activity was commissioned by UNDP under the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme, and as part of that initiative, is also intended to be applied at the regional level. Moreover, because it is closely linked to the present report, there is a certain deliberate overlap in the gender equality and citizen security objectives of both activities. The two activi-

ties are designed to complement and support each other, especially at the implementation stage. The development of a common standards framework is therefore an excellent entry point for effective delivery of the recommendations made here.

4.2. Citizen Security Initiatives and the Scope for Increased Integration of a Gender Equality Perspective

As Caribbean regional organizations chart their courses forward on the social and human development of their Member States, it is vital that they pay due attention to the safety and security of all their citizens, including women and children. The region's citizen security mandate dictates that the traditional focus on drug, gun and gang-related crime be broadened to incorporate a gender equality perspective. Such a perspective should enable a more comprehensive analysis of violence against women and family violence, ensuring that these experiences of crime and violence are fully recognized and considered as threats to citizen security.

In addition to the recommendations that have already been made above concerning the necessity of paying increased attention to gender equality, VAWG and FV, the following chart specifically plots potential entry points in current citizen security initiatives and makes recommendations on that basis:

Table 13: Regional Citizen Security Frameworks and Initiatives: Scope for the Increased Integration of a Gender Equality Perspective

Citizen Security Initiative	Relevance to VAWG and FV	Scope for the Increased Integration of a Gender Equality Perspective	Recommendations
CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy	The overarching framework for addressing crime and security strategies, it necessarily includes VAWG and FV.	• The Strategy is almost silent on the issue of gender equality and makes little reference to the issue of VAWG or FV, except for a minor reference to the implications of human trafficking on women and girls.	• Review and revise the Strategy to ensure its relevance to gender equality, including in the framing and development of its prevention focus and its 14 Strategic Goals. • Specifically ensure adequate, appropriate reference to sexual offences, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and other manifestations of gender-based violence that affect women and girls. • Ensure appropriate categorization of VAWG and FV within the 4-tier system currently applied in the Strategy, making sure that the gravity and extent of these forms of violence are adequately reflected.
Caribbean Action Plan for Social Development and Crime Prevention (CSDP)	The Plan's emphasis on prevention and its integration into social and economic policies that address poverty and social marginalization is a suitable context within which to address VAWG and FV.	• The Plan's focus on prevention is ideal for application to VAWG and FV and creates an opportunity to meaningfully address and deconstruct deeply rooted inequalities and social norms that perpetuate male dominance and enable tolerance for violence against women and girls.	• Given the Action Plan's time-limited implementation period, ensure that its objectives are extended and are still actively implemented. • The time-limited nature of the Plan provides the opportunity to review, update and improve it so that it specifically addresses VAWG in detailed and explicit terms.

Regional Framework for Action for Children (2002-2017)	This Framework is relevant to the child rights agenda, including the protection of girls and boys from violence.	• Developed almost 20 years ago, the original Framework identified priority areas for the protection of children's rights. There is scope for revising its priorities to take into account current gaps and challenges.	• Given the Regional Framework's time-limited implementation period, ensure that its objectives are extended and are still actively implemented. Like the CSDP above, the time-limited nature of the Framework provides the opportunity to review and revise it so as to reflect current priority actions for the protection of children's rights. • Ensure that the review of the Framework is grounded on the urgent need to address VAC as a citizen security issue, including the high levels of sexual violence and exploitation that disproportionately affect the security and well-being of girls. • Move towards finalization of the Cybercrime Strategy, ensuring that it reflects the implications of these crimes for women, girls and their families. • Incorporate specific mention of the types of cyber-based sex crimes, including those mentioned in this report, such as grooming.
CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy	The Strategy directly addresses issues of gender equality and VAWG.	• As of this writing, the Strategy is still in draft form. As such, it is well positioned to fully incorporate the relevant findings of this Situation Analysis concerning citizen security, VAWG and FV. • The Strategy framework is reportedly scheduled for country level consultations in late 2023. This will provide an entry point for the specific inclusion of a gender equality perspective that gives sufficient focus to VAWG and FV.	• Finalize the CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy as soon as possible. • Strengthen the connection between the Gender Equality Strategy and regional citizen security through cross-referencing existing citizen security frameworks. Give greater emphasis to access to justice issues as a mechanism for achieving gender equality, paying particular attention to the police and justice citizen security sectors. • Review the Strategy with a view to promoting the gender mainstreaming strategies identified in this analysis, including such well-established approaches as gender-responsive budgeting.

CariSECU-RE Project	Although the focus of the CariSECURE Project is on youth, its primary objective is to strengthen evidence-based decision-making for citizen security in the Caribbean. That objective is consistent with the agenda to address VAWG and FV.	• The Project focus on evidence-based decision-making creates an entry point for strengthening data collection and management relevant to both VAWG and VAC.	• Use the start of the second phase of the CariSECURE Project to review the project goals and increase focus on the disaggregation of data relevant to VAWG and VAC. • There is a specific focus on trafficking in persons in the second phase of the Project. This is an obvious entry point for the inclusion of VAWG and should be broadened so as to take on board as many related issues as possible. • Phase 2 of the Project is also designed to adopt a community-based approach and work closely with NGOs and community-based organizations. This is compatible with a gender equality perspective addressing VAWG and FV. • Explore the scope for creating synergies and partnerships with existing projects in the region focused on VAWG and data collection, with a view to addressing the unique data-collection challenges that compromise evidence-based decision-making relevant to domestic violence and other forms of VAWG. • Build on the momentum of the JJRP project that focused on young offenders within the OECS sub-region and explore the scope for expanding and integrating its objectives into existing regional citizen security initiatives. • Strengthen the connection between child justice and child protection issues, recognizing that the two issues are inextricably linked and influence the vulnerability of children. Encourage current citizen security initiatives with a child justice focus to deepen their analysis of the intersection of these two issues, recognizing that this will strengthen a gender equality approach.

			• Given that the JJRP project lacks a gender equality perspective, ensure that any ongoing or future initiatives focusing on young offenders, including CariSECURE, give greater attention to the gender disparities that affect young people's access to justice. This is an issue that should be thoroughly discussed in the section of the JJRP exit project reports that identify project gaps.
The Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme: Revision of Common Standards for Police and Justice Regional Institutions to Integrate Gender, VAWG and FV	This ongoing UNDP programme is directly related to citizen security, VAWG and FV.	• This is an ongoing programme closely related to the present analysis. Both are regional Spotlight Initiatives overseen by UNDP and should benefit from cross-referencing recommendations that can be reflected within the scope of each of the activities. • The regionally developed Common Standards are an excellent entry point for several of the recommendations that have emerged from the present citizen security analysis and should be fully exploited to achieve optimum results in addressing police and justice responses to VAWG.	• Review the draft Common Standards for the Police and Justice Sectors to ensure that they are based on the 11 essential actions identified in the ESP Package. • With respect to the police sector, ensure that the specific issues addressed in the thematic analysis in the present analysis are adequately covered in the Common Standards, including but not limited to: a. Establishing specialized police units that are sufficiently resourced to carry out their mandate to respond to VAWG and FV; b. Building the capacities of the police to cover the range of skill sets and topics addressed in the present analysis; c. Implementing capacity-building workshops that draw on the existing training modules developed by UN Women Caribbean Office; d. Emphasizing the importance of victim rights policies and other protocols that support the Common Standards, recognizing that there are existing frameworks that serve as regional good practice; e. Addressing the issues that underlie undue delays at the reporting and investigation stages of police responses; f. Emphasizing the importance of working in a collaborative, coordinated way with other essential sectors, including health and social services.

- With respect to the justice sector, ensure that the specific issues addressed in the thematic analysis of the present analysis are adequately covered in the Common Standards, including but not limited to:

  g. Establishing specialized Prosecution Units designed to handle vulnerable witnesses and ensure the availability of the best quality evidence for presentation in court.

  h. In the absence of specialized Prosecution Units, assigning designated prosecutors to handle all cases involving vulnerable witnesses, especially domestic violence, sex offences, child abuse and other forms of VAWG and FV. Assigning designated prosecutors will minimize prosecutor rotation and facilitate optimal prosecution of these cases.

  i. Overseeing police prosecution by the DPP Office in those jurisdictions where police prosecution is still practised. This should ensure the quality of the prosecution of cases in lower-level Magistrates' Courts, as well as better coordination of their subsequent prosecution in High Courts.

  j. Building the capacities of prosecutors should be institutionalized and should draw on existing training modules specifically designed for the Caribbean by UN Women Caribbean Office.

  k. Establishing specialized Courts to handle sex offences, drawing on established good practices, such as the sex offence courts in Guyana and Antigua.

  l. Building the capacities of judicial officers is critical and should be based on the training tool developed by UN Women Caribbean Office and piloted by the Judicial Education Institutes in Trinidad and Tobago and in Jamaica.

- The Common Standards also serve as an excellent entry point to address the issue of coordination between the police and justice sectors, as well as to address communication between the police and justice sectors and the other Essential Services Sectors such as health and social services. A specific section on coordination within the Common Standards is a possible approach for ensuring that this challenge is addressed in a deliberate and systematic way.

Source: Self-created, UNDP RBLAC.

Citizen Security Initiatives in Guyana

In Guyana, consultations with stakeholders specifically pointed to a number of citizen security initiatives concerning gender-based violence at the national level.
During their interviews, stakeholders in Guyana highlighted the following programmes:

01. GBV Awareness-raising Campaigns

The MHSSS carries out a large number of awareness-raising campaigns across the country in collaboration with other departments.

02. Community Advocates Network Programme

The MHSSS has launched an initiative in which volunteers from across the country are trained to advocate for ending GBV in their communities. They are trained to identify and report abuse and to offer support by referring individuals to the services offered by the MHSSS via the GBV hotline. This programme was launched in September 2022 and to date, over 260 persons have been trained.

03. Community Men and Women's Groups

Through the Gender Affairs Bureau, the MHSSS has created men and women's community groups across the country. These groups hold regular meetings and trainings with the staff in areas such as gender norms, conflict resolution, anger management, gender-based violence, sexual abuse and domestic violence. They act as support groups for people in the communities and promote healthy gender practices.

04. Parental Training

In 2022, an initiative was launched aimed at training parents in high-risk communities on positive parenting skills and conflict resolution techniques.

05. Counter Trafficking in Persons Campaigns

In 2022, the C-TIP Unit of the MHSSS assisted over 200 women who are victims of human trafficking and many more migrant families who have been exploited in other forms. This Unit also does communi-

ty awareness campaigns aimed at raising awareness of trafficking in persons and the types of trafficking and how to report. There is a hotline number in both English and Spanish that persons can make reports of suspected victims.

06. GBV and Cybercrime

The MHSSS has launched its Young Influencers Programme aimed at raising awareness of several issues affecting young people including GBV. This programme utilizes a group of popular young volunteers who sensitize young people via social media on key issues affecting this vulnerable group.

Interviews undertaken with staff of the judiciary of Guyana also highlighted that significant work has been undertaken in legislative reform in the area of justice for children. In 2018, the Government of Guyana, passed a new Juvenile Justice Act. The new legislation increases the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14, places greater emphasis on diversionary measures and outlaws the use of corporal punishment in detention.

Recent years have also seen the establishment of specialized courts in Guyana, including a court that focuses on sexual offences and another that deals with juvenile justice. One of the key aims of these courts is to ensure that victims feel more comfortable when testifying The establishment of these new specialized courts complements the Restorative Justice Bill, enacted in Guyana in 2022, which seeks to ensure that the criminal justice system is participatory and that perpetrators, victims and members of the community are all included in a way that facilitates reparation in communities affected by crime.

Chapter 5:

Special Considerations: Pandemics and National Disasters

5.1. Increased Vulnerability of Women

This section of the present situation analysis examines citizen security and its gendered impacts on women and girls in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters in the Caribbean region. The inclusion of natural disasters and climate change is critical here, given the regional context, and is directly related to citizen security. In the aftermath of a natural disaster, the state's ability to ensure citizen security weakens and its inability to respond adequately reinforces the impacts of systemic inequities for those living on the margins of economic, political, social and physical security. Women and girls in the region, although they attain higher levels of education than boys, still experience lower participation in the labour market, higher income vulnerability and occupy fewer positions of power than do men and boys, which negatively impacts human development and economic growth in the region (Giles Álvarez and Khadan, 2020, p.3). It is therefore important that any discussion of citizen security in the region integrate a gender analysis that clarifies the differential experiences of men and women.

The COVID-19 global pandemic was not only a health crisis, but also an economic and social one. It is important to note that the instances of violence against women and girls during the pandemic were not necessarily in response to the pandemic itself, but rather a continuation of pre-existing abusive gender, cultural and social norms. Moreover, prior to the pandemic, Caribbean countries already had a multitude of institutional, national and regional emergencies and realities to deal with, thus limiting their capacity to adequately respond to the challenges of COVID-19.

The issue of access to vaccines has itself been subjected to a gender analysis. It has been argued that to adequately and responsibly respond to the pandemic, unfettered, equal and non-discriminatory global access to "*COVID-19 vaccines, medicines, and other products, and the removal of policy and institutional barriers that block access and exacerbate the adverse gender impacts of the pandemic*" are needed (Feminists for a People's Vaccine, 2021).

As governments struggled to address COVID-19, the global health pandemic brought to light the region's limited capacity to provide adequate funding and resources to public health services and infrastructure. Prior to the pandemic, many English-speaking Caribbean countries were experiencing low rates

The Implications of COVID-19: A Powerful Case for Engendering Citizen Security

The COVID-19 pandemic particularly impacted the Caribbean region in the following ways:

- The region's pre-existing under-resourced and under-funded health systems were unable to respond effectively, disproportionately impacting those with underlying and pre-existing health issues;
- Ongoing deterioration of occupational health and safety concerns for essential workers;
- Initially limited access to life-saving vaccines due to inequities in global vaccine research, production and distribution;
- Ongoing scepticism and lack of trust in the vaccines and in the recommendations made by global, regional and national health authorities;
- Precarious economic security, loss of jobs, working hours and livelihoods;
- Increased demands on unpaid household and care work, specifically impacting the lives of women, girls and the elderly.

of economic growth while saddled with high public debt, therefore leaving very little fiscal policy space (ECLAC, 2020, p. 8). A main contributor to high public debt is the constant need to seek out financing for repairs to infrastructure in the wake of natural disasters, financing that is usually accompanied by high interest payments that subsequently impact public spending (ECLAC, 2020). When governments are faced with the dilemma of either paying back the public debt or investing in much-needed public services such as health care, social services, infrastructure development and maintenance and education, the citizens who will bear the brunt of the consequences are usually those already experiencing systemic inequalities.

The IMF estimates that in 2020, economic activity fell by 9.9% in the Caribbean region as compared to

6.8% in Latin America (Cecilia Acevedo et al., 2021, p. 3). One of the main drivers of economic activity in the Caribbean region is tourism, a sector that accounts for more than 50% of employment in most countries (ECLAC, 2020, p. 14). Like the health care sector, women make up the majority of workers in the tourism sector although they tend to occupy the lower-wage and lower-level jobs (Mulder, 2020, p. 9). Of the 20 tourism-dependent countries in the world, 13 are Caribbean countries that almost completely rely on visitors from Canada, the United States and Europe (Mulder, 2020, p. 15). Because many, if not all, Spotlight Initiative countries rely on tourism, the near-zero number of arrivals, and the massive hotel and accommodation cancellations due to the pandemic significantly impacted the GDP for these countries. In Jamaica, international tourist arrivals dropped by almost 70% in 2020 (Mulder, 2020 p. 15). The pandemic severely affected economic sectors employing a greater concentration of women, resulting in the loss of jobs and working hours. In other areas, jobs disappeared (ILO, 2021).

The health care sector also experienced significant pressure during the pandemic, resulting in deteriorating conditions for workers. This is a sector where women make up the majority of the workforce (ECLAC, 2020, p. 10) and the increased demands placed on the sector saw health care workers experiencing long workdays with little to no time to rest, eat or even to use the bathroom. These factors increased their vulnerability to the virus, not only due to the nature of their jobs but also to the strain their work placed on their bodies and immune systems. Further aggravating the situation was the fact that some of the women in the health care sector also had to continue caring for their dependents at home and take on most of the household labour, further increasing their workload and stress levels (ECLAC, 2020, p. 10).

The economic impacts of the pandemic on Caribbean societies will have ongoing and damaging impacts on the fight against poverty in the region. The shift from solely taking monetary factors into account to including the realities of people's lives and the many factors that impact them is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 1. This shift is part of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which has assessed and compared acute multidimensional poverty in 100 countries since 2010. It does so by examining every individual's deprivations across ten indicators, evenly distributed across three dimensions: health, standard of living, and education. According to the MPI, the pandemic will substantially jeopardize pro-

gress in reducing multidimensional poverty primarily across two indicators: nutrition and children's school attendance. Due to the peak in school closures caused by lockdowns, in April 2020 over 91% of the world's learners were out of school. The World Food Programme estimated that due to disruptions in livelihoods and the global food chain supply, the number of people experiencing food insecurity in 55 countries had increased by approximately 130 million.

> **"**
> **In Haiti, which has the highest percentage of people who are multidimensionally poor and deprived in years of schooling in Latin American and the Caribbean (22.8%), rural women face more disadvantage than their male counterparts, and the differences by sex are higher (by about 2 years)**
>
> (2020 Multidimensional Poverty Index Report)

As women tend to have higher levels of poverty as compared to men, investing in gender equality can serve not only as a smart economic decision but also as a pivotal step in reducing the additional poverty aggravated by the pandemic (Azcona et al., 2020, p. 8).

Attempts by governments to respond to the pandemic did not always take into account the intersecting and compounding needs and lived realities of women and girls. The pandemic reminded us of the fallacy of neutrality as related to developing and implementing the various policies and measures needed to curb the spread of the virus, such as confinement measures.

Given the increased use of virtual learning modes and many people's higher online presence during the pandemic lockdowns, technology served both as a vehicle for increased access to information, education, work and some services, but also turned a means of connecting with others into a potential ve-

hicle for cyber violence and harassment (Azcona et al., 2020, p. 12).

Furthermore, households became the place where everything was being done, including caring for and educating children, taking care of dependents, socialization, productive labour and in some cases, working from home . This further intensified the existing care crisis, already disproportionately shouldered by women. (Azcona et al., 2020, p. 10).

5.2. COVID 19 and Its Direct Implications for VAWG

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the global community coined the phrase 'shadow pandemic' to describe the increased domestic violence and VAWG that accompanied the virus outbreak. Enormous stress, lockdowns, lack of access to personal support networks and restrictions on movement created a situation ripe for domestic violence, as perpetrators and victims were forced to stay together inside their homes for extended periods. Prevalence surveys had already noted that pre-COVID-19 levels of domestic and gender-based violence were high, and according to reports, incidence increased significantly during the pandemic.

Among the factors contributing to the increase in VAWG:

- The shutdowns of public services during the first year of the pandemic directly affected access to services and to personnel trained in providing support related to violence against women and girls.

- Confinement measures during the periods of lockdown made it challenging for women who experienced intimate partner violence and domestic violence in the home to signal distress or to access support systems. Not only did the proximity to the abuser make it challenging during the pandemic but it also meant there were fewer avenues for support available. The longer the confinement and co-habitation, the higher the risk of experiencing violence (Inter-American Commission of Women, n.d., p. 10).

- Confinement had specific impacts on girls, who were exposed to increased sexual violence and abuse, added to which was the risk of exclusion and dropping out of school during and after the pandemic (Inter-American Commission of Women, n.d., p. 10).

- Some governments were put in the position of having to decide which services would remain

Increases in Reports of VAWG

A Gender Analysis of the Impact of COVID 19 on Women and Men in the 12 Caribbean Countries recorded the following statistics concerning reports of VAWG:

- Barbados observed a 38% increase in reports of domestic violence during the lockdown, many of which were reports of intimate partner violence.

- The National Domestic Hotline in Trinidad and Tobago saw a 119% increase in call volume for the period of January to October 2020. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service observed a 78% year-on-year increase in domestic violence reports between March and August 2020. The months of May, June and July 2020 saw upsurges of 113%, 149% and 132% respectively in Trinidad and Tobago.

- Anguilla observed equally serious trends. Monthly data available for the first two quarters of 2020 showed a 125% increase in reports of domestic disputes in March 2020, while April 2020 saw an 88% upsurge.

- At the regional level, the IDB found that all countries surveyed showed an increase above 10% in the number of respondents experiencing domestic violence since the pandemic, with a 23% rise in Suriname.

open and which were to close, categorizing some services as essential and others as not. The situation of individuals experiencing gender-based violence became very difficult as public services for the care, prevention and punishment of violence were not always considered as essential services (Inter-American Commission of Women, 2020, p. 4-5).

- The increased pressures put on services such as shelters and crisis hotlines, already under-resourced and under-funded, added to the challenges faced both by those working in these settings and those fleeing violence at home and outside. Jamaica responded to this challenge and opened the first national shelters for women victims of gender-based violence and their children (ECLAC, 2021, P. 8).

Responding to COVID 19: Implications for Reform

Well-designed, strategic responses at both the national and regional levels are required to address the gender inequalities triggered by COVID 19 and other pandemics. These include, but are not limited to:

- Working with relevant institutions to assess data collected on the gendered impacts of the pandemic and to establish robust tools to collect sex-disaggregated data;
- Increasing the number, funding and longevity of social assistance programmes and community spaces such as shelters, with a specific focus on female-headed households so as to better respond to the realities of their compromised financial resiliency;
- Reviewing pandemic measures and responses to assess and account for the gendered impacts in the workplace;
- Reviewing social and economic policies and measures to ensure that they are trauma-based and survivor-centric;
- Encouraging cross-sectoral awareness and education on the role and impact of technology and violence against women and girls;
- Using a gender impact assessment, reviewing the sectors that have been hardest hit by the pandemic and allocating resources and sustainable funding to help alleviate the disproportionate impacts on women, girls and other vulnerable groups;
- Increasing awareness campaigns on the COVID-19 virus and ensuring affordable and easily accessible information and vaccine acquisition;
- Supporting the capacity development of first responders to respond appropriately to calls concerning incidents of violence against women and girls and ensuring they have the training and knowledge necessary concerning referrals and reporting mechanisms;
- Supporting and strengthening women's rights and human rights organizations as well as groups working directly with survivors and individuals experiencing violence and harm, to assume leadership roles and participate in decision-making.

- There was evidence that first responders to violence against women, such as police services, also had to divert their time and attention to enforcing pandemic measures, including states of emergency (UN Women and IISD, 2021).

5.3. National Disasters: A Significant Threat to the Security of Women and Girls

The Caribbean region is poised to experience more severe and more unpredictable natural disasters as a result of the Earth's increased warming. This will ultimately lead to the ongoing destruction of ecosystems, livelihoods and infrastructure (UN Women and IISD, 2021, p. 3). It is therefore critical that citizen security be examined within the context of climate change as it will directly impact a state's ability to secure the lives and well-being of its citizens in addition to influencing the community structures that help ensure human security.

Prior to experiencing natural disasters related to climate change, Caribbean countries were already grappling with the problem of how to stretch limited funds and resources to adequately address precarious public and essential services. Communities witnessed disparities along gendered, racialized and ableist lines that were exacerbated in the event of a crisis.

A number of natural disasters occurred in the years before the pandemic that significantly impeded the ability of Caribbean nations to address gender disparities and pre-existing gaps in public services. In **Grenada, which experienced Hurricane Ivan in 2004**, women, who already shouldered a disproportionate share of unpaid labour and caregiving responsibilities in Grenadian society, faced increased burdens as they continued to care for children and the elderly. (ECLAC, 2005, p.8). A study carried out five years before Hurricane Ivan struck the island found that almost 30% of the Grenadian population was defined

as poor and 10.3% could be classified as indigent. A hurricane, much less a category 3 hurricane, would have left one-third of the population's families with severe losses (ECLAC, 2005 p.7). It was not surprising then that a Gender Impact Assessment of Hurricane Ivan found that women and their dependent children were particularly vulnerable during the emergency, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction phases in ways that were less apparent prior to the disaster (ECLAC, 2005, p.8).

Although Grenadian women had enjoyed a level of independence and the capacity to support their households despite limited economic and institutional supports, the Gender Impact Assessment found that due to the disaster, to make ends meet women felt forced to engage in relationships that solidified gender power imbalances (ECLAC, 2005, p.8). This had profound impacts on women and their families as at the time, Grenada had the highest proportion of households headed by women in the OECS, at 48% (ECLAC, 2005, p.8). Other factors that left women in precarious situations included their limited ability to move from one productive sector to another due to restricted skill sets, disproportionate responsibility for care work, compromised resilience and reduced capacity to rebound from challenging situations due to disintegrated social networks and lack of capital. Overall, increased burdens and responsibilities, coupled with the limited capacity to earn an income, made the situation even more difficult for women (ECLAC, 2005, p. 9).

In **Dominica, after the island was devastated by Category 5 Hurricane Maria in 2017**, the shelters established were largely filled by women, their children and the elderly (Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, 2017, p. 11). As women represented 39% of the heads of households in Dominica, this meant that women and their dependents experienced a greater share of economic and social insecurity. It was found that elderly women were doing most of the care work in the shelters in addition to bearing a greater burden of care (Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, 2017, p. 11). In instances of natural disasters, civilians would normally turn to the State for support and resources, but in the case in Grenada, the pre-existing weaknesses in the governance system were made worse during and after the disaster (ECLAC, 2005). Thirteen years later, when Hurricane Maria made landfall in Dominica, the government reported total damages of EC$2.51 billion (US$931 million) and losses of EC$1.03 billion (US$382 million), amounting to 226% of the 2016

gross domestic product (Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, 2017, p. 1).

More recently, in **St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the volcanic eruption of La Soufrière** on 9 April 2021 left thousands of people without homes or shelter and significantly impacted their ability to access critical medication, personal protective equipment, food and other vital necessities. Over 20,000 people in the volcano red zone were affected and almost 4,000 were left without accommodation (PAHO, n.d.). Occurring as it did during a global health pandemic, the eruption left people in very difficult situations as they not only had to worry about staying out of the path of the volcano, but also had to keep themselves and their communities safe from contracting the virus. As of 6 April 2021, two days prior to the eruption, only 11,787 vaccines had been administered on the island, with 129 active cases reported (Ferdinand, 2021). As of November 2021, the country had seen the number of COVID-19 cases increase to 640 (PAHO/WHO, 2021, p. 1). Having to adequately address the serious, changing needs of those impacted by a natural disaster while facing a global health pandemic strained the already limited public services and the capacity of local governments to respond.

The disproportionate impact of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls is fuelled both by their disparate access to supports and resources and by systemic decision-making that pays scant regard to gender justice. Not only is it important to be able to respond to natural disasters and health crises using a gender analysis and approach, but it is equally important to put in place structures, policies and practices that take into account differentiated gender experiences and needs before a disaster occurs. In the absence of clear organizational commitments and practices, the integration of gender in disaster planning and management will be largely dependent on efforts made by individuals. This approach is not only limited in scope, but potentially compromises the more systemic and sustained objectives of gender equality.

The need for a more systemic, institutionalized appreciation of gender equality in Caribbean-based climate change adaptation and disaster reduction was underscored in an analytical study of the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and practices that was conducted in nine Caribbean countries (UN Women and IISD, 2021). The study was carried out by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) on behalf of UN Women under the EnGENDER

Project with a view to gaining a better understanding of the impact of gender-related biases and perceptions and how they influence coordination mechanisms for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The study focused on representatives of the coordinating Ministries for climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR), institutions responsible for gender equality, and sector Ministries involved in implementing climate and DRR actions. The following key findings should be noted:

- **Individual knowledge:** Respondents agreed that there is a gender dimension to vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, yet there remained some confusion around the key concepts underpinning gender justice, such as equality and equity. Furthermore, despite accepting that gender should be prioritized in their work, respondents shared that they lacked knowledge of what that meant in fact.

- **Attitudes and behaviour:** Certain results in response to questions concerning attitudes demonstrated a clear gender-based bias. For example, one-third of respondents do not think that women and men have the same rights.

- **Internally-focused institutional practices:** The study showed that there are gaps in the mechanisms in place to integrate gender properly in the very institutions tasked with responding to climate change adaptation: less than half of respondents indicated that their institution has a gender mainstream mandate (UN Women and IISD, 2021 p. 7).

- Although the presence of both genders also needs to be accompanied by a political commitment to gender equity, respondents indicated that there appears to be a lack of **gender balance** within their institutions: nearly half felt there is no gender balance and two-thirds stated that there is not a balance between men and women when it comes to senior positions.

- Although there was some indication of individual **commitment to gender equity**, it was not always clear that an institutional commitment exists and there are gaps in institutions adopting and implementing gender-specific mandates and action plans (UN Women and IISD, 2021 p. 12).

5.4. Natural Disasters and Their Direct Implications for VAWG

Natural disasters in the Caribbean are closely connected to an increased risk of gender-based violence. Violence is particularly common in shelters due to the lack of protection for women and girls. For instance, after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, cases of sexual assault reached a peak of 10,813 within six weeks of the disaster (World Bank, 2021). Even within family households, women are exposed to increased domestic violence after a disaster for many of the same reasons already addressed for pandemics. It is important to note four key points:

01. Responding to natural disasters with pre-existing limited economic bandwidth will mean either a reduction in, or no funding at all directed to critical services aimed at supporting individuals fleeing gender-based violence, as funding will be largely directed to infrastructure development and emergency aid.

02. Disruptions to the infrastructure and social services that respond to violence against women and girls leave survivors in precarious positions. This is aggravated when there is a contraction in funding and resources to these services, often already underfunded, in order to fund disaster recovery.

03. There is a clear connection between poor economic conditions and violence against women and girls, in which they experience sexual abuse and exploitation in exchange for food, shelter and even security due to their limited economic access and opportunities.

04. The demands placed on women and girls to care for the sick, the elderly and children leave them more vulnerable to the risks caused by climate change and natural disasters, reducing their capacity for resilience.

The failure to adequately account for the gendered impact of natural disasters and pandemics on women and girls may exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and potentially create new ones, thus worsening the experiences for women and girls who are already exposed to intersecting forms of violence, discrimination and oppression. Furthermore, in the aftermath of a natural disaster, the state's ability to ensure citizen security weakens. This lessened ability to respond reinforces the impacts of systemic inequities

for those living on the margins of economic, political, social and physical security.

Within the framework of the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme, UNDP partnered with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to integrate gender, VAWG and FV considerations in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRR/M) in the Caribbean. Guidelines for the integration of VAWG and FV in DRR/M in the Caribbean were developed and will be launched officially in 2023. These guidelines are expected to support CDEMA's Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and promote awareness of the definitions, tools, databases, key publications and reports available on GBV in the Caribbean. One of the key elements of the Guidelines are practical "Checklists" that stakeholders working in DRR/M can use to ensure the integration of VAWG and FV in their project cycles. Information in this section is based on interviews with UNDP staff.

APPENDIX A:
LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Sherwin Toyne	CARICOM CONSLE
Anne- Marie Williams	CARICOM Gender and Development Unit
Reyanna Sanker Miguel Trim	CariSECURE
Rommel St. Hill	UNDP Consultant
Heather Stewart Candice Wallace	UNICEF Caribbean Office
Isiuwa Iyahen	UN Women Caribbean MCO
Jamie Saunders	Gender Bureau (Antigua)
Sabrina Dougdeen-Jaglal	Assistant DPP (Trinidad)
Renee Adimoolah	Ministry of National Security (Trinidad)
Shakey Cornwall	Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic (Grenada)
Stacey Anne Whittingham	Victim Support Unit (Jamaica)
Christine Johnson Spence	Assistant DPP (Jamaica)
Rosalee Gage–Grey Eric Vassel	Child Protection and Family Services (Jamaica)
Teshana Lake	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Guyana)
Patricia Gittens	UNICEF (Guyana)
Anne Baksh	Judiciary of Guyana
Arianna Beharry	UNFPA Guyana

APPENDIX B:
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	SCOPE OF INQUIRY
Regional Citizen Security Organizations	• Role in shaping region's citizen security agenda and the challenges encountered • Effectiveness at gender-inclusivity in policies and procedures • Scope for institutional strengthening • Mechanisms for influencing citizen security agenda at the national level and challenges in doing so • Challenges collecting data • Assessment of their own progress on inclusion of gender equality issues, particularly in relation to VAWG and FV • Assessment of their own appreciation of entry points for ensuring gender mainstreaming in work, policies and procedures • Female representation at committee and organizational levels • Access to training and capacity-building on gender-related issues
Law Enforcement Sector	• Challenges responding to VAWG and FV • Existence of specialized police units to respond to VAWG • Access to relevant training and capacity-building • Female representation on national police forces and representation at higher ranks • Data collection on VAWG and FV, identifying data-collection challenges • Identification of law enforcement issues specific to young people, including to girls • Knowledge of regional citizen security frameworks and networking with regional organizations to achieve regional and national citizen security objectives
Justice Sector	• Challenges responding to VAWG and FV • Legislative and policy reform to improve state responses to VAWG and FV • Specialization in the prosecution and judicial treatment of VAWG • Access to relevant training and capacity-building • Data collection on VAWG and FV, identifying challenges collecting data • Existence and compliance with existing policy, protocols and SOPs • Identification of law enforcement issues specific to young people, including to girls

National Women's Mechanisms	• Reasoned appreciation of gender as an important consideration for citizen security and identification of gender issues that they consider important to citizen security • Ability to ground national and regional level citizen security priorities • Challenges meeting their mandate • Data collection on VAWG and FV • Perception of law enforcement and justice responses to VAWG • Role in prevention of VAWG and FV and challenges in performing that role • Knowledge and awareness of regional citizen security frameworks
Child Protection Sector	• Factors that place children most at risk of harm • Effectiveness of current State responses to the protection of children from harm • Exploration of issues specific to girls
Civil Society Organizations	• Assessment of State actions in responding to VAWG and FV, and their appreciation of areas of weakness • Role of civil society in strengthening their citizen security mandate, particularly in responding to VAWG and FV

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The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between European Union and United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Lauched with a seed funding commitment of €500 million from the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative represents an unprecedented global effort to invest in gender equality as a precondition and driver for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. As a demonstrating that a significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in gender equality and ending violence can make a transformative difference in the lives of woman and girls.

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