



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

A Study of Women, Politics,  
Parliaments and Equality  
in the CARICOM Countries



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# UNITED NATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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# Table Of Contents

- FOREWORD .....8**
- INTRODUCTION .....9**
- Chapter 1: Women’s Political Participation in Brief .....10**
- Chapter 2: Human Development and Gender Inequality .....16**
  - Economic Development..... 16
  - Gender Inequality..... 18
- Chapter 3: Women’s Access to Legislative, Executive and Judiciary Branches.....23**
  - Women and Legislative Power ..... 24
  - Affirmative Action and Quota Systems in the CARICOM..... 32
  - Women and Executive Power ..... 35
  - Women and the Judiciary ..... 39
  - Women at the Sub-National Level ..... 42
  - Women and Tribal Governance Systems in CARICOM..... 47
- Chapter 4: Women, Power and Influence to Promote Gender Equality.....50**
  - There are Relatively Few Women in Political Decision-making ..... 50
    - Reasons Women are Underrepresented ..... 51*
  - Powerful Women in the Caribbean Political Arena..... 53
  - Institutional Impediments Within Political Parties in CARICOM Countries..... 54
    - Low presence of women in leadership positions in political parties ..... 55*
    - Women’s leadership in political parties ..... 58*
    - Gender equality and political party agendas ..... 60*
  - Prioritization of Gender Issues in Parliaments ..... 61
    - Women in parliamentary committees ..... 62*
    - Building capacity for promoting gender equality ..... 63*
    - Gender Responsive Budgeting ..... 66*
  - Accountability for Gender Equality ..... 66
  - Gender Equality Advances on Legislation: A Review of Topics ..... 68
  - Public Policies on Gender Equality and the Role of the Gender Bureaus ..... 72
    - Gender Bureau Budgets..... 74*
  - Women as Agents of Change for Gender Equality ..... 75
    - Political women and the promotion of women’s issues ..... 75*
    - Women’s movements ..... 76*
  - Networks and Caucuses: Women Working Together ..... 77
    - Women’s caucuses ..... 78*
    - Women’s network associations ..... 79*

<b>Chapter 5: Main Findings and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>82</b>
Main Findings .....	82
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Appendix I: Health and Education in CARICOM Countries .....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Appendix II: Electoral Systems in CARICOM Countries.....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Appendix III: Women’s and Parliamentarian Representation and Leadership in CARICOM countries.....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Appendix IV: Women’s Sub-National Representation and Leadership in CARICOM countries.....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Appendix V: Summary of CARICOM Countries with Indigenous or Tribal Groups and their sub-national governance rights. ....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Appendix VI: Summary of Relevant Legislation in CARICOM Countries regarding Gender-Based Violence (Dec 2013) .....</b>	<b>109</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1: GDP, GDP/capita, foreign direct investment, official development aid received, and employment in CARICOM countries .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Table 2: Gender inequality index, maternal mortality rate, adolescent fertility rate, population with at least secondary education, labor force participation .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Table 3: Years of general suffrage CARICOM countries .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Table 4: Composition of national legislative bodies in the CARICOM countries, and percentages of women (as per December 2013).....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Table 5: Current woman presiding officers in CARICOM countries, and year of first-time woman presiding officer in resp. countries. ....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Table 6: List of current M/W clerks of parliament in CARICOM countries (as of December 2013)..</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Table 7: Women heads of state and government of CARICOM countries since 1980.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Table 8: Percentages of women judges in CARICOM countries 2007-2013 .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Table 9: Sub-national government systems in CARICOM countries .....</b>	<b>43</b>

<b>Table 10:</b> Percentages of women in sub-national and national legislative bodies in Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Guyana, compared with Latin America (as per December 2013).....	46
<b>Table 11:</b> Political parties in the House of Representatives of Jamaica, number and percentage of women, and number and percentage of women candidates after/in last elections (Dec 2011).....	56
<b>Table 12:</b> Political parties in the National Assembly of Guyana, and number and percentage of women after last elections (Nov 2011).....	56
<b>Table 13:</b> Political parties in the National Assembly of Suriname, and number and percentage of women after last elections (May 2010).....	57
<b>Table 14:</b> Parliamentary Committees in Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname according to the Skard and Haavio-Manilla categorization (Dec 2013) .....	62
<b>Table 15:</b> Overview of legislated maternity leave in CARICOM countries (Dec 2013) .....	71
<b>Table 16:</b> Approval year of legislation governing gender-based violence in CARICOM countries (Dec 2013).....	72

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1:</b> Gender gaps comparison in economic participation, education attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. ....	21
<b>Figure 2:</b> Overview of current number of parliamentarians and women’s representation (December 2013) .....	24
<b>Figure 3:</b> Percentages of women in national legislative bodies of CARICOM Countries compared with the Americas and global averages, 2000-2013 .....	25
<b>Figure 4:</b> Percentages of women parliamentarians with seats in the upper houses of CARICOM countries with a bicameral system 2008-2013 .....	28
<b>Figure 5:</b> Number and percentage of women in ministerial positions in CARICOM countries (as of January 2014) .....	37
<b>Figure 6:</b> Global political empowerment rank for select CARICOM countries 2006-2014 .....	50



# FOREWORD

The importance of equal participation of women in politics, and especially in decision-making positions, is not simply about equal numbers; it's about cultivating an environment that values women's perspectives, recognizes women as change-makers and leverages differences to improve democratic governance.

Gender equality is at the heart of UNDP's mandate. It's a matter of human rights, but also a driver of development progress. Unless women and girls are able to fully realize their rights in all spheres of life, human development will not be advanced (UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, 2014-2017). By empowering women as agents of change and leaders in the development processes that shape their lives, UNDP envisions a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient world.

Although many advances in women's representation have been made in Latin America in the last decade, progress in the Caribbean has moved at a slower pace. This disparity prompted the questions: what happened in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries? Where are the women?

Historically, women in the CARICOM countries have been actively involved in politics and have made important contributions to the legislative agendas in their respective countries. Nevertheless, the presence of women parliamentarians in the region lags significantly behind that of the neighbouring countries in Latin America: 14.3% compared with 25.2%, respectively.

To answer these questions, UNDP produced the report "Where are the Women? A Study of Women, Politics, Parliaments and Equality in the CARICOM Countries". The research had three main objectives: first, to obtain a more detailed picture of the situation regarding women's political participation in the CARICOM countries; second, to identify contextual factors and analyse how they affect the presence of Caribbean women in politics; and third, to provide a list of necessary measures to increase women's political participation and presence in decision-making positions.

In light of these findings, this regional analysis will be an important resource for political parties, civil society, women's organizations and governments to help identify the steps necessary to increase the presence and representation of women in politics. Moreover, we hope it will serve as a catalyst for strategic alliances amongst these diverse actors. In particular, we hope that the findings will prompt further research and inspire policy reform that accelerates equal political participation of women and men in decision-making structures and promotes it as an indispensable driver for more effective democratic governance, and ultimately, for sustainable human development.

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# INTRODUCTION

In 2013-2014, a study was undertaken by UNDP to explore the presence of women in decision-making positions in the countries of the Caribbean Community<sup>1,2</sup> (CARICOM), as well as the link between their presence in politics and institutions and the national advances on gender equality, i.e. the link between descriptive and substantive representation. The initial hypothesis for the study was that there is a relationship between women's political presence and the positive effects it might have through the inclusion of gender and other related inequality issues into the legislative and executive agenda — thereby establishing women as important agents of change for development. A similar study was in process in Latin America, but limited to the legislative agenda.

This study was conducted as a desk review, during which available information and data on women, parliaments, and gender equality were collected and analysed from existing reports, documents, and other resources. While the aim of the research was to analyse the data on women's political participation at the local and national levels for the period between 2000 and 2013, data for the period before were incorporated wherever it was available. This was done in order to paint as complete a picture of women's political participation as possible and thereby capture key historic milestones and precedents that continue to have significant impact. As with many desk reviews that cover a wide range of countries and styles of government, the consistency and quality of data was often a challenge. Data quality and depth is constantly evolving and improving, and as a result not all countries were able to provide records with gender-disaggregated data for the time period studied. However, some countries, namely Suriname, Jamaica, and Guyana, possessed data and other information sources that allowed for more in-depth analysis, and allowed for the creation of three case studies that shed extra light on the regional study.

The content of this publication is organized into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 gives a brief overview of women's political participation. Chapter 2 provides background information on human development and gender inequality in CARICOM countries. Chapter 3 describes women's access to the legislative, executive and judiciary branches. It also includes the following: an outline of electoral laws, affirmative action and quota systems used in CARICOM countries; and data on women's participation in sub-national levels and in tribal governance structures. Chapter 4 examines the extent of women's participation in several fields of power and their influence on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. This includes women's participation in political parties and parliaments, in particular their participation in parliamentary committees and in the promotion and approval of legislation. Furthermore, the chapter examines the role and influence of women's political caucuses, women's organizations and gender bureaus. The main findings and recommendations are listed in Chapter 5.

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1 This study incorporates all CARICOM country states (Antigua and Barbuda; The Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; Saint Lucia; St. Kitts and Nevis; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Suriname; and Trinidad and Tobago) except Montserrat. It was excluded because after the eruption of the Soufrière Hills volcano in 1995, which destroyed the capital city, two-thirds of the population were relocated to the United Kingdom. The island is now officially a British Overseas Territory, and its people have been granted full British citizenship since 2002.

2 Haiti is the only French-speaking CARICOM member state, and Suriname the only Dutch-speaking member state.

# Chapter 1: Women's Political Participation in Brief

All members of the Caribbean Community have ratified or signed key agreements that commit to eradicating discrimination against women, observing their rights, and reducing gender inequality. Agreements of note include the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979; the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in 1985; and the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. As a result, most structural impediments to women's participation in political, public, and private spheres of life have been removed in the CARICOM countries. However, women's political participation continues to remain an area of concern.

Political participation is a complex issue that should in principle ensure equal treatment of social groups whose characteristics may vary according to ethnicity, class, age, gender, and location. It is influenced by factors such as governmental, parliamentary, and electoral systems; culture; customs; democratization processes; and the strength of civil society. Given this innate complexity, the level of women's representation in national parliaments has been the usual measurement of women's equality in the discourse on gender equality in political participation and politics. Further, experts in the area have emphasized the political and social significance of women's participation.<sup>3</sup>

At the global level, it has been noted that women parliamentarians do indeed have an impact on the legislative process, particularly on legislation related to women's issues, however "a dependency remains on a multiplicity of factors including the level of citizenship, democracy and democratization of society, governance structures, institutional roles and procedures, formative action and justice distribution, particularly resource distribution, and other structural and functional factors such as the role of media and gender role ideology, all of which come together to determine the performance of women parliamentarians"<sup>4</sup>.

However, while one cannot dispute the positive impact women have in legislative processes, introducing women into legislative systems can be a challenge, particularly when taking into account the legacy of institutionalized barriers that may hamper

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<sup>3</sup> Rodríguez Gustá and Madera, Hallazgos empíricos respecto de la representación descriptiva y la representación sustantiva de derechos de mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Farzana Bari, Chair of the Women's Study Centre, Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad, during a panel discussion on the role of women parliamentarians in social and political change organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in 2009



women's participation. These may be overcome by several mechanisms, of which the best known are affirmative action and gender mainstreaming in political institutions. Affirmative action targets gender biases in the recruitment and selection processes of candidates, and can include voluntary or legislated gender quotas that require political parties to nominate an agreed upon percentage of female candidates, a mandate to create special seats on party lists, or having so-called "reserved seats" for women in parliament. Regardless of the form, the introduction of gender quota systems aims to establish minimum levels for women's participation in political leadership.

These mechanisms have proven effective in other regions. After the introduction of legislated quota systems in some countries in Latin America, the percentages of women in Parliament increased drastically. In 2000, the average rate of women in parliaments was 13%, while by in 2013, it had increased to nearly 23%<sup>5</sup>. Other countries have used voluntary gender quotas adopted by the majority parties, which has also resulted in higher percentages of women parliamentarians and councillors. The minimum percentage recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) is 30%, the critical mass needed to bring about change. However, it should be noted that change cannot be accomplished by quotas alone. Quota effectiveness depends on the type of electoral system in the country and the existence and enforcement of sanctions<sup>6</sup>. The Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)<sup>7</sup> also stresses several factors regarding the electoral system that are indispensable components to the successful implementation of quotas, such as: the placement of women's names on the lists, voting and ballot distribution, and promoting debate, discussion, and sharing experiences.

A review of the literature on women's political participation shows that challenges continue to undermine the use of quota systems (see the bibliography for a full list of sources). For instance, quotas may lead to discussions and prejudices on allowing 'underqualified' persons to obtain seats in order to meet percentage requirements. However, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union<sup>8</sup>, elections worldwide have demonstrated that quota laws are an important measure in fast-tracking women's political representation. Experts in gender and public policy such as Cynthia Barrow-Giles, Ana Laura Rodríguez Gustá,

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5 <http://www.oas.org/es/cim/docs/CiudadaniadelasMujeres-ES.pdf>

6 Rodríguez Gustá and Madera

7 <http://www.idea.int/americas/gender.cfm>

8 [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Justin Esarey and Gina Chirillo<sup>9</sup>, and Violete Eudine Barriteau<sup>10</sup> argue that greater inclusion of women in political parties and government would place specific interests of women on the political agenda. Further, empirical evidence has shown the advantages of more women in political institutions. In countries with high percentages of women in political institutions, there is generally a substantial increase in equality bills and legislation on women's issues, social policy, and on topics addressing new generations of human rights. Women politicians have also been shown to use different communication channels and different kinds of political networking.

However the mere presence of women in decision-making positions does not ensure that they will be able to influence political processes and nor does it guarantee that more women will eventually gain access to them, that meaningful and sustained change will automatically be effected. Ana Laura Rodríguez Gustá, a sociologist with the Center for Development Studies at the National University of San Martín, warns that in order to determine women's power and influence in politics and political decision-making, we need to look beyond numbers of women in institutions and should also take into account how women function in these institutions and in society, namely in the areas of:

- Women as active citizens, with their right to vote and be elected and exerting voting rights without suffering political violence.
- Women as active participants in the life of political parties, which also means access to power positions and candidacies within the party.
- Women as elected members of political institutions (national parliaments and local councils)
- Women as decision-makers in the executive power (elective and non-elective positions, such as ministers and other high-level executive jobs).

Although advances have been made, women continue to remain on the margins of the decision-making process, with parliaments remaining a men's mainstay. In the Caribbean, women have been able to vote and stand for elections for over sixty years, and they have been involved in politics ever since political parties were set up. But the region as a whole still lacks a critical mass of women as key political decision makers<sup>11</sup>. Universal adult suffrage did not automatically lead to political equality for women, and only small numbers of women have managed to gain a place within party leadership structures. In fact, while women in the Caribbean represent

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<sup>9</sup> Esarey and Chirillo, 2013. In a Rice University study on the correlation between corruption and women politicians.

<sup>10</sup> Barriteau, 2001. Dr. Barriteau is Professor of Gender and Public Policy and was Head of the Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies (Cave Hill, Barbados) 1993 - 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Barrow-Giles, 2010; Barriteau, 2003.

a strong political group due to their numbers, they continue to be underrepresented and have not yet transformed into a political bloc that political parties need to court<sup>12</sup>. Dr. Cynthia Barrow-Giles, Professor of Political Science at the University of the West Indies and expert on gender issues in the Caribbean, notes that not only are there barriers to women's participation in the Caribbean, but the pool of women candidates is also limited. She also mentions the following structural impediments for women<sup>13</sup>:

- Socialization: the views on the social roles of the sexes
- Economics: women are challenged by having to juggle careers and domestic responsibilities, especially when they are single heads of households. This is exacerbated when the economic decline in a country causes loss of jobs.
- Politics: political parties have not addressed the challenges facing women, and have not generally provided special assistance to attract them to the political arena.
- Financing: women lack access to political money and independent financial resources.

Women in the Caribbean must overcome three hurdles to be elected to public office. They have to be willing to stand for election, be nominated by their party, and be elected by the voters. Dr. Barrow-Giles<sup>14</sup> has observed that party nomination seems to be the most difficult hurdle because, even where women show an interest in more active participation in electoral politics, the selection process discriminates against them. For example, candidate selection is still determined by party leaders in many countries, creating a difficult barrier for women to break through, as “these gatekeepers are often times men who may see any attempt by women to ascend to political office as a threat to their longstanding political power”.

Political and electoral systems can also have an important impact on women's participation. The democratic systems in the Caribbean region are supported by two separate and distinct electoral systems. In Guyana and in Suriname, the system is based on proportional representation (PR), where the number of seats won by a party is proportional to the number of votes received. This system is designed to produce a close correlation between the proportion of the total votes cast for a party and the proportion of seats that the party gains in the legislature. The rest of the English-speaking CARICOM countries rely on the system of first past the post (FPTP), where candidates who receive the largest number of the votes cast in the single member

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12 Barrow-Giles, Political Party Financing and Women's Political Participation in the Caribbean

13 Barrow-Giles, 2010

14 idem

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

constituency gain the contested seat. Further, Suriname and Haiti adhere to the *trias politica* principle, where the government is divided into three independent areas of responsibility (legislative, executive, and judicial). The English-speaking countries use the parliamentary Westminster model, where a de facto executive branch is made up by members of the legislature. The natures of these systems, and how they play out in practice, affect women's participation in varying ways.

For example, the nature of the Westminster model as practiced by many of the English-speaking Caribbean countries is such that Senate members are appointed, contrary to seats in the lower chambers, which are generally elected positions — and it is often the case that there are higher percentages of appointed women in the upper chambers in comparison with the percentages of elected women in the lower chambers. This relationship is something that requires further analysis to determine appointed members' actual functioning and influence in decision-making, as it is possible that women are sidelined by their respective parties into highly visible positions that do not hold political power in decision-making. The Westminster model also contains inadequacies that, as Dr. Barrow-Giles<sup>15</sup> notes, require reforms that are being demanded by their constituencies:

*“Not only are Caribbean democracies dominated by powerful political executives, but the tendency towards authoritarian rule is compounded by the results of general elections in several Caribbean democracies that have resulted in strong one-party control of parliaments. Further, election results in many jurisdictions reveal a pattern of declining voter participation which is a clear signal of public dissatisfaction and therefore the need for change.”*

One of the key areas where there have been calls for reform is the very nature and the composition of a parliament that contains an unelected upper chamber.

Irrespective of the percentage of women in parliament, women in many countries seem to have joined forces in some type of formal or informal caucus to influence government decisions or push for legislation on gender equality or women's issues. Such women's parliamentary caucuses have also been promoted in the Caribbean region. In this aspect, quotas provide an important means to bring parliamentarians together across political party lines to share information, discuss policy issues, channel common interests and concerns, and engage with civil society. The informal, extra-parliamentary women's caucuses and lobby groups seem to be effective in the

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<sup>15</sup> Barrow-Giles, 2010.

advancement of gender equality and in providing support for women parliamentarians in small countries. In a 2011 E-discussion, the following challenges were pointed out of formal, intra-parliamentary caucuses<sup>16</sup>:

- The low numbers of women parliamentarians in most parliaments render women caucuses too small an organ to enact significant change.
- The inherent difficulty in working across party lines and the pervasive presence of party loyalties make it hard to find common ground on which to join forces.
- The organizational aspect, in particular the leadership issue and the additional workload that comes with establishing or joining a women's caucus.

If progress is to be achieved, political parties are key places to start, for they can either hinder or promote the selection of women into decision-making positions, or as candidates in winnable positions on the electoral lists. They also play an important role in the development and training of candidates. A study of political parties in the Caribbean carried out by the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWiL) and UN Women<sup>17</sup> reveals that while women have always participated in the political processes of their countries, their role has been mainly as voters and campaigners, and has hardly ever translated into increased women's representation in political office.

This is due to structural and social barriers that prevent women's political participation and representation. Socio-cultural norms, negative stereotypical gender roles, and lack of empowerment still often prevent women taking leadership positions. However, political parties also play a critical role in whether women are able to successfully enter politics and achieve decision-making positions in political processes, for they are responsible for recruiting, selecting and promoting candidates for elections. Their structures and operations are influenced by strong patriarchal norms, which are obstacles to women's equality of opportunity in political participation and representation, and in the hierarchy of political parties. The most effective approaches to increase women's participation within political parties are said to rely on a combination of strategies to address the underlying vulnerabilities that women face. These would include transforming the structure of political institutions and political parties. It would also mean providing support to gender equality advocates within and outside political parties, women candidates, and elected politicians.

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<sup>16</sup> Women Parliamentary Caucus, South Asia Regional Network of Women Parliamentarians, Technical Paper 3, Center for Gender and Social Transformation, February 2013

<sup>17</sup> CIWiL and UN Women study Gender and Political Parties in the Caribbean

## Chapter 2: Human Development and Gender Inequality

While all CARICOM countries have ratified the key agreements on the elimination of discrimination, and much progress has been made throughout the region to address discrimination against women through legal reform, only Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, and St. Kitts and Nevis have acceded to the CEDAW Optional Protocol that allows women (or groups of women) to file complaints regarding countries' failure to comply with the Convention. However, a CARICOM version of the Beijing Platform for Action was developed in 1997 to mainstream gender policies<sup>18</sup>, and gender policies and action plans were also developed at the national level, and gender budget initiatives were taken in some countries. In spite of these efforts, there are still quite a few gaps that need to be filled before gender equality can be reached in CARICOM member states.

### Economic Development

The economic advantages of gender equality have been proven. According to the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index of 2012<sup>19</sup>, a correlation is evident among competitiveness, income and development, and gender gaps. The index also points out that studies in several regions have shown that closing the gap between male and female employment boosts Gross Domestic Product (GDP) considerably<sup>20</sup>. The Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago all fall in the high income WEF classification (with per capita GDPs of over US\$12,276), and have high female-male ratios for labour force participation. Guyana, on the other hand, falls in the lower-middle income category, while it has one of the lowest ranks for women's economic participation and opportunities (117 out of 136 countries) according to the WEF. While Suriname and Jamaica fall in the upper-middle income classification, Suriname's economic participation and opportunities ranking for women are ranked very similar to Guyana's.

The Gender Gap Index of 2012<sup>21</sup> further notes that restricting job opportunities for women is costing the Asia/Pacific region between US\$42 and US\$46 billion a year. The document does not provide figures for other regions of the world, but

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18 CARICOM Secretariat, Gender Equality, Social Justice and Development: The CARICOM Post-Beijing Regional Plan of Action to the Year 2000

19 The Global Gender Gap Index 2012, World Economic Forum (WEF), p. 29

20 The Global Gender Gap Index 2014, WEF p. 42

21 The Global Gender Gap Index 2012





the Caribbean is most likely no exception in this respects, and needs to improve women's employment and wages.

In the 2014 Human Development Report, the Caribbean shows quite a diverse picture in terms of its economic indicators (Table I) that in many cases support the observations of the WEF, most CARICOM countries are categorized as high human development countries. All CARICOM countries except Guyana and Haiti have per capita GDPs that are above the average for the Small Island Developing States (US\$ 6,736).

**Table 1: GDP, GDP/capita, foreign direct investment, official development aid received, and employment in CARICOM countries**

	GDP	GDP per capita	GNI per capita	Foreing direct investment FDI	Net official development assistance ODA	% employment
	(2011 PPP\$) \$billions	(2011 PPP \$)	(2011 PPP \$)	(% of GDP)	% GNI 2010	
	2012	2012	2013	2012	2011	2012
Antigua and Barbuda	1.76	19,714	18,800	5.1	1.4	..
Bahamas	8.47	22,705	21,414	7.6	0.3	70.8
Barbados	4.33	15,299	13,604	9.1	0.1	67.5
Belize	2.73	8,438	9,364	6.6	0.4	66.9
Dominica	0.69	9,629	9,235	7.2	5.2	..
Grenada	1.24	11,786	10,339	5.3	1.6	..
Guyana	4.81	6,054	6,341	6.4	6.2	56.2
Haiti	16.02	1,575	1,636	2.5	23.2	75.5
Jamaica	22.8	8,421	8,170	1.2	0.4	65.3
Saint Kitts and Nevis	1.12	20,895	20,150	15.2	2.5	..
Saint Lucia	1.85	10,242	9,251	6.7	3.0	..
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1.12	10,271	10,339	15.9	2.8	..
Suriname	8.11	15,174	15,113	3.4	2.3	56.3
Trinidad and Tobago	38.9	29,086	25,325	2.4	..	64.5
Latin America and the Caribbean	7,482.50	13,554	13,767	3.1	0.3	67.3
Small island developing states	286.4	6,736	9,471	2.5	3.3	65.7

Source: Human Development Report 2014

## Gender Inequality

Regional women’s organizations like the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) have been indispensable in addressing issues like violence against women, securing sex workers’ rights, women’s reproductive rights, and in raising critical issues relating to gender and trade throughout the years. In the individual countries, civil society organisations, and in particular women’s organisations, played an important role in awareness, advocacy, and lobbying for change, especially as a follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995).

In the 2014 UNDP Human Development Report, the Gender Inequality Index rank and value are absent for almost half of the CARICOM countries due to a lack of available data. Table 2 below gives the gender inequality index, maternal mortality rate, adolescent fertility rate, share of seats in parliaments, the percentage of the population with at least secondary education, and the percentage of labour force participation. The data for Latin America and the Caribbean and for the Small Island Developing States have been included for the sake of comparison. Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines are countries that lack sufficient data.

**Table 2: Gender inequality index, maternal mortality rate, adolescent fertility rate, population with at least secondary education, labor force participation<sup>22</sup>**

Country	Gender Inequality Index		Maternal mortality ratio	Adolescent birth rate	Share of seats in parliament	Population with at least some secondary education		Labour Force Participation rate	
	Rank	Value	(deaths per 100,000 live births)	(births per 1,000 women aged 15-19)	(% held by women)	(% aged 25 and above)		(% aged 15 and above)	
	2013	2013	2010	2010/2015	2013	W	M	W	M
Antigua and Barbuda	..	..	..	49.3	19.4	..	..	..	..
Bahamas	53	0.316	47	28.5	16.7	91.2	87.6	69.3	79.3
Barbados	66	0.350	51	48.4	21.6	89.5	87.6	65.9	76.7
Belize	84	0.435	53	71.4	13.3	35.2	32.8	49.1	82.3

22 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2014>

	Gender Inequality Index		Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19)	Share of seats in parliament (% held by women)	Population with at least some secondary education (% aged 25 and above)		Labour Force Participation rate (% aged 15 and above)	
	Rank	Value				W	M	W	M
Dominica	..	..	..	..	12.5	29.7	23.2	..	..
Grenada	..	..	24	35.4	25.0	..	..	..	..
Guyana	113	0.524	280	88.5	31.3	61.5	48.8	42.3	80.9
Haiti	132	0.599	350	42.0	3.5	22.5	36.3	60.6	70.8
Jamaica	88	0.457	110	70.1	15.5	74.0	71.1	56.1	71.0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	..	..	..	..	6.7	..	..	..	..
Saint Lucia	..	..	35	56.3	17.2	..	..	62.6	76.0
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	..	..	48	54.5	13.0	..	..	55.7	78.2
Suriname	95	0.463	130	35.2	11.8	44.6	47.1	40.4	68.8
Trinidad and Tobago	56	0.321	46	34.8	26.0	59.4	59.2	52.9	75.5
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>	—	<b>0.416</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>53.3</b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>79.8</b>
<b>Small island developing states</b>	—	<b>0.478</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>50.4</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>73.3</b>

Source: 2014 Human Development Report.

The Bahamas has the best GII in the region, followed by Trinidad y Tobago. In regards to the share of seats held by women in parliaments, Guyana has the highest number with 31.3%.

With the exception of Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Suriname, the maternal mortality rate of the CARICOM countries falls below 60, and compares favourably with Latin America and the Caribbean average of 74. With the exception of Belize, Guyana and Jamaica, the adolescent fertility rate is below the rate for Latin America and the Caribbean (68.3) and that of the Small Island Developing States (61.5). A brief listing of the most striking features per country is given below:

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

- The Bahamas and Barbados score reasonably well with all indicators. In particular the Bahamas has a high percentage women with at least some secondary education (91.2%), which is even higher than men's secondary education (87.6%).
- Belize shows the biggest difference between women and men in percentage of labour force participation (W=49.1%; M= 82.3%).
- In Haiti, there has been some legislative progress in the promotion of women's rights, but inequality remains striking. Haiti (along with Guyana) also has the highest maternal mortality ratio in the region.
- Jamaica has a high adolescent birth rate (70.1 per 1,000) and a high maternal mortality ratio (110) in comparison with the CARICOM countries listed. Guyana's adolescent birth rate is also relatively high, at 88.5 per 1,000.
- Suriname's data on women's labour participation percentage (40.4%) is the lowest of the CARICOM countries.
- Trinidad and Tobago scores reasonably well throughout, although labour participation percentages are low when compared to the Bahamas, Barbados and Jamaica.

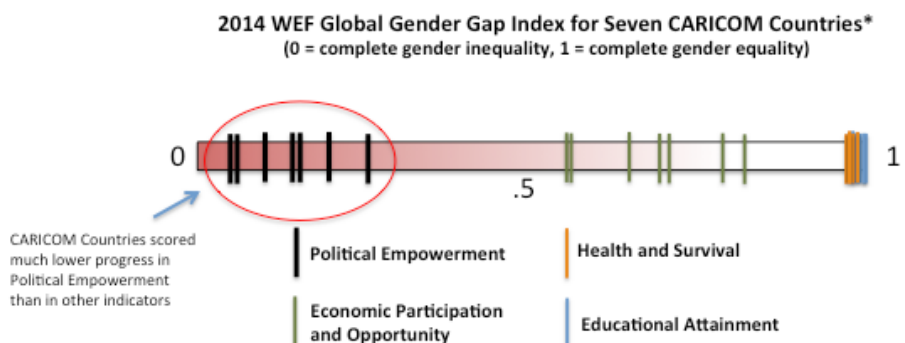
The Global Gender Gap Index was also used to compare countries for this study. Only seven of the CARICOM countries are included in this Index: the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. It should be stressed that the WEF Global Gender Gap Index displays gaps and not the level of development. The countries are ranked on the basis of economic, political, education and health criteria. According to the 2014 Global Gender Gap Index, the region of Latin America and the Caribbean has closed over 70% of its overall gender gap, and shows the best improvement from 2013, as compared to the other regions<sup>23</sup>.

Figure 1 gives an overview of overall score of the four thematic areas of the WEF Global Gender Gap Index for the seven CARICOM countries included in the report. Barbados, the Bahamas, and Trinidad and Tobago are classified as high income countries. Belize, Jamaica, and Suriname are classified as upper middle income countries, while Guyana is classified as a lower middle income country. All countries perform well on 'educational attainment' and 'health and survival'. Even with ranks that might show them being low on the general listing, their individual scores for these two areas are above 0.94, and thus close to 'gender equality' (= 1).

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<sup>23</sup> Global Gender Gap Index WEF 2014, p.12

**Figure 1: Gender gaps comparison in economic participation, education attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.**



Source: WEF Global Gender Gap Index 2014

The largest gender gaps for CARICOM countries included in the Global Gender Gap Index lie in ‘economic participation’ and ‘political empowerment’. With a score of 0.822, the Bahamas does best in economic participation. On the other hand, Guyana, with a score of 0.565, has the largest gap to close. Regarding ‘political empowerment’, the seven CARICOM countries listed have a long way to go to close the gender gap. In short, the data reveal that the seven CARICOM countries listed in the 2014 WEF Global Gap Index report are closing health and education gaps, but still generally show low levels of women’s economic participation and large gaps in political empowerment:

- The Bahamas and Barbados did reasonably well overall. However, both had low scores for political empowerment (especially the Bahamas).
- Belize is the lowest performing country of the region on the ‘women in parliament’ indicator.
- Jamaica improved between 2012 and 2013, mainly due to improvements in ‘economic participation and opportunity’ and ‘political empowerment’. However, 2014 numbers showed a slight deterioration in the country’s ‘economic participation and opportunity’ index score.
- Suriname’s political empowerment gap continues to fall, from 0.072 in 2013 to 0.056 in 2014, and is now ranked 131 out of 135 countries in this area.
- Trinidad and Tobago, while scoring comparatively high in the area of ‘women in parliament’, has the largest gender gap in the area of “women in ministerial positions’ out of the seven CARICOM countries assessed in the index.

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Another key factor of gender inequality in the Caribbean is gender-based violence. According to the Caribbean HDR, three practices have become a matter of growing concern: sexual violence, domestic violence and trafficking in persons<sup>24</sup>. UN organisations and agencies have therefore been working intensively these past years in the region on the eradication of violence through the mandates of their respective programs. Legislative reform has also been supported throughout the Caribbean, very often through awareness and advocacy initiatives directly with or in support of national parliaments, gender bureaus, and civil society organisations. This has resulted in legislation being passed or amended in the CARICOM countries to address gender-based violence, in particular domestic violence and sexual harassment. With new legislation, police have been given greater responsibility to prevent domestic violence and to protect persons who are suspected of being victims of domestic violence. Anecdotal evidence suggests that while the procedures are in place, they do not always work in practice due to lack of capacity or misinformation within the police force, and decisions by individual police officers on duty when cases of domestic violence are reported.

While documentation appears to be absent, women's personal stories in countries like Haiti<sup>25</sup>, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname<sup>26</sup> seem to confirm a trend also found in several Latin American countries, where violence in politics has become an additional barrier for women and has increased their vulnerability as political candidates. Given the fact that the trend of increased gender-based violence in politics is emerging in other countries worldwide<sup>27</sup>, the trends in Caribbean countries should be documented and lessons learned applied in a preventive manner.

In addition to explicit political violence, women seeking political office often face ridicule and harassment as well<sup>28</sup>. CIWiL and UN Women have therefore recommended that political parties take steps to institute zero-tolerance policies with strong sanctions on harassment, including sexual harassment, and gender-based violence. They also recommend that institutional protocols should be developed to encourage women members to officially report offences to the political leadership and to the police if a violation of the legislation related to sexual offences, domestic violence, and offences against the person occurs. These measures would send a strong message to the party membership that such behaviours are unacceptable, and would promote an enabling environment for women members.

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24 UNDP study: Legal Aid For Women Victims of Gender Violence in the Caribbean. Identifying Gaps and Programmatic Responses (2014)

25 Forum for Women in Politics, held in Haiti in May 2014

26 Personal communication from women in these countries, who were helping to gather data and information for this study.

27 IPU Women in Parliament in 2013, pp. 7-8

28 CIWiL and UN Women, p.9

## Chapter 3: Women's Access to Legislative, Executive and Judiciary Branches

**Table 3: Years of general suffrage CARICOM countries**

Country	Universal adult suffrage <sup>29</sup>
Antigua and Barbuda	1951
Bahamas	1962
Barbados	1950
Belize	1954
Dominica	1951
Grenada	1951
Guyana	1953
Haiti	1950
Jamaica	1944
St. Lucia	1951
St. Kitts and Nevis	1952
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1951
Suriname	1948
Trinidad and Tobago	1946

Source: CARICOM; Association of Caribbean Electoral Organizations

The countries included in this study all have parliamentary systems of democratic governance with three distinct branches: executive (government), legislative (parliament) and the judiciary. The executive and legislative are interconnected in that the executive is accountable to parliament. With the exception of Haiti, the CARICOM countries are all relatively young independent states. Dominica, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago have a president as head of state and a prime minister as head of government. In Guyana and Suriname, the president is head of state and government. The remaining countries (Antigua and Barbuda; the Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Grenada; Jamaica; St. Kitts and Nevis; St. Lucia; St. Vincent and the Grenadines) are constitutional monarchies within the realm of the Commonwealth of Nations, and they accept the monarch of the United Kingdom as their head of state. These countries have a governor general representing the monarch as head of state, and an elected prime minister, who is head of government.

By the early 20th century, the public education system was available and producing new professionals, new economic opportunities were opening up, and labour unions were gaining importance. The social and political democratization of the Caribbean societies resulted in universal adult suffrage throughout the Caribbean between 1944 and 1953. This gave all adults - women and men - the right to vote, which caused a dramatic increase of the number of voters:

*"After adult suffrage, the number of electors rose to include all men and women 21 years or older. For instance, the Jamaican electorate increased from 61,000 in the 1930's to over 660,000 in the first elections under UAS in 1944. UAS marked the rise of mass politics - the entry of the Caribbean masses onto the political scene for the first time in their history."<sup>30</sup>*

Table 3 indicates the years when universal adult suffrage, including women's voting rights, was attained in the respective CARICOM countries.

<sup>29</sup> Women's suffrage was also granted in the universal adult suffrage in the respective countries.

<sup>30</sup> Buddan, Robert, Politics in the Caribbean, Topic Three:

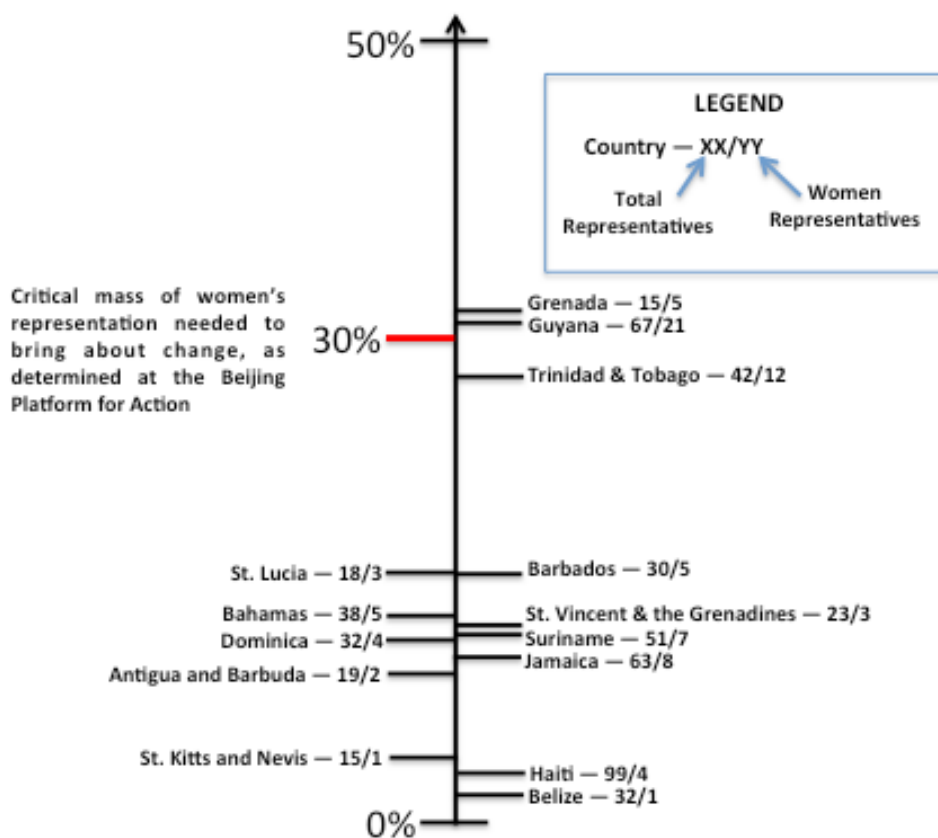
Voting Behaviour, Lectures 5-6. <http://gtuwi.tripod.com/gt22dlec3.html>, accessed on 6 January 2014

## Women and Legislative Power

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union<sup>31</sup> (IPU), the global average of women in parliaments now stands at 22.3%, up from 21.8% in 2013. By the end of 2013, parliaments in the Americas had 25% women parliamentarians on average, up from 18.2% in 2003. As far as the Caribbean sub-region is concerned, Grenada showed a great leap forward in the number of seats held by women in their lower house: from 13.3% to 33.3%, which, according to IPU, is the biggest increase in all countries of the world in the past year.

Figure 2 is an overview of the CARICOM countries that includes data on the statutory number of members of parliament<sup>32</sup> and current women’s representation (for a more thorough overview, please see Appendix II).

**Figure 2: Overview of current number of parliamentarians and women’s representation (December 2013)**



Sources: IPU Parline database; Caribbean Elections; De Nationale Assemblée Suriname

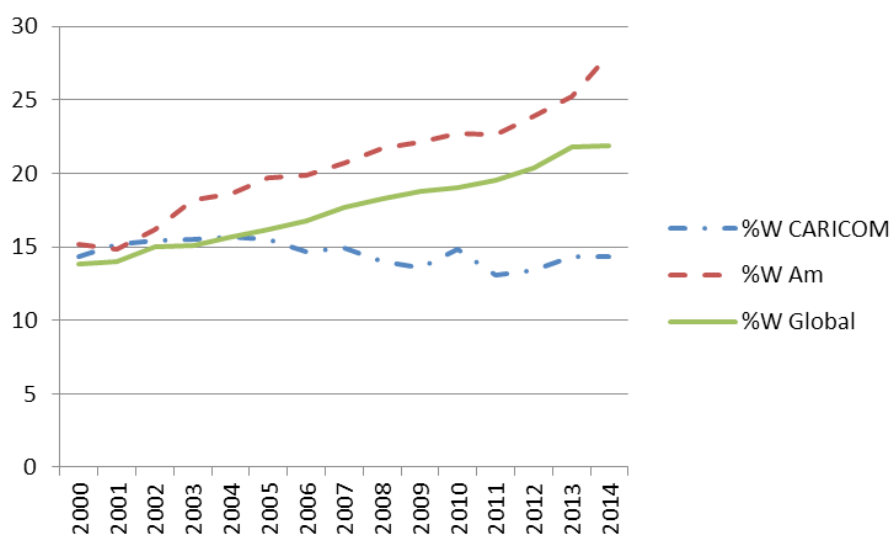
<sup>31</sup> IPU and UN Women, Women in Parliament in 2013.

<sup>32</sup> In this study, the term “parliament” has the meaning of the national legislature, which usually consists of elected members. In a bicameral system, this will refer to the lower chamber. Where the upper chamber, or senate, is included, this is specifically mentioned.



As Figure 3 shows, the average percentage of women’s representation in the Caribbean countries has been almost stagnant for the period 2000 – 2014: between 13.1% and 15.7%. The percentages of women in the national legislative bodies of the CARICOM countries grew from 14.3% in 2000 to 15.7% in 2004 (in stride with global and regional averages), but decreased steadily to 13.1% in 2011. Since 2012, representation has gradually picked up and meets 2006 standards, but remains low in comparison to global and regional figures. By the end of 2014, national legislative bodies in the CARICOM countries had just 14.3% women parliamentarians, which is well below the global average of 21.8% and the Americas average of 25.2%. The 2013 rate is equivalent to data registered in 2000.

**Figure 3: Percentages of women in national legislative bodies of CARICOM Countries compared with the Americas and global averages, 2000-2013**



Source: IPU Parline database (archive of statistical data)

Breaking Caribbean legislative bodies down to the senate and house (upper and lower) levels, Table 4 reveals that the CARICOM<sup>33</sup> countries have a total of 163 senators, 36 of whom are women (22.1%); and a total of 539 lower house parliamentarians, 76 of whom are women (14.8%). This data reinforces that of Figure 2, which shows that, with the exception of Grenada (33.3% in lower house) and Guyana (31.3% in unicameral parliament), all countries fall below the 30%

<sup>33</sup> Within the scope of this study it was not possible either to establish for individual countries, such as Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, whether any of the women parliamentarians listed were directly elected or appointed. For the sake of ease, this study considers parliamentarians of the lower house as elected members, because the percentage of appointed lower house parliamentarians on the total number of lower house parliamentarians would be low.

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

women's representation to which they have committed — be it by signing the Beijing Declaration or through their Commonwealth membership, or their respective national gender policies and plans. The region as a whole only reaches an average of 16.7% women's representation, or 266 women elected in 13 years out of a total of 1,858 elected political representatives. Eleven of the fourteen countries (78.6%) have less than 20% representation of women and 28.6% of the countries in the region have less than 10% women's political representation. Furthermore, the size of the parliament chamber does not seem to show a correlation to the greater or lesser representation of women.

**Table 4: Composition of national legislative bodies in the CARICOM countries, and percentages of women (as per December 2013)**

Countries	Upper house (usually appointed) <sup>34</sup>		Lower House (directly elected and appointed)	
	Total # members	# and % Women of total members	Total # members	# and % Women of total members
Antigua and Barbuda	17	5 (29.4%)	19	2 (10.5%)
Bahamas	16	4 (25%)	38	5 (13.2%)
Barbados	21	6 (28.6%)	30	5 (16.7%)
Belize	13	5 (38.5%)	32	1 (3.1%)
Dominica	-	-	31	4 (12.9%)
Grenada	13	2 (15.4%)	15	5 (33.3%)
Guyana	-	-	67	21 (31.3%)
Haiti	20	0 (0%)	95	4 (4.2%)
Jamaica	21	5 (23.8%)	63	8 (12.7%)
St. Kitts and Nevis	-	-	15	1 (6.7%)
St. Lucia	11	2 (18.2%)	18	3 (16.7%)
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	-	-	23	3 (13.0%)
Suriname	-	-	51	7 (13.7%)
Trinidad and Tobago	31	7 (22.6%)	42	12 (28.6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>36 (22.1%)</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>76 (14.8%)</b>

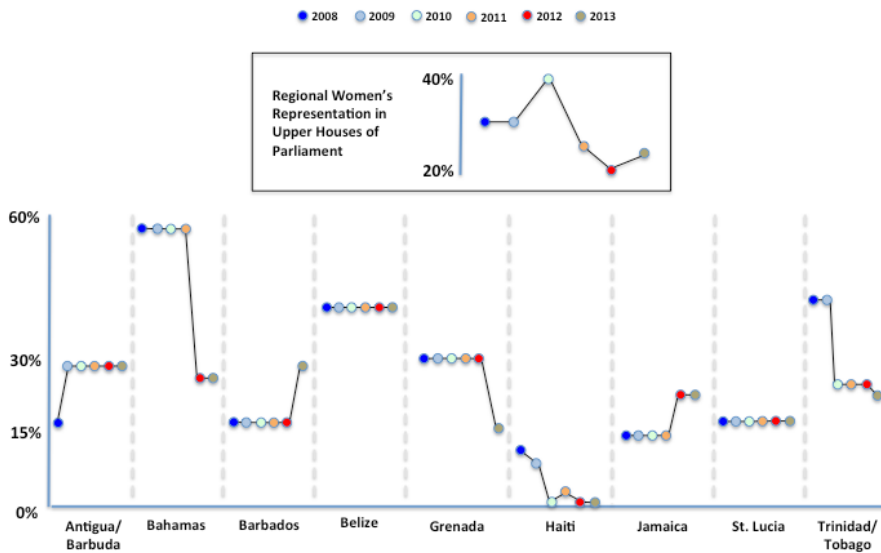
Source: IPU Parline database; National Assembly of Suriname

<sup>34</sup> The members of the Senate of Haiti are directly elected for a period of 6 years; one-third of the membership is renewed every 2 years.

There is an interesting phenomenon in the English-speaking countries with a bicameral parliamentary system, whose senators are all appointed by nomination of the ruling and opposition political parties, and sometimes by the head of state or government. These countries show higher women's representation in the senate, even in years when women's elected representation in the lower house is low. A review of women's representation of the upper houses of CARICOM countries over the last five years (Figure 4) shows that while Belize had no women in the lower (elected) chamber for 2008-2012, women represented 38.5% of its senate. The Bahamas even exceeded 50% women's representation in its senate in 2008-2011 — although it showed a disappointing drop in the percentage of women senators from 56.2% in 2011 to 25.0% in 2012. Grenada shows more or less the same picture: a drop from 30.8% in 2012 to 15.4% in 2013. Figure 4 also shows a declining trend in the percentages of women in the upper houses in CARICOM countries, from 28.1% in 2008 to 22.1% in 2013. The relatively higher percentage (39.2%) of women in 2010 is due to the fact that the data on Haiti were not included for that year.

The number of women senators in Haiti has consistently decreased: from 11.1% in 2008 to 0% in 2013. Currently, Haiti lags behind the rest of the CARICOM countries, with 4.2 % women in its lower house compared with the CARICOM average of 14.8% women's representation in parliament. The contrast is even more evident in the senate, where the other CARICOM countries with a bicameral system show on average 22.1% women's representation, while Haiti has 0%. This may have something to do with the fact that members of the upper house of Haiti are directly elected and not appointed, as in the other countries. Haiti is not only the poorest country in the Caribbean, but is still struggling to recover from the 2010 earthquake disaster. Haitian politics have been rife with corruption and violence, which would add to the traditional reasons found in other countries, such as multiple roles in production and reproduction, lack of time and care-taking facilities, etc., which create barriers for women's participation in political decision-making. The implementation of the 30% quota system recently amended in the Constitution seems to be a timely and necessary measure in the process to advance gender equality in political participation, but it will have to be promoted, supported, and monitored with internal and external networks. The lessons learned from Guyana's experience might well be useful to Haiti.

**Figure 4: Percentages of women parliamentarians with seats in the upper houses of CARICOM countries with a bicameral system 2008-2013**



Source: IPU Parline Database

Grenada has the second highest percentage of women parliamentarians in this period (25%), which is surprising, since the country has not taken any affirmative action to accomplish this. Guyana’s high level of representation by women would indicate a correlation with its quota, which was enacted in 2000 and which lays down a 30 percent requirement for women on the political candidates’ lists in national elections.

Trinidad and Tobago has consistently produced reasonably high percentages of women in parliament in comparison with the rest of the region, yet has no quota system. At the local level, Trinidad also shows relatively high percentages of women representatives: 30% councillors and 38% aldermen. Chapter 4 will touch upon some possible reasons or factors for the high percentages of women parliamentarians in Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago, but more in-depth studies are required in both countries.

It should be noted that there have been calls for reforming the nature and the composition of parliament, in particular the bicameral parliament, because of general dissatisfaction of the performance of the Senate and its partisan orientation<sup>35</sup>. This could have an impact on the percentage of women in the upper chambers, as they are generally political appointees. Further in-depth study would be needed to establish

35 Barrow-Giles 2010

the role and functioning of the senate in the different countries with a bicameral system, the political power of women in upper chambers, and their influence on women's legislation and gender equality issues.

In terms of Women's leadership roles and total representation in the parliaments of CARICOM countries, as per December 2013, there were women speakers of parliament in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Suriname. There were also women presiding over the senates in Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, and St. Lucia. Additionally, two countries (Barbados and St. Lucia) currently also have women leaders of the opposition (See Appendix III for a complete breakdown of women and leadership in national representative bodies).

- Antigua and Barbuda has 29.41% appointed women in the Senate, up from 17.65% in 2004, versus 10.53% elected women in the house. What is noteworthy is the consistent women's leadership of both the House and Senate over the periods listed. There is also a woman Governor General.
- The Bahamas showed a maximum of 20% women in the House in 2003, after which there was a decline. Whereas the Bahamas had 56.25% women appointed to the Senate in 2007, the number of women senators was halved after the elections of 2012, and now stands at 25%.
- The percentage of women in parliament in Barbados increased in 2013. In the House, the percentage of directly elected women now stands at 16.67%; in the Senate the percentage of appointed women has increased to 28.6%.
- Belize had no women in the Lower House in 2008. In 2012, five women were appointed to the Senate. The list for direct elections for the house included only 3 women candidates of 77 or 4%. Only one of these three women candidates was successful, which brings the percentage of women in Belize's House to 3.23%. The Senate has 38.46% appointed women.
- Dominica has experienced a drop in the percentage of women parliamentarians from 18.75% in 2000, to 12.90% in 2005, and 12.50% in 2009. But both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of parliament are women.
- Grenada had 26.67% women in parliament in 2003, which drastically decreased to 13.33% in 2008. In the 2013 general elections, Grenada managed to bring in 33.33% women in parliament, thus becoming the only country in the English-speaking CARICOM to reach the target of having at least 1/3 women parliamentarians, and this without a quota system in place. Five of the eight women who contested seats in the House were elected, of whom one was appointed a senator.
- Guyana's percentage of women parliamentarians has steadily increased from 20% in 2001 to 31.34% in 2011. It is interesting to note, however, that the country had 36.9% women parliamentarians in 1990, ten years before the quota law was enacted.

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

- The percentage of women in Jamaica's Lower House seems to be stuck at 12%, with a minimum of 11.67% in 2002, and a maximum of 13.33% after general elections in 2007. The Senate has 23.81% appointed women members.
- The percentage of women parliamentarians in St. Kitts and Nevis also shows a drastic decrease from 13.33% to 0% in 2004, after which it has picked up again to 6.67% in the 2010 elections.
- St. Lucia has been wavering between 5.56% and 11.11% women parliamentarians, but has picked up to 16.67% after the 2011 elections. Its senate shows a slightly higher percentage: 18.2% appointed members.
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been experiencing a gradual decline of women parliamentarians over the past fifteen years: from 22.73% (2001) to 18.18% (2005) to 17.39% (2010).
- Suriname is the only country on the list that experienced a steady growth of the number of women parliamentarians, but subsequently experienced a nosedive from 25.49% in the 2005 elections to 9.80% in the following elections (2010). With the admission of a woman member of parliament in 2013 (the next on the list), taking the place of a male parliamentarian who became a minister, this percentage has now increased to 13.7%.
- Trinidad and Tobago has shown a steady increase from 11.11% in 2000 to 28.57% in 2012. This is more or less the same percentage as Guyana, but Trinidad has achieved this without a quota system in place.

Table 5 gives an overview of the women presiding as officers of parliament (or of one of the houses) in the CARICOM countries, the first time a woman was a presiding officer, and women who are currently presiding officers (four countries have a man presiding one or both houses). The first woman to be appointed was the Speaker of the House of Assembly of Dominica, Marie Davies-Pierre, in 1980. Guyana, Haiti, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have never had women presiding officers of parliament.

**Table 5: Current woman presiding officers in CARICOM countries, and year of first-time woman presiding officer in resp. countries.**

Country	First time woman presiding officer	Current woman presiding officer
Antigua and Barbuda	1994	Giselle Isaac-Arindell since 2004 Speaker of the House of Representatives Hazelyn Francis since 2005 President of the Senate
Bahamas	1997	Sharon Wilson Since 2012 President of the Senate
Barbados	2012	Kerryann F. Ifill Since 2012 President of the Senate
Belize	1984	(M)
Dominica	1980	Alix Boyd Knights since 2000 Speaker of House of Representatives
Grenada	1990	Joan Purcell since 2008 President of the Senate
Jamaica	1984	(M)
St. Kitts and Nevis	2004	Christen Springette since 2011 President of the Assembly of Nevis
St. Lucia	2007	(M)
Suriname	1997	Jennifer Geerlings-Simons since 2010 Speaker of the National Assembly
Trinidad and Tobago	1991	(M)

(M): Man presiding officer

Source: *Worldwide Guide to Women in leadership*<sup>36</sup> and *IPU database*<sup>37</sup>

The concept of leadership should not be limited to presiding officers, but should cover administrative leadership as well (Table 6). Clerks in Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Haiti, and St. Kitts and Nevis are all men, while these positions are occupied by all women in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadine, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Suriname is noteworthy in that the entire administrative (clerk and deputy clerk) and political leadership (speaker and deputy speaker) lie in the hands of women.

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Parliaments\\_Current.htm](http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Parliaments_Current.htm)

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/speakers.htm>

**Table 6: List of current M/W clerks of parliament in CARICOM countries (as of December 2013)<sup>38</sup>**

Countries	Clerk to house	Clerk to senate
Antigua and Barbuda	W <sup>39</sup>	
Bahamas	M	W
Barbados	M	
Belize	M	
Dominica	W	-
Grenada	M	
Guyana	M	-
Haiti	M (a.i.)	M
Jamaica	W	
St. Kitts and Nevis	M	-
St. Lucia	M	W
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	W	-
Suriname	W	-
Trinidad and Tobago	W	W

Sources: Commonwealth Parliamentary Directory; IPU Parline database

## Affirmative Action and Quota Systems in the CARICOM

In its Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat calls on governments – which include those of the English-speaking CARICOM countries – to introduce measures to promote at least 30% representation of women in parliament, government and business. The Secretariat expressed concern about women’s minimal leadership role in national and local political spheres, and emphasized that strategic partnerships should be built between women’s machineries and parliamentarians, the judiciary, the private sector, the media and civil society organisations in order to advance gender equality.

<sup>38</sup> The information was not available for the period 2000 – 2013

<sup>39</sup> In some cases, the clerk is in function for both upper and lower house



According to the Inter-parliamentary Union, elections worldwide in 2013 demonstrated yet again that quota laws have facilitated women's access to parliaments. During that year, electoral quotas were used in 39 chambers holding elections in 30 countries. With legislated quotas (21), women took 25% of seats, and with voluntary quotas (18) they gained 28%. However, IPU emphasizes that quotas alone do not work. The quotas need to be ambitious, ensure that women's names are placed in winnable positions on lists and carry sanctions for non-compliance, such as the refusal to register a party. There also has to be political commitment from all actors to include women in politics<sup>40</sup>.

In CARICOM, only two countries have quota laws: Haiti and Guyana. The Republic of Haiti has a legislated quota system that is prescribed for in the Constitution, amended to this effect in 2012. The law recognizes the principle of a minimum quota of 30% for women at all levels, especially in public life (Article 17.1), and requires that all laws related to political parties, their structures and functional mechanisms reserve a minimum 30% of positions for women (Article 30.1.1). However, there is no implementing legislation by which to articulate this general provision into practice-by electoral and other mechanisms.

The legislated quota system of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, a candidate quota system, has been in effect for over 10 years. The candidate quota provision (Representation of the People Act, Section 11B) does not guarantee seats for women candidates in the legislature, but does require at least one-third (33%) women on the contending party's candidates' lists in order for the constituencies in which that party is contending. If the list does not meet the established one-third quota, the Electoral Commission must notify the party concerned and allow the party to rectify the list. The list is only approved when deemed in compliance by the Commission (Representation of the People Act, Section 14 & 17). Thus, if a party does not fulfil the requirement, it cannot participate in the elections. The order of the names on the list is fixed in accordance with what the party concerned deems fit (Representation of the People Act, Section 11B [9]).

There is an added requirement in Guyana, namely that at most 20% of the number of constituencies in which a party is contesting may contain no women. In a number of constituencies, therefore, lists with no women candidates at all can be submitted, since the one-third quota requirement is for the total of the lists submitted by each political party.

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40 [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

However, it should be noted that the quota system of Guyana does not apply to elections at the sub-national level, filling posts in cabinet, or appointing boards and committees. Moreover, it is a complicated text, which must be interpreted within the framework of the entire electoral law. Although the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) has provided written guidelines to all political parties with respect to the one-third female quota, and has conducted training seminars for election agents from each political party, many people still find the rules and regulations complicated and difficult to interpret.

Guyana's quota system has undoubtedly brought more women to national parliament, which has indirectly also allowed more women to be appointed in cabinet. Although even before the quota system existed, Guyana had relatively high percentages of women parliamentarians: 29.2% in 1985; 20% in 1997. This most likely reflects the more powerful and visible roles that women in Guyana have played within their respective political parties, and the willingness of the parties to nominate women as candidates. After the quota system was introduced in 2000, the percentages of women parliamentarians have steadily increased: 20% in 2001; 28.99% in 2006, and 31.34% in 2011.

In a workshop on women and quotas held in 2012 in Suriname, the case of Guyana was discussed<sup>41</sup>. There, it was pointed out that the efforts to introduce the quota system were built on years of education and awareness on women's issues, and that the lobby for the quota system was pursued in a structured manner. Public mobilisation was an important part of the process: panel discussions, interviews, radio and TV spots, press releases, banners, posters, flyers. In the hinterland, radio communication was used as an important means of communication to spread information to communities. Financing was provided to community members to travel to centres where public hearings were held and where submissions could be made. A total of 4,601 recommendations were received on amending the electoral laws; 275 of these were from individuals, 30 were from interest groups, and 13 from parliamentary political parties.

Practice shows that different strategies are necessary for increasing women's participation (e.g. awareness campaigns in political parties, caption of women candidates, citizen civic campaigns, etc.). But so far, the most effective and rapid

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<sup>41</sup> 'Electoral Gender Quotas: The Case of Guyana', presented to the Women and Quota Workshop, organized in 2012 by the Democracy Unit of the University of Suriname, the Ilse Henar Hewitt Foundation, the *Vrouwenparlement Forum* (VPF, Women's Parliament Forum) and the National Bureau of Gender Policy of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Suriname.

mechanism to accelerate progress seems to be affirmative action in the form of temporary special measures (TSM) or quota systems. When opportunities to introduce the gender equality agenda are identified, affirmative action should be promoted, when possible.

The views on introducing such measures in the Caribbean seem to be divided, as shown by the CIWiL and UN Women study<sup>42</sup>, where people in four CARICOM countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago) were interviewed. The opinions presented ranged from being adamantly against the introduction of TSMs to being absolutely in favour. If the choice is made to introduce affirmative action of whatever kind, extensive preparation will be required. One of the lessons learned in Guyana is that mass education is an essential element for the introduction of a quota system. Furthermore, the experience also teaches that for the system to work there must be qualitative involvement in addition to the quota itself. Anecdotal evidence for Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago points to similarities with Guyana in the process that is currently underway in those countries. In Jamaica, the *51% Coalition: Women in Partnership for Development and Empowerment through Equity* has taken on the lobby and advocacy for a quota system since the last elections in 2011.

## Women and Executive Power

Women have held executive power in twelve of the fourteen countries in this study since 1980. Four have served as prime minister in the English-speaking countries: Maria Eugenia Charles of Dominica (1980-1995); Janet Jagan of Guyana (1997); Portia Simpson-Miller of Jamaica (2006-2007 and 2012 - present); and Kamla Persad-Bissessar of Trinidad and Tobago (2010-present). In addition, Janet Jagan served as President of Guyana (1997-1999), while in Haiti Ertha Pascal-Trouillot was acting President (1990 – 1991) and Michèle Pierre-Louis held the post of Prime Minister (2008 – 2009). Besides the positions of heads of state and government, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has had a woman Deputy Prime Minister since 2010 (Girlyn Miguel). And, there are currently two women leaders of the opposition in CARICOM countries: Mia Mottley in Barbados, and Gale Rigobert in St. Lucia<sup>43</sup>.

Currently, three women serve as governors general in CARICOM countries: Dame Louise Lake-Tack of Antigua and Barbuda; Dame Cécile La Grenade of Grenada; and Dame Pearlette Louisy of St. Lucia. There is one woman Deputy Governor

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<sup>42</sup> CIWiL and UN Women study

<sup>43</sup> Website of Caribbean Elections, <http://www.caribbeanelections.com/education/women.asp>

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

General, Monica Jesse Dacon, of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The governor general is the representative of the British monarch, and as such, has the right to be kept informed on the conduct of the government, has the prerogatives of judicial pardon, performs ceremonial duties of the head of state, makes appointments to public offices, formally assents to bills before they can become law, and summons and adjourns Parliament. In most matters, the governor general acts on the advice of the prime minister, and sometimes on the advice of both the latter and the leader of the opposition. Of the CARICOM countries, only St. Kitts and Nevis and Suriname has never had a woman in the position of head of state/ government (Table 7).

**Table 7: Women heads of state and government of CARICOM countries since 1980**

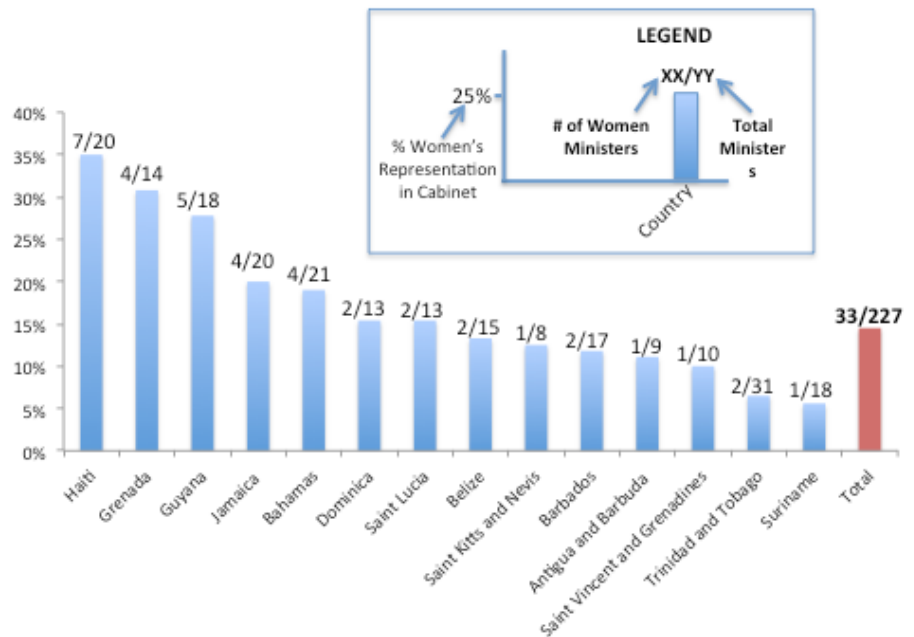
Country	Function	Name	Period
Antigua and Barbuda	Governor General	Dame Louise Lake-Tack	2007 – present
Bahamas	Governor General	Dame Ivy Dumont	2001 – 2005
Barbados	Governor General	Dame Nita Barrow	1990 – 1995
	Acting Governor General	Sandra Mason	2 days: 30 May – 2 Jun 2012
Belize	Governor General	Dame Elmira Minita Gordon	1981 – 1993
Dominica	Prime Minister	Mary Eugenia Charles	1980 – 1995
Grenada	Governor General	Dame Cécile La Grenade	2013 – present
Guyana	Prime Minister	Janet Jagan	1997
	President	Janet Jagan	1997 – 1999
Haiti	Acting President	Ertha Pascal-Trouillot	1990 – 1991
	Prime Minister	Michèle Pierre-Louis	2008 – 2009
Jamaica	Prime Minister	Portia Simpson Miller	2006 - 2007 2011 – present
St. Lucia	Governor General	Dame Pearlette Louisy	1997 – present
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Deputy Governor General Acting Governor General	Monica Jessie Dacon	2001 – present
Trinidad and Tobago	Prime Minister	Kamla Persad-Bissessar	2010 – present

Sources: *Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership*

In regards to women ministers in CARICOM countries, only 33 out of a total of 227 cabinet ministers have been women<sup>44</sup> (14.5%), with most CARICOM countries having between 10% and 19.9% women in cabinet (Figure 5). However given the small size of most cabinets, this comes down to between 1 and 4 women ministers if expressed in real numbers. Four countries have between 20% and 35% women ministers: Jamaica (20%), Guyana (27.8%), Grenada (30.8%), and Haiti (35%). Two countries have less than 10% women ministers: Trinidad and Tobago (6.5%) and Suriname (5.6 %).

<sup>44</sup> As of 1 January 2014,

**Figure 5: Number and percentage of women in ministerial positions in CARICOM countries (as of January 2014)**



Source: *Women in Politics: 2014, Situation on 1 January 2014, IPU and UN Women*

In regards to which ministries are held by women, data from IPU and UN Women<sup>45</sup> on portfolios held by women ministers all over the world show that 258 of the 1096 portfolios held by women ministers (23.5% on average) focus on social affairs such as issues relating to family, children and youth, elderly and disabled, and women’s affairs or gender equality. However, according to Professors Mala Htun and Jennifer Piscopo, in their work with the Global Institute for Gender Research, while women hold an average of 15% of ministerial portfolios in the Caribbean<sup>46</sup>, they tend to be responsible for ‘less powerful’ policy areas, such as social services, education, tourism, culture, sports, youth, and gender affairs. Women are rarely charged with ‘hard’ domains such as commerce, industry, foreign affairs, labour affairs, development, and finance.

While this study has looked only into ministerial portfolios currently held by women in Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname, no conclusion can be drawn on portfolios held by women ministers in general within the CARICOM countries. However, the global trend and the information provided by Drs. Htun and Piscopo for the Caribbean as a whole are likely to be the trend for the CARICOM countries as well.

<sup>45</sup> IPU and UN Women, *Women in Politics: 2014, Situation on 1 January 2014*.

<sup>46</sup> Htun and Piscopo, 2010. This includes the English-speaking countries which are not CARICOM members.

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Over the past ten years, several women have been appointed to ‘more powerful’ cabinet posts in the three countries. There has been a woman Minister of Foreign Affairs in Guyana since 2008. Also, Suriname had a woman Minister of Labour (2005 – 2010), a woman Minister of Foreign Affairs twice (2000-2005 and 2005-2010), and appointed its first woman Minister of Finance in 2010. The latter, however, resigned a year later in 2011. She was replaced by another woman, who was asked to resign in 2013. The first was a non-political appointee, while the second was a member of the largest party in the ruling coalition government. This specific example is worthy of attention, and there may be similar situations in other CARICOM countries as well.

Women have also been appointed as junior, state or deputy ministers, and ministers without a portfolio. While these positions may or may not be considered cabinet posts (depending on the country), they are all either within a ministry or the prime minister’s office, or under a regular minister, and without the full responsibilities of a cabinet minister. For example, in Jamaica, two of the four ministers without a portfolio are women, as are one of the eight junior ministers. In Suriname, there is only one state minister’s portfolio, which is held by a woman. In most reports and documents, no distinction is made when numbers of ministers per cabinet are counted. The case studies conducted in the framework of this regional study have shown the value of undertaking in-depth review and analysis on women’s ministerial portfolios in CARICOM countries, as well as on the role and responsibilities of their junior, state, or deputy ministers.

The political and electoral systems to a large extent determine the manner in which women are appointed to cabinet posts. The English-speaking CARICOM countries follow the Westminster system. Characteristic for this system is the way in which legislative and executive powers are merged: cabinets are usually made up of members of the legislative branch, while the primary function of parliament is to scrutinize and refine government legislation. In the English-speaking CARICOM countries, cabinet ministers are usually appointed from elected parliamentarians, either because the law so provides, or because there may be impediments to the non-elected minister’s functioning in parliament. For example in Guyana, if a minister is not an elected parliamentarian, he or she may speak to parliament, but may not vote. If there are low percentages of women in parliament, this is a serious restriction to the number of women who can be appointed in cabinet by the ruling party. The only way to increase the percentage of women in cabinet in Guyana, therefore, will be to convince the political parties to nominate more women for cabinet posts, or to influence the President to appoint more women ministers, or the implementation of temporary special measure both in ministries and parliaments.

A contrast to the Westminster system can be found in Suriname, where ministers are officially appointed by the President, in most cases upon nomination by their respective political party. Ministers cannot at the same time be parliamentarians, and if an elected parliamentarian is appointed in cabinet, he or she must relinquish his or her seat in parliament to the following person on the party's candidates' list. The percentage of women in parliament does not influence the percentage of women in cabinet, since there is no requirement that one can only be appointed as a minister if first elected as a parliamentarian (as is the case in other CARICOM countries such as Guyana and Jamaica).

Finally, In Haiti the first Woman High Court Judge (Ertha Pascal-Trouillot) became Haiti's first woman President for a brief period in the provisional government after the overthrow of the government of General Prosper Avril. She led the transition to democracy and oversaw the first free elections in Haiti on December 16, 1990<sup>47</sup>. Haiti's President is directly elected by absolute majority in general elections, and afterwards appoints a Prime Minister. Cabinet members are chosen by the Prime Minister in consultation with the President.

## Women and the Judiciary

In all CARICOM countries, there seems to be a trend of increasing numbers of women lawyers and prosecutors. In most of the countries the number of women judges is increasing as well. The criteria used to determine whether or not a person can serve as a judge or magistrate in CARICOM countries does not take gender into account; instead, determination is based on years of service and whether or not the applicant can perform his or her functions. According to the Minister of Human Services and Social Security Guyana, women accounted for 30% of judges and 60% magistrates in 2013. In Suriname, over 50% of the appointed judges and deputy judges of the circuit courts are women.

The number of women graduating from university with a law degree has contributed to this steady growth. Regarding women's representation in the judiciary in the Caribbean, women occupy over one-third of the seats. However, in spite of the high percentages of women judges throughout CARICOM, the Caribbean Court of Justice has a surprisingly low percentage of women on its bench: only one of the seven

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47 [www.haiti-reference.com](http://www.haiti-reference.com)

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

members has so far been a woman, the Honourable Mme. Justice Désirée Bernard, who held the position from 2005 until her retirement in 2014.

It is expected that future appointments throughout the region will continue to see more women being appointed in the judiciary, while the bar associations have also noted the number of women lawyers is increasing. Further, the women's associations of lawyers or judges have been active in taking on women's issues, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and human trafficking, and have played an important role in lobbying for and advising the respective governments and parliaments on necessary legislation and legislative amendments.

Jamaica has a large number of female judges and is headed by a woman Chief Justice. In the Bahamas, the posts of Chief Justice and President of the Court of Appeal have been held by women. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Association of Women Judges was established in 2013, and has been instrumental in the preparations for the Caribbean Association of Women Judges (CAWJ), launched in March 2014. The CAWJ comes under the umbrella of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), and was created to promote a greater understanding and better resolution of legal issues facing women and girls, and will also focus on general issues affecting women and women judges in the Caribbean region.<sup>48</sup>

Table 8 shows percentages of women judges in the CARICOM countries for the period 2007 to 2013. It also includes the number of women judges in the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. The ECSC was established in 1967 by the West Indies Associated States Supreme Court Order No. 223 of 1967. It is a superior court of record for nine member states, to include six independent countries, (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) and three British Overseas Territories, (Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat). The ECSC has unlimited jurisdiction in the Member States.<sup>49</sup>

In regards to the other Caribbean countries, Suriname's percentage of women judges nearly doubled, climbing from 33.3% in 2008 to 62.5% in 2013. Belize shows no significant changes for the period. Additionally, Jamaica shows an important increase between 2009 and 2011, from 25% to 50%. However, the percentage decreased for 2012 and 2013 to 42.9%

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.cawj.org/>, accessed on 9 June 2014

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.oecs.org/about-the-oecs/institutions/eastern-caribbean-supreme-court-ecsc>



**Table 8: Percentages of women judges in CARICOM countries 2007-2013<sup>50</sup>**

Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Bahamas	NA	NA	NA	NA	25.0	25.0
Barbados	NA	NA	NA	53.8	53.8	50.0
Belize	33.3	22.2	22.2	28.6	28.6	20.0
Jamaica	25.0	25.0	50.0	50.0	42.9	42.9
Suriname	33.3	33.3	52.6	55.6	55.6	62.5
Trinidad and Tobago	32.5	32.5	39.3	NA	41.9	37.5
Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court*	45.8	44.4	60.0	60.0	56.5	55.6

Source: ECLAC Gender Equality Observer,  
<http://www.cepal.org/oig/default.asp?idioma=IN#>

\*Note: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Despite the increasing number of women judges and lawyers, and the legal perspective that men and women have equal rights in the CARICOM countries, societal pressures and customs in these traditionally patriarchal societies (especially in rural areas) sometimes prevent women from fully exercising their rights — in particular, those involving marriage and inheritance. For example, the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI), which analyses the quality of democracy, market economy, and political management in 128 countries, stated in its 2012 report with regard to the situation of women in court decisions in Jamaica, that:

*“... as a result of the highly sexualized environment and culture in Jamaica in which a woman's body is seen primarily as a sex object. Incidents of sexual harassment and abuse, rape, and incest are therefore frequently treated lightly and not as serious offences.” (p.9)*

In an attempt to remedy this issue, the judiciary and police forces throughout the CARICOM countries have received gender awareness training and training on women's rights thanks to the efforts of regional and national women's organisations, in the framework of the emphasis in the past decade on gender-based and domestic violence by the UN organisations, CARICOM, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and other international and regional organisations operating in the region. These initiatives seem to have brought improvement in the treatment of women, and in women's attempts to seek redress from abuse.

<sup>50</sup> The period from 2007 to 2013 showed the most data. Nevertheless, no information is available for Guyana and Haiti.

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

The judiciary clearly has the power to play an important role in protecting women's rights. From appellate courts and high courts down the chain to magistrate and circuit courts, they are often instrumental in ensuring that women's legal rights are safeguarded in practice. With the increasing number of women appointed to the judicial system in higher positions, such as director of public prosecutions, attorney general, and solicitor general, or as chief magistrates and even presidents of the High Court or Supreme Court, one may hope to see an improved situation of women in court in future, in particular in sexual offence and property rights cases.

## Women at the Sub-National Level

National, centralized governments have increasingly been transferring administrative and management responsibilities to subnational levels, as a consequence of which subnational politics have become more relevant in the process of democratization and citizens' rights. A recent analysis of women's participation at the subnational level<sup>51</sup> in Latin American countries found that between 1998 and 2012, the number of women in subnational governance structures has doubled. Currently, about a quarter of the councillors in Latin America are women. It is assumed that larger numbers of women in democratic subnational structures will most likely translate into a greater recognition and guarantees of the rights of women in their election into positions of authority. Moreover, women at sub-national levels often use the social and community sphere as a stepping stone and a source of motivation for their involvement in politics. Similarly, the subnational government structures of the Caribbean seem to show increasing numbers of women, who appear to use their appointments on public boards and commissions as a route towards local political participation<sup>52</sup>. For example, in Jamaica, the appointment of women to public boards, school boards, and commissions is considered another key space for them to participate in governance structures, since they often use this route to begin their political careers.<sup>53</sup>

### An Example of Women's Influence in the Judicial Sector: Guyana

The Guyana Association of Women Lawyers has been active since 1987. It has worked closely with the Women's Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Human Services and the National Commission on Women on the development of the National Policy on Women and the National Plan of Action, plays an integral part in the preparation of the Guyana's Reports to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and has attended the reporting sessions of the Committee. It has championed the cause of having a greater representation of women in decision-making, particularly in the National Assembly, which resulted in the inclusion of the quota system in the electoral laws of the country.

51 UNDP Regional Centre Panama, How Much Progress We Made? An Analysis of Women's Political Participation in Subnational Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean

52 CIWIL and UN Women study Gender and Political Parties in the Caribbean

53 CIWIL and UN Women study.

The CARICOM countries vary greatly in subnational governance structures. Five of the CARICOM countries have no system of locally elected institutions: Barbados, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It should be noted that these countries are small island states with populations ranging from 46,325 in Saint Kitts and Nevis, to 280,000 in Barbados.

In countries where there are locally elected institutions, the same electoral system applies as for national level elections. Guyana's quota law applies only to elections for national parliament. However, the English-speaking CARICOM countries are members of the Commonwealth and are committed to the Commonwealth gender policy and plan of action<sup>54</sup>, which endeavours for at least 30% women in all decision-making positions. This would naturally include the local level. Table 9 presents an overview of women's representation in sub-national governments in CARICOM countries (for a more complete overview, see Appendix IV).

**Table 9: Sub-national government systems in CARICOM countries**

COUNTRY	Number of Reps	Women's representation
Antigua and Barbuda	- 11 members of Barbuda Council: 9 elected, 2 ex-officio members (Barbuda's House and Senate reps)	<u>Membership</u> (2013): 9% (1 of 11 members of Barbuda Council)  <u>Leadership</u> : 0%
<b>Bahamas</b>	Third-schedule district councils: 5-9 members  Second schedule councils and town committees: Councils vary according to size of population	<u>Membership</u> (2011): 45 elected female councillors <sup>55</sup> .  <u>Leadership</u> Not Available
<b>Barbados</b>	11 parishes, divided into 30 constituency councils, each with 15 appointed members (by minister)	Not Available
<b>Belize</b>	-9 municipal councils -193 village councils -84 alcaldes	<u>Membership</u> : (2012) 25.9% councillors  <u>Leadership</u> 22.2% mayors
<b>Dominica</b>	-13 city councillors (8 elected, 5 nominated) -8 urban councillors (5 elected, 3 nominated) -38 village councils, each with 8 reps (5 elected, 3 nominated) -Carib council (8 elected)	<u>Membership</u> (2011/12) town councils 30% village councils 43% urban councils 37% Carib council 14%  <u>Leadership</u> : Not Available

<sup>54</sup> Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005 – 2015

<sup>55</sup> Percentage could not be calculated, since total number of councillors was not available

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

COUNTRY	Number of Reps	Women's representation
<b>Grenada</b>	-	-
<b>Guyana</b>	- 10 RDCs <sup>56</sup> - 6 Municipal Councils - 65 NDCs <sup>57</sup> - 75 AVCs <sup>58</sup>	<u>Membership</u> 2008 still functioning NDCs 5% 2011 RDC election: 30.7% <u>Leadership</u> No regional chairs 2 regional vice-chairs 1 deputy mayor 2 NDC chairs 2 NDC vice-chairs
<b>Haiti</b>	10 departments  - 42 arrondissements - 140 communes - 570 sections communales	<u>Membership (2012)</u> <sup>59</sup> municipal councils: 48.5% regional councils: 45% <u>Leadership</u> Not Available
<b>Jamaica</b>	Total of 14 councils (228 councillors) divided into:  - 12 parish councils with 175 councillors - Kingston and St Andrew Corporation (KASC) with 40 councillors - Portsmouth Municipal Council with 13 councillors	2000-2003: 27% 2003-2007: 23% 2007-2012: 18% 2012 elections: 19% <u>Leadership (2012):</u> Chairs Not Available  4 women mayors: Manchester, Kingston, St. Andrew, Hanover, St. Thomas
<b>St. Kitts and Nevis</b>	-	-
<b>St. Lucia</b>	15 constituency councils, each with 9-15 appointed members	Not Available
<b>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</b>	14 appointed local government entities, Kingstown Board serves capital headed by a warden	Not Available
<b>Suriname</b>	115 district councillors  778 local councillors	<u>Membership (2010)</u> Local councils 35.7% District councils 29.6% <u>Leadership:</u> 26.7% District commissioners 30.6% Local council chairs

56 Regional Democratic Council

57 National Democratic Council

58 Amerindians Village Council

59 Information from IDEA Haiti program: <http://www.idea.int/americas/towards-genuine-application-of-the-gender-quota-in-haiti-the-importance-of-strengthening-the-c.f.m> . It is not clear what is meant with 'regional councils'.

COUNTRY	Number of Reps	Women's representation
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>	Trinidad: 134 councillors 31 aldermen 5 mayors 9 chairpersons  Tobago: 12 elected assemblymen and 4 appointed councillors (3 by chief secretary, 1 by opposition leader)	<u>Membership</u> (2010 Trinidad) 30% councillors 38% aldermen  (2013 Tobago) 27% councillors  <u>Leadership:</u> Trinidad -21% mayors or chairpersons Tobago -5% mayors

Sources: [www.clgf.org.uk/local-government-profile/2013/](http://www.clgf.org.uk/local-government-profile/2013/); IDEA ([www.idea.int/](http://www.idea.int/)); <http://www.bahamas.gov.bs/>;

ECLAC Gender Observatory; Centraal Hoofdstembureau Suriname

Unfortunately, difficulties in collecting data that is consistent across countries, regions, and sub-national structures, and that included gender disaggregated data over time meant that it was not possible to determine whether women's political participation at the subnational level is increasing, and what the percentages of appointed or elected women in the different subnational institutions are.

However, four countries where partial data were available on percentages of women's representation in subnational systems have been compared with average percentages for Latin America (Table 10). In Latin America, the women's representation in legislative bodies is more or less the same at the national, regional, and local levels — a characteristic that is shared by Guyana and Trinidad, whose percentage of women in different legislatures varies by only one percentage point. In contrast, women's representation varies greatly in Jamaica and Suriname, where local political representation is higher than at the national level. The variance in Suriname is particularly noteworthy, where the subnational representation of women is as much as 22 percentage points higher than at the national level. This may be an indication that more women are nominated by their political parties at the subnational levels in Jamaica and Suriname, or perhaps that more women show an interest in being nominated as candidates at the local level.

**Table 10: Percentages of women in sub-national and national legislative bodies in Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Guyana, compared with Latin America (as per December 2013)**

Country	Women's Representation: Local Level (%)	Women's Representation: District, Regional, and Provincial Level (%)	Women's Representation: National Level (%)
Guyana	NA	30.7% (RDC)	31.3%
Jamaica	19%	-	12.7%
Suriname	35.7%	29.6%	13.7%
Trinidad	27% (councillors)	-	28.6%
Average Latin America	25% (municipal)	23% (regions, states, provinces, governances, departments, federal entities, etc.)	22%

Sources: [www.clgf.org.uk/local government profile/2013](http://www.clgf.org.uk/local-government-profile/2013); individual websites of local councils; Centraal Hoofdstembureau Suriname; UNDP analysis of Latin America<sup>60</sup>

60 How Much Progress We Made? An Analysis of Women's Political Participation in Subnational Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, p.43

## Women and Tribal Governance Systems in CARICOM

The Amerindian peoples are the indigenous people of the Caribbean, and several CARICOM countries, like Belize and Guyana, still have sizable Amerindian populations. In addition to indigenous peoples, tribal peoples can also be found in Belize and Suriname, and to a lesser extent in Jamaica. Also there are the Maroons, descendants of black slaves who managed to escape from the plantations and establish their own communities in remote parts of the country. Some states have taken formal measures to recognize the rights of their indigenous and tribal peoples, while others accept their presence in the country as special without any formal constitutional recognition of the groups. There are at present six countries (Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) that have indigenous and/or tribal local governance.

### Guyana

Amerindian peoples comprise approximately 10% of the population of Guyana, the only CARICOM country that has ratified ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. At the national level, the Amerindian Act (2006) provides for separate Amerindian village councils (AVCs), which are managed by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs; a National *Toshaos* Council (NTC) serves as an umbrella organisation comprising all the leaders of the Amerindian villages; and the Constitution provides for an Indigenous Peoples Commission (IPC), which was established by the President in 2010 to set up mechanisms to respond to the legitimate demands and needs of the Amerindian people. The number of women *toshaos*<sup>61</sup> is increasing. Amerindian communities are primarily located in five of Guyana's regions: One, Two, Seven, Eight, and Nine. Among these, women *toshaos* account for 10% in Region One, 15% in Region Seven and 2% in Region Nine. As for Amerindian Councillors, they account for 28% in Region One, 39% in Region Seven and 35% in Region Nine<sup>62</sup>. Further, a woman has been chair of the National *Toshaos* Council since 2009, and has served as a vocal representative of the indigenous people, playing an important role in the recognition of land rights for indigenous peoples in the 2006 Amerindian Act, and participating in international meetings as a representative of her people (For a summary of countries with indigenous and tribal groups and sub-national governance rights, please see Appendix V).

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<sup>61</sup> *Toshaos* is the name of the traditional community leader.

<sup>62</sup> Speech by the Minister of Human Services and Social Security in celebration of international women's day in March 2013

### Belize

In Belize, the indigenous Maya peoples of Belize make up about 11% of the population, while the Garifuna tribal group, who have a mixed African and Amerindian ancestry, form another 6%. While an *alcalde* system of governance was introduced specifically for the Maya people in Belize, the Garifuna do not have a separate governance system. The National Garifuna Council, a non-governmental organization that represents the Garifuna people of Belize, focuses on cultural and economic development. No information is available on women's leadership in these groups.

### Jamaica

Jamaica has a small Maroon community that recognizes a woman, Queen Nanny (or Granny Nanny), as their founding mother. She was known for her exceptional leadership skills, and is the only woman listed among Jamaica's National Heroes. Although the Maroon governance structure is not formally recognized, the specificity of the group is considered unique and Maroon dignitaries are acknowledged by government officials as community leaders. Women from five Maroon villages, who act as preservers of their heritage, formed the Maroon Indigenous Women's Circle (MIWC) in 2009, which has initiated contacts with a sister organization in Suriname, the Marron Vrouwen Netwerk (Network of Maroon women), that is more politically oriented and has a gender equality agenda.

### Suriname

Suriname has both Amerindian and Maroon peoples living in tribal communities. People of Amerindian ancestry form approximately 3.7% of Suriname's population, while the Maroon peoples live in 8 tribal groups that make up 21.7% of the population. There is no constitutional recognition of specific rights for indigenous and Maroon people in Suriname, but both groups have their own governance structures, and their dignitaries are recognized by the government and supported financially and operation-wise by the Ministry of Regional Development. The *Vereniging van Inheemse Dorpshoofden* (VIDS), the association of Amerindian village leaders, was set up in 1992 to ensure the interests of the indigenous peoples. Its office in the capital of Paramaribo acts as a secretariat and is managed by a number of university-educated Amerindian women. There seems to be an increase of the number of women in village leadership positions, with female captains now being elected or standing for election in some villages these past years, 8 of the 40 village chiefs are currently women.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Information from the VIDS office.





There is no umbrella organization of Maroon leadership. The traditional leadership structure in each tribal group is determined through clans and families. Since the 1990s, Maroon political parties have been gaining in power, and have been part of the ruling coalition since 2005, with Maroon serving as cabinet ministers. In the current parliament, two of the six women parliamentarians are Maroon women, as is the current Minister of Social Affairs, while the current permanent secretary of the ministry of Regional Affairs, the deputy director, and other high-level staff are all women of Maroon descent. The *Marron Vrouwen Netwerk* (Maroon Women's Network) has been active since the late 1990s, and like other women's organizations in Suriname, has a gender equality agenda and some of its members have moved into political parties.

## Trinidad and Tobago

Since there is no official census category for indigenous people in Trinidad and Tobago, there are no official population percentages for Amerindians, nor is there specific legislation on indigenous peoples' rights or a specific system of sub-national rights awarded to indigenous people. However, the Amerindian people have their own governance structure with a chief and a queen, who are both chosen by their people.

In Guyana and Suriname, indigenous and tribal persons are playing increasingly important roles in politics at the local and national levels and in both countries, women of the indigenous and tribal communities are taking on more visible decision-making roles — both within the traditional governance structures of their communities and in the formal executive and legislative structures of the country. There have been many studies on the indigenous and Maroon peoples in these countries, but so far, attention has focused only on the changing role of women in their traditional communities. Women's new role in politics and the impact it may have on decision-making and power, with increasing numbers of young women from these groups completing university education and taking more prominent national leadership roles, presents a rich opportunity for further analysis.

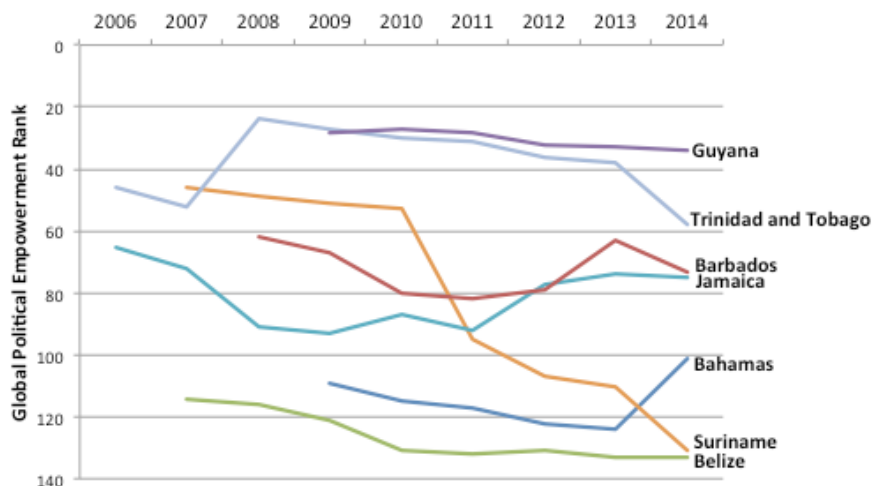
# Chapter 4: Women, Power and Influence to Promote Gender Equality

As a desk review, the scope of this study was limited and could not be centered specifically on the impediments to the political participation of women. It has attempted, however, to analyze the extent of women’s participation in several fields of power and their influence to promote positive changes to gender equality and empowerment of women, topics which this chapter will focus on.

## There are Relatively Few Women in Political Decision-making

While there is a general perception that Caribbean society predominantly bases the mother as the head of the household, and that Caribbean women are strong, powerful, capable, and able to take care of themselves and their families, women have always been underrepresented in politics in the region. This is evident in Figure 6, which shows the ‘political empowerment’ rank for seven of the CARICOM countries included in the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum for 2014 for the period 2006 – 2014<sup>64</sup>.

**Figure 6: Global political empowerment rank for select CARICOM countries 2006-2014**



Source: WEF Global Gender Gap Index 2014

64 The “political empowerment” subindex, of the Global Gender Gap Index report of the WEF, measures the gap between men and women at the highest level of political decision-making, through the ratio of women to men in minister-level positions and the ratio of women to men in parliamentary positions. In addition, include the ratio of women to men in terms of years in executive office (prime minister or president) for the last 50 years.

From the figure, we see that:

- The Bahamas has steadily declined from 109<sup>th</sup> place in 2009 to 124<sup>th</sup> place in 2013, but rose again in 2014 to 101<sup>st</sup> place.
- After a steady decline over a four-year period, Barbados regained its 2008 ranking in 2013, but fell again in 2014.
- Belize shows a steady decline in political empowerment of women between 2007 and 2014.
- Guyana has remained more or less constant, with a slight decline evident in 2012 to 2014. However, its political empowerment ranking remains above that of several industrialized countries such as France, Canada, and the United States
- Jamaica has been fluctuating, with a declining trend between 2006 and 2009, followed by a slight improvement in 2010, and another decline in 2011. There was a positive jump in 2012, and a further slight improvement in 2013.
- Suriname, like Belize, is showing a steady downward trend from 2007 to 2014.
- Trinidad and Tobago also displays a fluctuating trend: a decline between 2006 and 2007, followed by a steep increase in 2008, and then a downward trend between 2009 and 2014.

## Reasons Women are Underrepresented

Diverse documents, as well as reports at national and international forums, explain some of the reasons why women's participation in political decision-making has been difficult to achieve. Structural and social barriers have been named among the reasons that prevent women's political participation and representation. Socio-cultural norms, negative stereotypical gender roles and lack of empowerment are continuously mentioned. In order to address this issue, efforts have been made by several regional stakeholder groups to better understand the challenges to increasing women's political participation in the region.

An example of such an effort were the hemispheric forums in 2011 and 2012 organized by the *Interamerican Commission on Women* (CIM) of the Organisation of American States (OAS)<sup>65</sup> to discuss women's leadership and political citizenship in strengthening democratic governance in the region. These forums aimed at bringing women's visions, experiences, and aspirations to the construction of a

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65 CIWIL and UN Women study

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

citizens' democracy with full equality for men and women; better understanding the current challenges that democratic systems face in guaranteeing the exercise of women's substantive political citizenship; identifying and discussing the political and state reforms necessary in order to expedite the exercise of women's full citizenship in Latin America and the Caribbean; and stimulating synergy, consensus and joint activities between the government's executive, legislative and judicial branches, women's networks and organizations, and ombudspersons. They were successful in developing recommendations for increasing women's participation that included the need for modernization of governmental branches, political parties, electoral processes, as well as modernization of the state from a gender mainstreaming and women's rights perspective, and promoting synergies between governmental branches, ombudsmen, women's organisations and networks, and civil society.

### ***Interamerican Commission on Women (CIM) of the Organisation of American States: Statements by key participants***

Dr Kenny Anthony, also speaking at the First Hemispheric Forum in 2011, said that in the Caribbean the greatest challenges to progress in gender equality, meaningful citizenship, and good governance are the lack of economic sustainability, persistent cultural and social stereotypes that fail to appreciate women as authority figures, and the lack of appropriate mechanisms to accommodate women in their several and diverse social roles and responsibilities. He also mentioned that class and race add an extra dimension in achieving gender equality in the Caribbean.

Former Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados and current leader of the opposition, Mia Mottley<sup>66</sup> affirmed: "... there is still lip service paid in respect to the participation of women in politics in our countries, in spite of the significant gains made at a certain level. We have, for example, a situation where we expect two or three out of 30, four at most, in a cabinet out of 20 and a Parliament out of 30. But if you try to go beyond that, women are then chosen and put into seats where they are not going to win, and if they win, it is an extraordinary feat that usually arises from a landslide for one term, and then the system corrects itself. We have a situation where the notion of affirmative action is treated as an offensive notion, simply because it is felt: 'Well, women already occupy 80 percent of the places going into university, what more do you want?' without realizing that the ability to decide and the ability to choose is the fundamental right, the ability to be—not to be selected, not to be agreed to."

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<sup>66</sup> Mottley, Mia, 'Challenges to women's political representation in the Caribbean, presentation at the "Women's Leadership for a Citizens' Democracy", 2011. Mia Mottley is former Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados and currently the first woman leader of the opposition.



Even when women have been involved in politics or social movements in the Caribbean, their contributions were always secondary to those of men. Dr. Barriteau<sup>67</sup> points out that the “twentieth century Anglophone Caribbean is a liberal, democratic, masculinist construct whose activities and power relations affect the ways women’s economic, political, social, and personal activities are perceived and maintained”.

## Powerful Women in the Caribbean Political Arena

The women who do make it to political decision-making positions (e.g., prime ministers, cabinet ministers, speakers of parliament) and survive over time to make a difference are those who have carved out a place for themselves in the political arena through becoming powerful players within their own political parties, or developing their own following in the communities that they represent.

In her profile of twenty of the most influential women, Dr. Barrow-Giles<sup>68</sup> identifies those who have struggled and excelled despite the obstacles from 12 territories in the Caribbean. She describes them in four categories: women who led the struggle for freedom; women who fought for equal rights and justice during the pre-independence period; postcolonial trailblazers; and women entrepreneurs. Most of the postcolonial trailblazers went on to become heads of state government or opposition.

Although women in politics are currently a minority, some have achieved very powerful positions in the political arena. Below are several excellent examples of influential women in the Caribbean’s political spectrum. One example is Trinidad’s Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the leader of a political party and of the coalition of five parties (People’s Partnership Coalition) that was formed for the general elections of 2010. The PPC won 29 of the 41 seats of the House of Representatives in the last elections, resulting in her becoming the first woman to serve as Attorney General, acting Prime Minister, and Leader of the Opposition.

Another example includes Jamaica’s Prime Minister, Portia Lucretia Simpson-Miller, whose career began in local government as a councillor. She has been in her party’s leadership since 1978 and has topped opinion polls for many years. Her People’s

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<sup>67</sup> Barriteau, 2001, p. 43

<sup>68</sup> Barrow-Giles, 2011.

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

National Party won 42 of the 63 seats in the House of Representatives in the last elections. Also of note are Suriname's Speaker of the National Assembly Jennifer Geerlings-Simons (who holds both a high position within her party's structure and has a popular following), and Deputy Speaker Ruth Wijdenbosch, who was elected into this position by the opposition.

All these women leaders have publicly spoken out on the need for women in politics and leadership positions, and have given women opportunities in their place of work. However, how their positions may have helped to open spaces for women within their respective political parties is not directly visible.

## Institutional Impediments Within Political Parties in CARICOM Countries

The political parties are responsible for recruiting, selecting and promoting candidates for elections. Hence, they play a critical role in whether or not women are able to enter politics and achieve decision-making positions in political processes. Parties' structures and operations are influenced by strong patriarchal norms, which are obstacles to equality of opportunity for women in political participation and representation as well as in party hierarchy. The most effective approaches to increase women's participation within political parties are said to rely on a combination of strategies to address the underlying vulnerabilities that women face, and would include transforming the structure of political institutions and political parties. It would also mean providing support to gender equality advocates within and outside political parties, and women candidates and elected politicians.

The political party is a powerful actor in the Caribbean. Although there are instances where individuals have run as independents, people can only be elected successfully if they are members of a political party and run on a party's ticket in the countries included in this study. As the political party, and in particular the party leadership, determines who is on a candidates' list and in what position, it is a key focal point for achieving progress in women's participation in politics. They can either hinder or promote the selection of women into decision making positions, or as candidates in winnable positions on the electoral lists, and they play an important role in the development and training of candidates.

## **Low presence of women in leadership positions in political parties**

A recent study by CIWiL and UN Women<sup>69</sup> confirms that the structures and operations of political parties were fashioned, and have continued to be influenced, by strong patriarchal norms, and furthermore states that since political parties are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and promoting candidates for elections, they are the main gatekeepers of women's struggle for parity in political decision-making.

Interestingly, data from several studies indicate that women often have numerical superiority in party membership: in most Caribbean countries, women serve as campaigners, field workers, and/or election workers. However, this presence rarely transforms into gender equality in party leadership. For instance, all the major decision-making bodies or organs of the PNP in Jamaica show an overwhelming membership of men, albeit the majority of the members are female at 18,900 with males at 12,600. Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago women's membership in political parties ranges from 40-50 percent, varying immensely with their presence in party leadership, which is only ten percent. In Haiti, only 7 of the 144 political parties are headed by women; in Suriname, none of the parties that participated in the 2010 elections were led by a woman.

This phenomenon was directly observed during the OAS observation mission to the 2007 general elections in Jamaica<sup>70</sup>, where it was noted that a large number of women were actively involved in propaganda and other election-related activities, despite the presence of few female candidates. As a result of this mission, the OAS recommended that parties pursue mechanisms to recruit, train, and finance women to be candidates for public office, and to disaggregate electoral data to establish the numbers of women and youth voters and electoral officials in order to quantify relative participation rates and considering which groups are under-represented at different stages of the electoral process and why.

Support to the argument that political parties contain institutional impediments to limit women's participation can be seen in Jamaica's general elections in 2011. There, the current ruling party (PNP) managed to win a landslide victory with 42 seats, i.e. two-thirds of the seats in parliament (Table 11). However, only five of those seats (11.9%) were won by women — an indication of the low number of women who were nominated as candidates by the party. With a strong woman leading the party

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69 CIWiL and UN Women study

70 Final Report of the OAS Electoral Observation Mission for the General Elections in Jamaica, General Election 2007, OEA/Ser. GCP/doc. 4261/08, 27 February 2008

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

(the current Prime Minister), one might have expected the PNP to have nominated a higher percentage of women candidates, which might have brought in more women parliamentarians. It should be noted that five of the six PNP women candidates did manage to win seats. The percentage of women candidates nominated by the JLP was higher, but only 3 of the 13 women candidates won seats, resulting in 14.3% women's representation for the JLP.

**Table 11: Political parties in the House of Representatives of Jamaica, number and percentage of women, and number and percentage of women candidates after/in last elections (Dec 2011)**

Political party	Seats held in House	Number and % of women in House	Number of candidates on lists of political parties	Number and % of women candidates
PNP	42	5 (11.9%)	63	6 (9.5%)
JLP	21	3 (14.3%)	63	13 (20.6%)
Total	63	8 (12.7%)	126	18 (14.3%)

Sources: IPU Parline Database; Political Database of the Americas; Caribbean Elections; Bureau of Women's Affairs

Guyana's quota system was in part a response to these structural impediments within parties. Although the system in place<sup>71</sup> does not guarantee one-third of the seats for women in the national assembly, it has ensured a growing percentage of women parliamentarians. Of particular note is the high percentage of women who were brought into the national assembly by the smallest party (AFC) in the last elections (Table 12).

**Table 12: Political parties in the National Assembly of Guyana, and number and percentage of women after last elections (Nov 2011)**

Parties and alliances	National seats		Regional seats		Total seats	
	Total #	# and % women	Total #	# and % women	Total #	# and % women
People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/Civic)	19	4 21%	13	4 30%	32	8 25%
Partnership for National Unity (APNU)	16	6 37.5%	10	2 20%	26	8 30%
Alliance for Change (AFC)	5	2 40%	2	1 50%	7	3 42%
Total	40	12 30%	25	7 28%	65	19 29%

Sources: IPU Parline Database; Political Database of the Americas; Caribbean Elections

71 In Guyana, the percentage of women nominated by each political party, as required by the quota law, must be 30%.



Another example of institutional barriers can be found in Suriname's complicated proportional multi-party representation system, which allows each party to enter elections individually or as a political combination. As a result, in past elections, mammoth political combinations have been formed that are usually formed to contend in elections, and not on political or developmental vision. These have caused problems in the past, with individual parliamentarians or smaller groups within the large political combinations either crossing over, or forming their own parliamentary factions.

**Table 13: Political parties in the National Assembly of Suriname, and number and percentage of women after last elections (May 2010)**

Political combination	Seats	# and % elected women
Mega Combination: NDP PALU NS KTPI	23	2 (8.7%)
NF Combination: NPS VHP SPA DA9I	14	1 (7.14%)
A Combination: ABOP SEEKA BEP	7	1 (14.28%)
VA Combination: Pertjajah Luhur Pendawalima D2I Middenblok NPLO PPP PPRS Trefpunt 2000	6	1 (16.67%)
DOE	1	0 (0%)
Total	51	5 (9.8%)

The political parties and combinations that won seats, and the number of women elected as parliamentarians, are depicted in Table 13. The formation of political combinations is a specific challenge to nominating women as candidates in Suriname due to the fact that all individual political parties in 2010 were chaired by men. When political combinations are formed for elections, the chairs of the individual parties are nominated first on the candidates' lists; leaving relatively few places open for women, even if they hold a strong position inside their own party or have a personal following within their constituency. The only way then open for women to win a parliamentary seat is if they campaign for preferential votes from the electorate.

Sources: IPU Parline Database; Political Database of the Americas; De Nationale Assemblée

### *Women's leadership in political parties*

Women's leadership in political parties varies from country to country in the Caribbean. However, Guyana, Jamaica, and Suriname are noteworthy examples of a rich history that can be built upon to ensure greater participation and empowerment.

Guyana has had a tradition of visible women's leadership in political parties since the early 1950s: Janet Jagan co-founded the People's Progressive Party (PPP) with her husband Chedi Jagan in 1950. Together with Winifred Gaskin, she also formed the first women's political body known as the Women's Political and Economic Organisation in 1946. Both Jagan and Gaskin devoted themselves to improving the situation of women by endeavouring to bring about fundamental social and political changes through education and political mobilization. With the formation of the People's National Congress in October 1957 as a spin-off from the PPP, Winifred Gaskin became one of the party's founding members. Although at the frontline of actually establishing the respective political parties to which they belonged, they nevertheless played a secondary role to male politicians.

In Jamaica, women have manifested a different tradition of active political involvement<sup>72</sup>. This ranges from the women's arm of the People's National Party in the early 1970s, to feminist efforts that pushed the government to set up special mechanisms to integrate women's affairs into national development policies. The early feminists of the first half of the twentieth century in Jamaica were vocal about women's equality, colour discrimination, and human rights, and were closely involved in political activism. The 1960s and 1970s produced many political activists, but no party frontrunners like in Guyana. Portia Simpson-Miller is an example of the Jamaican women politicians who worked themselves up from the local level and through party structures. She became a vice president of her party in 1978, and then party leader in 2006.

In Suriname, one woman wrote history when in a strange twist of logic; she was able to stand for election and was actually elected to the then 15 member all-male parliament in 1938 — despite not having the right to vote in elections herself until universal adult suffrage was granted ten years later. Like other Caribbean countries, women's involvement in politics in Suriname has traditionally always been more focused on support or active campaigning for male candidates. However in 1991, a woman politician who was placed quite low on her party's candidates' list campaigned enthusiastically and received sufficient preferential, personal votes to gain a seat in parliament. She later went on to become the first woman Speaker of the National Assembly in Suriname (1996-2000).

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<sup>72</sup> Antrobus, 2004

The first political parties set up in Suriname did not have any women frontrunners as in Guyana. Nor was there an active feminist lobby as in Jamaica. It was only during the preparations for Beijing in 1995 and in the post-Beijing activities that women's organisations became actively involved in advocating for more women in decision-making positions. The first political party to be founded by women was DOE in 1999, which is also the only party with a quota system laid down in its by-laws: 50% of its board and party structures must consist of women.

According to CIWil and UN Women<sup>73</sup>, many political parties in the Caribbean contributed to the region's independence movements. Generations of political leadership have been groomed and encouraged in these institutions, and political parties are "a critical nexus where social and structural barriers to women's political participation can either collide or be transformed". Political parties, therefore, play a crucial role in increasing women's political participation, and in transforming stereotypes about women's role as leaders. But the structures and operations of political parties continue to be influenced by strong patriarchal norms, and since the political parties are responsible for recruiting, selecting and promoting candidates for elections, "they are the main gatekeepers of women's struggle for parity in political decision-making".

Bearing in mind the essential nature of political parties in regards to women's participation, during the *Caribbean Colloquium on Women Leaders as Agents for Change*, convened in Trinidad in 2011<sup>74</sup>, the resulting Port of Spain Consensus called upon political parties of the Caribbean to:

- Set targets of at least 40% of either sex on the lists of candidates for parliamentary and local government elections, and senatorial appointments;
- Review governance processes to identify and address impediments to internal party democracy;
- Develop and implement initiatives that facilitate women's full participation in all internal policy-making structures, and electoral nominating processes;
- Examine party structures and implement procedures to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against women's participation and leadership; and
- Strengthen and support mechanisms to engender women's and youth participation.

*"A good indication of a party's commitment to gender issues is given by the number of women within its leadership structures, the initiatives it undertakes to increase the presence of women in different spheres of political decision making, and how seriously it undertakes the task of promoting gender equality through its political activities" (Teresa Sacchet, 2005).*

*Source: CIWil and UN Women, Gender and Political Parties in the Caribbean*

<sup>73</sup> CIWil and UN Women study in the Introduction chapter

<sup>74</sup> CIWil and UN Women study. The colloquium was convened by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in partnership with CIWil, UN Women, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Organisation of American States (OAS).

### *Gender equality and political party agendas*

Gender equality has very low priority on the agendas of political parties in the Caribbean. The highest priorities cited in polls include: unemployment, economic management, crime, inflation, corruption, leadership, education, justice, police behavior, economic inequality, and race. While the system of patronage politics and constitutional and electoral reform are also sometimes mentioned as priorities, women's issues and gender equality are never mentioned in opinion surveys as issues that concern the electorate. Instead, they have usually been brought up by women's organizations, associations, networks, and platforms that advocate for gender equality and where women hold decision-making positions.

Political parties often indulge in gender equality rhetoric while shirking active commitment<sup>75</sup>. For example, in the survey among political parties conducted in Trinidad and Tobago,<sup>76</sup> respondents were asked whether parties instituted any special measures to include more women in politics, and whether or not a gender policy had been mainstreamed into party constitutions, manifestos, or youth arms. The response was negative, lending evidence to the idea that the existence of a women's league and the mention of gender in a party manifestos were most likely regarded as sufficient evidence that of gender sensitivity.

Political parties throughout the CARICOM countries usually include women's arms, whose purpose is to promote inclusion of more women in political parties. In Jamaica, the PNP Women's Movement<sup>77</sup> was jointly founded by women from civil society and women in the PNP hierarchy, and advocated for key legislation, policy, and programmes with an impact on women that were successfully put in place, such as the laws on maternity leave, pay equity, minimum wage, the national housing trust, and amendments to the inheritance laws. However, in general, the effectiveness of women's arms in advancing gender equality agendas is questionable; very little is known of how and if they play a role in empowering women politicians within their own party. It appears that their activities generally focus more on mobilizing support for male contenders in the form of financial resources and community development workers.<sup>78</sup> Political parties sometimes include gender equality goals in their policies or programs, and sometimes women's arms or other representatives of the political party publicly commit to advancing these goals during campaigns. However, after the elections, politicians often seem to forget their party rhetoric and "it would seem that 'Business As Usual' (BAU) has been declared".<sup>79</sup>

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75 CIWIL and UN Women study

76 CIWIL and UN Women study in the Chapter on Trinidad: Gender and Political Parties in Trinidad and Tobago ( Lead Researcher Dr. Rosina Wiltshire with Isiuwa Iyhen and Glenda Joseph-Dennis), p 11

77 CIWIL and UN Women study, p.63

78 CIWIL and UN Women study, p.7

79 Grant-Cummings, Joan, Gender and Political Parties in Jamaica, p.16 in CIWIL and UNWomenUN Women study



## Prioritization of Gender Issues in Parliaments

Once elected, parliamentarians are generally expected to observe party discipline when voting. The more experienced parliamentarians in the party are generally the ones who speak on important issues; the younger and less powerful party members are expected to concur. This dynamic is particularly evident in countries with a Westminster parliamentary system. In this system the more influential or powerful party members (the ‘frontbenchers’) sit in front and speak on important or controversial issues, while new or less important ones (the ‘backbenchers’) are seated further back and speak on less important issues and are expected to agree with what the frontbenchers have presented. The ministers of cabinet are frontbenchers for the ruling party in parliament.

Additional prioritization issues also exist. For example, the Suriname system offers an additional layer of complexity through time limits for parliamentarians who speak on important issues such as the budget debates. The government coalition parties and the opposition parties are assigned maximum time, agreed upon by the respective parties and the parliamentary leadership. Coalition and opposition parties then assign one or two persons each to speak on certain issues in the debates. This restricts the participation of parliamentarians in open debate, especially if they are new or less experienced.

In neither situation do individual, inexperienced parliamentarians who enter parliament after general elections — and newly elected women parliamentarians usually fall in this category — have the power to bring change or lobby for bills and legislative amendments that may be controversial or difficult to pass (such as most bills that deal with gender equality). Frontbenchers or the more powerful parliamentarians are the only option for building inter-party alliances or working structures to address issues of gender.

Parliamentarian partisanship also hinders prioritization. In Guyana, where the larger political parties have historically never agreed on much of anything, even greater political discord is now present. This situation has impeded the formation of inter-party working structures such as women’s caucuses. As the critical mass of women parliamentarians needed for women’s or gender quality issues is divided along party lines, partisan politics appears to have derailed action in these areas. This situation can also be observed in Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica, where partisan politics also seem to govern the work of parliament and hamper effective functioning.

## Women in parliamentary committees

In national legislative bodies, women parliamentarians could influence legislative work through their participation in committees. However, in Guyana, Jamaica, and Suriname, parliament does not have a committee specifically for gender equality or women’s rights, and because of the relatively low numbers of women in the national legislative bodies of Jamaica and Suriname, existing parliamentary committees have few or even no women members.

It is important to review the type of committees where women are present in order to determine whether there is a traditional division of labour in parliament. An analysis of committees for Guyana, Jamaica, and Suriname (Table 14),<sup>80</sup> shows that ‘reproduction committees’ (which main focus on social issues) have the highest percentages of women, followed by the ‘preservation of system’ committees (which focus on political and administrative issues). Committees addressing national economic and infrastructure issues (the ‘production committees’) have the lowest percentages of women parliamentarians.

### Committees without women’s participation

In Jamaica, 4 of the 14 committees of the House of Representatives have no women members. None of these committees, or those in the senate, is chaired by a woman.

In Suriname’s National Assembly, 9 of the 23 committees have no women members. With the exception of one committee, which is chaired by the speaker herself and was established to prepare and implement renovations of the parliamentary building, none of the committees is chaired by a woman.

The National Assembly of Guyana currently has a total of 27 committees. In spite of the higher number of women parliamentarians than in Jamaica and Suriname, there are nevertheless 4 committees with no women members, and only 3 committees chaired by a woman.

**Table 14: Parliamentary Committees in Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname according to the Skard and Haavio-Mannila categorization (Dec 2013)**

Skard and Haavio-Mannila categories	Guyana			Jamaica			Suriname		
	Number of committees	Total members	Number of women members	Number of committees	Total members	Number of women members	Number of committees	Total members	Number of women members
Reproduction	6	55	18 (32.7%)	4	38	7 (18.4%)	8	45	7 (15.6%)
Production	7	66	12 (18.2%)	5	61	5 (8.2%)	6	33	4 (12.1%)
Preservation of system	14	132	39 (29.5%)	5	47	3 (6.4%)	10	71	8 (11.3%)

80 For the purposes of the analysis, the Skard and Haavio-Mannila method was used, which distinguishes three categories of committees: reproduction, which includes social policy, family, health, education, housing, environmental, culture, etc.; production, which includes economic and fiscal policy, labor, industry and energy, etc.; and preservation of the system, which comprises political and administrative reform, foreign and defense policy, support to interest groups and minorities, etc.

## ***Building capacity for promoting gender equality***

Capacity-building activities for parliaments in CARICOM countries have usually focused on strengthening general parliamentary operations and procedures. However, awareness and education initiatives that focused on legislative action have also been created to facilitate a better understanding of human rights issues. For example, with the help of women's and gender bureaus, women's and other civil society organisations, and UN agencies operating in the region, parliamentarians have been given the opportunity to gain more insight into gender budgeting, domestic violence, sexual harassment, HIV-AIDS, and human rights of vulnerable groups (children's rights, LGBT rights). Some activities have even included high-level government decision-makers.

### **Strengthening Parliaments to monitor gender**

While the Second Hemispheric Forum in 2012 was being held, CIM also organized the first consultation of female members of parliament of the Americas in collaboration with the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) and the Committee on Gender Equity of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic. The consultation aimed at identifying the main problems, priorities, and strategies for promoting equality between men and women on the legislative agenda, and to develop a hemispheric programme to strengthen the ability of parliamentary committees and blocs to monitor gender equality and exert influence.

A second parliamentary consultation was held in October 2013, resulting in a cooperation agreement between the Network of Women Parliamentarians and CIM “to unite and complement efforts to promote and defend legislative agendas for women's rights and gender equality in the parliaments of the region”<sup>81</sup>

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81 <http://us7.campaign-archive2.com/?u=f4f9c21ffdd25a4e4ef06e3c2&id=5637e3f671&e=e092baeda2>

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

In terms of capacity building, The *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)* has developed a Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments<sup>82</sup> that offers a broad range of strategies in the following seven action areas that can be implemented by parliaments irrespective of the number of women members:

- Increasing the number of women in parliament and achieving equality in participation
- Strengthening gender equality legislation and policy
- Mainstreaming gender equality throughout all parliamentary work
- Instituting or improving gender-sensitive infrastructure and parliamentary culture
- Ensuring that responsibility for gender equality is shared by all parliamentarians – men and women alike
- Encouraging political parties to be champions of gender equality
- Enhancing the gender sensitivity in, and gender equality among, parliamentary staff

According to the IPU, “a gender-sensitive parliament responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its structures, operations, methods and work”<sup>83</sup>. To this end, Parliaments were called on to implement the Plan of Action at the national level by setting concrete objectives, actions, and deadlines suited to their national context, and to regularly monitor and evaluate their progress towards the goal of gender sensitivity. However, from the data and information gathered during this desk review and from expert sources, it is not clear whether parliaments of the CARICOM countries have started to implement any of the strategies proposed in the Plan of Action.

In Jamaica, Guyana, and Suriname, where more detailed information was gathered, national parliaments have not yet discussed or mentioned the IPU’s resolution to develop a gender plan for their institutions — nor have they taken actions yet towards institutionalizing gender-sensitivity. In Suriname, the Speaker of the National Assembly has been speaking out for increasing women in politics in general (and in parliament in particular) and has initiated training for women in political parties. However, these represent her personal initiatives and not activities undertaken by parliament.

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<sup>82</sup> The Plan of Action is adopted by the 127th IPU Assembly in Quebec, Canada, in October 2012. It is designed to support parliaments to become more gender-sensitive.

<sup>83</sup> IPU Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments, p.10



It was not possible to find specific data and information on structures and procedures of parliaments and their operations, which could help establish the extent to which they are gender-sensitive. No information could be found in the available resources on legislative procedures or the composition of committees over the past ten years (or more) to identify a trend in women's participation in parliamentary work, inter-party work structures, legislative themes, and policies. According to the resource persons in the different countries, such information might be available in the archives of the individual national parliaments or the national archives (where these exist). However, finding such specific information would be time-consuming and would require a more in-depth reading and analysis of existing parliamentary and other documents. When information was found on parliamentary structures and policies, it was included in the present study, even if such information was available only for one country or only for recent years.

The only CARICOM country with a formal women's inter-parliamentary caucus is Grenada. The *Grenada Women's Parliamentary Caucus (GWPC)* was created in 2009, and relates to both chambers. According to its rules, the GWPC "provides an opportunity for women to exchange and ensure the cross-fertilization of ideas, to form collective platforms on particular policies and actions, and to support one another on issues and areas of common concern." It aims at enhancing democratic processes and strengthening legislatures by building the capacity of prospective female parliamentarians and leaders regardless of party affiliation.

### ***Women parliamentarians working together***

The GWPC published the booklet *Women and Governance, A Grenadian Experience* in 2011 to commemorate 50 years of parliamentary service, in which all women who had served in the Senate (a total of 16) and the House of Representatives (a total of 13) were listed, as well those who served during the Grenada revolution and Interim Government. The booklet showcases the work of women in legislatures and is an awareness-raising instrument for the work of the GWPC. At the same time, it provides insight into the backgrounds of the women who were elected or appointed. As Grenada has neither a women's or gender bureau or commission, nor a non-governmental umbrella organisation that brings together women's organisations, the high percentage of women in parliament and cabinet after the last elections (2013) might be attributed to the work of the GWPC.

### Gender Responsive Budgeting

One strategy for holding parliaments and government accountable for gender equality is through gender responsive budgeting. According to UN Women<sup>84</sup>, gender responsive budgeting (GRB) is “government planning, programming, and budgeting that contributes to the advancement of gender equality and the fulfilment of women’s rights. It entails identifying and reflecting needed interventions to address gender gaps in sector and local government policies, plans, and budgets. GRB also aims to analyse the gender-differentiated impact of revenue-raising policies and the allocation of domestic resources and Official Development Assistance.”

Gender responsive budgeting leads to greater public transparency and to economic policies with more benefits for the community. None of the CARICOM countries has introduced gender responsive budgeting, in spite of advocacy by UN Women, other UN agencies, and the Commonwealth Secretariat that demonstrate its relevance to the Millennium Development Goals, aid effectiveness, public sector reform, and financing for development. Throughout the years, several CARICOM countries have seen a number of initiatives that address GRB, usually undertaken by women’s bureaus, gender bureaus, or women’s organisations. In Suriname, the workshops on GRB initiated by the *Vrouwenparlement Forum* (VPF) to its inclusion in the national gender policy plan. Unfortunately, the pilot project was not further developed or implemented.

### Accountability for Gender Equality

Accountability to the public means that the public monitors the actions of officials in order to promote transparency, encourage performance, ensure that processes and institutions produce results that are promised, and that resources are efficiently used. Meaningful citizen involvement and media attention are the most effective ways to monitor the actions of public servants.

One example of accountability to the public can be found in Suriname, where *Stichting Projekta* (the Projekta Foundation) has organised Democracy Month in November every year since 2009. While it focuses on the wider context of participation and democracy, the issue of gender is always included. An annual newsletter, *The State of our Democracy*, is published electronically during the month, and parliamentarians are invited for face-to-face

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<sup>84</sup> <http://www.gender-budgets.org/>, accessed on 20 January 2014

interactions with the general public during presentations, workshops, training, etc. The Speaker of Parliament was invited to hold a presentation in shortly after her election to the post in 2010, which also happened to be the midst of the first budget debates led by her. At this opportunity, she presented her vision and plans to build the capacity of the national assembly and make it more accessible to the general public by the active use of broadcasting and internet. Afterwards, presentations were organized in parliament on the political participation of women, which led to a commitment from the ministry of Home Affairs to work on legislation for gender equality in political and executive processes, possibly through a quota system.

The Projekta Foundation has also organized the annual 'March of Women' activity since 2011, which uses a month of presentations, debates, workshops, and media attention to debate gender equality issues with the general public. Parliamentarians, including the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, are invited to all events, where there are always one or two interested parliamentarians who actively engage with the public.

The Government of Jamaica has also introduced a number of systems and measures to improve accountability of public officials in both government and parliament. These include the introduction of the Consultation Code of Practice for the Public Service, which requires public consultation for all policies being developed, and the reform of Parliament to enhance its representativeness and accountability by strengthening its capacity to oversee governance and accountability systems and to ensure that it has the requisite capacity to deliver on its responsibilities.

The media plays an indispensable role in monitoring what takes place in society, reporting on current events, providing frameworks for interpretation, potentially mobilizing citizens, and entertaining. In the countries included in this study, women's organisations have invested time and resources throughout the years in involving and interacting with the media and providing access to information or education on gaining access to statistics. As a result, they have been trained to better understand gender inequality issues both in the individual countries and as part of Caribbean initiatives in the hope that they would eventually monitor gender inequality, socialization issues, and gender roles in their respective countries. On their part, the media have actively cooperated in reporting on events, providing space for interviews, or giving extra coverage and attention on international women's day. However, there are not many examples of structured, self-prompted and self-generated media activities that provide continuous information on gender inequality issues, let alone monitor what government and parliament are doing to eradicate women's discrimination and

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

gender inequality. In fact, most media activities were once-only events concentrated on newly elected governments and newly installed parliaments. Follow-up and monitoring were usually lacking, either due to lack of funding available for civil society action, or lack of technical capacity in women's/ gender bureaus and women's organisations, or a possible lack of continued interest among the media.

That being said, an excellent example of how civil society organisations actively and successfully involved the media can be found in Guyana's campaign to lobby for a legislated quota system as a reform to electoral laws. Also, in Grenada, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, the relevant women's caucus and women's organisations and networks have been interacting closely with the media to focus attention on the need for more women in decision-making positions.

## Gender Equality Advances on Legislation: A Review of Topics

The constitutions of the CARICOM countries in general guarantee every person, regardless of sex, their fundamental rights and freedoms — including the right to equality before the law. If anti-discrimination provisions do not specifically appear in the constitution, women are ensured equality of treatment by public institutions. However, these regulations sometimes apply only to public institutions and not to the private sector, where little is done to protect women from discrimination in employment matters. It is in such cases that national legislative bodies need to pass legislation to guarantee gender equality. However, given that the percentages of women in parliaments and cabinets of the CARICOM countries are generally low — beneath 30%, the globally recognized critical mass needed in parliaments to bring about reforms and amendments in relation to women's rights and gender equality — legislative reforms and societal change will probably remain slow.

While this critical mass is essential, it is important to note that in the CARICOM countries with consistently high percentages of women in parliament, such as Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, increased attention to gender equality in bills or amendments' being submitted in parliament does not seem to have come about. In Guyana this may be due to the lack of interparty collaboration and a slim majority of the opposition in parliament, which could effectively reduce or negate the advantage provided by a relatively high percentage of women parliamentarians.

However, some progress has since been made in CARICOM countries to remove sex-based occupational distinctions in the determination of wage levels, and to establish

or extend maternity leave. Also, the legal infrastructure to **ensure gender equality in employment** has been strengthened, with more governments approving sexual harassment legislation and equal pay. Most CARICOM countries have legislation pertaining to employment equality legislation, either formulated in specific laws or in enshrined in the general labor laws that date from the 1990s.<sup>85</sup> At least part of this progress is attributable to The CARICOM Secretariat producing model legislation between 1989 and 1991 on issues affecting women in order to assist member states in the drafting of national legislation. Issues covered included citizenship, domestic violence, and equality for women in employment, equal pay, inheritance, maintenance and maintenance orders, sexual harassment, and sexual offences.

In terms of **citizen security**, the CARICOM Secretariat also proposed model legislation in 2004 as a guide for governments for the implementation of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crimes and its Protocols, which includes the Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. A CARICOM strategy on crime and security was adopted at the 24th Inter-sessional Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of Government in February 2013 in Haiti. The strategy defines security threats and risks, and elaborates 14 strategic goals in its action plan<sup>86</sup>. International organized crime, human trafficking and smuggling, natural disasters, and climate change, among other things, have been included.

This strategy was complemented in September 2013, by an agreement signed between CARICOM and Spain for a USD1.1 million regional citizen security project that will focus on youth and gender issues and youth entrepreneurship.<sup>87</sup>

In regards to **human trafficking**, most CARICOM countries address trafficking in persons (TIP) in their criminal or penal codes. The following CARICOM countries have passed specific laws on trafficking<sup>88</sup>:

- Bahamas - The Trafficking In Persons Prevention and Suppression Act (2008)
- Belize - The Trafficking In Persons Prohibition Act (2003)
- Guyana - The Combating Trafficking In Persons Act (2005)
- Jamaica - Trafficking Act of Jamaica (2007)

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85 The Database of Labor Legislation of ILO member states in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean gives the full text of the laws ([http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/projects/cariblex/ab\\_act2.shtml](http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/projects/cariblex/ab_act2.shtml))

86 CARICOM Strategy on Crime and Security, 2013

87 CARICOM press release 205/2013 of 30 Sep. 2013, [http://www.caricom.org/jsp/pressreleases/press\\_releases\\_2013/pres205\\_13.jsp?prnf=1](http://www.caricom.org/jsp/pressreleases/press_releases_2013/pres205_13.jsp?prnf=1)

88 UN Interagency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) [http://www.no-trafficking.org/resources\\_int\\_tip\\_laws.html](http://www.no-trafficking.org/resources_int_tip_laws.html)

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Despite laws addressing TIP, the US Department of State still placed Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, St. Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago on its Tier 2 Watch List in its 2013 Trafficking in Persons<sup>89</sup> report. This classification means that the number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is significantly increasing, and governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards in their respective Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). However, CARICOM countries are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards. Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Jamaica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines were placed on the Tier 2 List, which, unlike the Tier 2 Watch List, indicates that while these countries do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, they are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance.

Further evidence of efforts to bring countries up to minimum standards may be found in the US Department of State's 2014 Interim Assessment<sup>90</sup>, which highlights:

- Barbados and Guyana have initiated prosecutions against trafficking offenders.
- Haiti took steps toward the passage of legislation to ensure that all forms of trafficking are prohibited and that provides for victim protection.
- St. Lucia created an interagency task force that is drafting a national action plan to combat forced labor and forced prostitution.
- Suriname increased prosecution efforts against trafficking offenders; however the draft national action plan on human trafficking has not yet been approved.
- Trinidad and Tobago used its trafficking law for the first time to charge trafficking offenders and developed draft standard operating procedures on victim identification.

As far as **sexual reproductive rights**<sup>91</sup> are concerned, in most Caribbean countries the legal age of consent to sex is 16. However, the legal age of majority is 18 — meaning that parental consent is required for medical treatment. This effectively restricts access to contraception and other aspects of sexual and reproductive health care for 16 and 17 year olds, despite being legally allowed to have sex. In the English-speaking Caribbean, reference is sometimes made in common law to “Gillick competence” (used to decide whether a child is able to consent to his or her medical treatment without the need for parental permission or knowledge) to justify cases where sexual reproductive care is provided to adolescents under 18.

The grounds under which **abortion** is legal vary widely in the countries included in this study, from complete illegality in Haiti and Suriname, to no restrictions in Guyana.

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89 <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/index.htm>

90 <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/reports/2014/221821.htm>

91 Allen, Caroline, Situation Analysis of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV in the Caribbean, PAHO, 2013

Between these two extremes, some countries require justification for abortion on the basis of saving the life of the women, or preserving her physical or mental health, while in some countries abortions can be legally justified on socioeconomic grounds.

In regards to **maternity leave and benefits** (Table 15), the Bahamas is the only CARICOM country to include paternity leave (seven days without pay). Only the Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago cover 100% of the full maternity leave. Jamaica covers the full 100% for domestic workers, and Suriname covers 100% for women employed in public service, who are guaranteed 12 weeks of maternity leave. However, Suriname is also the only CARICOM country that does not have a national law on maternity leave, and the trade unions operating in the private sector must negotiate for it in collective labor agreements.

**Table 15: Overview of legislated maternity leave in CARICOM countries (Dec 2013)**

Countries	Duration	Benefits
Antigua and Barbuda	13 weeks	100% for first 6 weeks: 40% employer and 60% social security system 60% for 7 remaining weeks
Bahamas	12 weeks	100%: 33.3% employer 66.7% social security system 100% covered by the social security system if worker's contributions are not up-to-date
Barbados	12 weeks	100% covered by the social security system
Belize	12 weeks	100% for first 10 weeks covered by the social security system 80% for 2 remaining weeks
Dominica	12 weeks	60% covered by social security for 12 weeks 50% by employer for 4 weeks Maternity grant of \$500 per child for insured woman or uninsured spouse of insured man
Grenada	12 weeks	65% covered by social security system
Guyana	13 weeks	70% covered by social security system
Haiti	12 weeks	100% for 6 weeks covered by social security system
Jamaica	12 weeks	100% for 8 weeks covered by employer 100% covered by social security system for domestic workers
St. Kitts and Nevis	13 weeks	65% covered by social security system
St. Lucia	13 weeks	65% covered by social security system and remainder by employer
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	13 weeks	65% covered by the social security system
Suriname	12 weeks only for the public sector In the private sector based on collective labour agreements	For public sector: 100% covered by employer
Trinidad and Tobago	13 weeks	100% the first month, covered by the employer, and the two following months: 50% employer and 50% social security system

Source: ECLAC-UNICEF Challenges, July 2011; Dominica Social Services<sup>92</sup>

92 <http://www.dss.dm/benefitsshortmaternitygrant.cfm>, accessed on 8 March 2014

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

In regards to **gender-based violence**, legislation governing domestic is sexual violence is covered by existing legislation in all countries (Table 16; for a detailed overview, see Appendix VI). It should be noted that legislation specifically governing the issue of sexual harassment appears only in six of the thirteen countries reviewed. Information on Haiti was not available.

**Table 16: Approval year of legislation governing gender-based violence in CARICOM countries (Dec 2013)**

COUNTRY	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	SEXUAL VIOLENCE	SEXUAL HARASSMENT
Antigua and Barbuda	1999	1995 (amended 2004)	
Bahamas	2007	1991	1991
Barbados	1992	1992	
Belize	2007	2000 (revision of criminal code)	1996
Dominica	2001	1998	
Grenada	2001	1958 (revision of criminal code)	
Guyana	1996	2010	1997
Jamaica	1995	2009 (included child pornography)	
Saint Kitts-Nevis	2000	2002 (revision of criminal code)	
Saint Lucia	2005	2005 (revision of criminal code)	2000 (criminal code revised in 2005)
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	1995	1990 (revision of criminal code)	
Suriname	2009	Wetboek van strafrecht (Criminal Code) Title XIV, Offences against morality, articles 292 – 313	Wetboek van strafrecht (Criminal Code) Title XIV, Offences against morality, art. 290- 291
Trinidad and Tobago	1999	2006	2005

Sources: UN Women Caribbean, National Assembly of Suriname, Criminal Code of Suriname

## Public Policies on Gender Equality and the Role of the Gender Bureaus

The size, population, and resources of the CARICOM governments have been a challenge to the establishment of national machineries as autonomous state entities. However, women's organizations, the establishment of formal and informal networks, and assistance from donors have been indispensable for smaller countries to advance the gender equality agenda. By 2000, even most of the smaller Caribbean countries had national mechanisms of some sort, although still ascribed to sectorial ministries.<sup>93</sup> In most CARICOM

<sup>93</sup> Fernós 2010, p. 13



countries, women's or gender bureaus, or national gender commissions have proven to be instrumental to the formulation of national gender policies and plans, the signing and ratification of CEDAW and other international and regional human rights conventions and treaties, and the reporting on progress with respect thereto, as well as the preparation of legislation.

In the English-speaking CARICOM countries, the gender or women's bureaus have direct access and links to national parliament through the minister under whom they fall (as ministers in Westminster systems are also parliamentarians). Technical assistance in preparation of legislation, therefore, usually takes place within or through these bureaus, after which the minister can submit the necessary bills or legislative amendments to parliament. This might be the reason why there are no parliamentary committees in these countries that deal specifically with gender or human rights.

A notable contrast can be found in Suriname, where the Gender Bureau is a department within the Ministry of Home Affairs, and does not have direct access or a direct link to national parliament, since ministers are not parliamentarians. There, a committee was established by the Minister to make an inventory of legislation that needs to be brought in line with CEDAW and other international and regional conventions and treaties. This committee also prepared the necessary bills and amendments, which were submitted in the national assembly by a parliamentarian belonging to the ruling coalition or a member of the minister's party, and usually after lobby by women's organisations.

The gender and women's bureaus throughout the region have always collaborated closely with women's organisations to not only formulate policies, but also to advocate for legislative change, and lobby government and parliament for specific issues and legislation, such as domestic violence. However, low technical and institutional capacity, and sometimes insufficient budgets, have plagued most of these bureaus, and hampered both the interactions with civil society organisations in general, and the gender agenda of the individual countries.

### Gender Bureau Budgets

In order to present a sampling of gender bureau budgets, the below excerpts from the Jamaica, Guyana, and Suriname case studies provide an understanding of resources allocated to gender equality in the region.

In Jamaica, the budget for ‘women’s welfare’ is part of the budget of the Prime Minister’s office and includes the bureau of women’s affairs and the women’s centre, as well as grants to non-government organisations. In 2011-2012 the total expenditures for women’s welfare amounted to 2.19% of the total recurrent budget of the office of the PM; this increased to 11.9% in 2012-2013. There was no information available for the 2014 budget.

The national budget of Guyana incorporates a sub-programme “Gender Equality and Empowerment”, which has four activities, i.e. protection of women’s rights, protection of men’s rights, economic advancement and support, and elimination of gender-based violence. This sub-programme is part of the Social Services Programme of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security. The ministry does not show a specific budget for gender equality and empowerment, but the ministry’s entire budget was only about 3.8% of the national budget in 2011 and 4.4% in 2013.

In Suriname, the National Bureau of Gender Policy (NBG) comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The realization for ‘gender emancipation’ in 2012 was a mere 0.58% of the ministry’s total realized budget. The projected gender policy programme budget for 2014 is 0.82% of the ministry’s total policy programme budget, and for the projected following years it is consistently below 1% of the ministry’s total budget. The amount which the Ministry of Home Affairs has budgeted each year for the National Gender Policy Bureau, and thus for the implementation of the gender equality programme, has always been low, and the current amount is even below what was budgeted in 2007 and 2008.

The funds budgeted for gender-focused bureaus in the Jamaica, Guyana, and Suriname are noteworthy for two reasons. First, the low amounts are indicative of the relative importance gender initiatives are given in political circles in the region. Jamaica allocates a comparatively high percentage of the total PM budget to gender. However, when one takes into account other countries such as the Philippines, where 5% of all agencies’ budgets are required by law to be dedicated to gender programmes<sup>94</sup>, allocations for the other two countries researched appear inadequate. Second, the

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<sup>94</sup> Sharp, Rhonda; “Budgeting for Equity: Gender Budget Initiatives within a framework of performance oriented budgeting”; 2003

volatility of funding, such as is evident in Suriname's programme expenditures between 2001 and 2016, may indicate that gender policy may be lower priority — and that budget cuts may affect gender programmes before others.

UN Women Caribbean has recommended a number of strategic actions<sup>95</sup> to ensure that national machineries in the Caribbean region can continue to advance the gender equality agenda. These actions include the following:

- Gender bureaus should be strengthened and institutionalized by increasing their resources and including them in all levels of policy making processes, as well as forging closer alliances with various statistical and data gathering agencies so that research can be analysed along gender lines and better used to inform programmes and policies targeting women;
- Gender training should be provided for relevant staff in NGOs (Non-governmental Organisations), government, and regional organisations on gender analysis and the way gender operates in society;
- Gender impact assessments must be implemented in all new policies, work plans, relevant departments, ministries, organisations, and corporations.

## Women as Agents of Change for Gender Equality

Throughout the CARICOM countries, increasing numbers of women have been appointed to government positions in the past decade, and development plans usually included paragraphs or chapters on how gender equality would be attained. However, these initiatives have not always resulted in changes in attitudes or more just political systems, despite women having participated on public boards and commissions, and having always been the mainstay of civil society through their active work in non-governmental organisations.

### *Political women and the promotion of women's issues*

Women who have become politically influential do not always advocate for women and women's issues, either because they do not want to be seen as feminists or women rights advocates, or because party discipline might prevent them from taking an active role in collaborating across party lines on gender equality issues.

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<sup>95</sup> <http://www.unifemcar.org/>, accessed on 20 January 2014

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Sometimes they have obtained their influence and power positions by advocating for other relevant issues (such as indigenous rights, green development, or economic change), and therefore may have an agenda other than gender equality. It should also be noted that being a woman may not necessarily imply being gender sensitive.

At the First Hemispheric Forum in 2011, Dr. Barrow-Giles<sup>96</sup> stressed that women politicians do not always represent specific women's interests, and it has been extremely difficult for women to influence political decision-making or take a different stance from their political party in Caribbean democracies. At the forum she noted that while it would be expected that women in political parties would bring interests that cannot always be represented by men to the agenda, parliamentary democracies like those in the Commonwealth Caribbean often prevent this from happening. In these forms of democracy, institutionalized factors such as collective responsibility and party strength make it difficult for women to introduce issues that might deviate from the party line.

### *Women's movements*

Women throughout the Caribbean have played an important role in the history of slavery, colonialism, and independence in the region. According to the esteemed Caribbean scholar Professor Rhoda Reddock<sup>97</sup>, women were active in religious and social organizations in the late 19th century and early 20th century because these were "legitimate spaces in which women could freely participate outside of the home, without the need for justification to spouse or family". These organisations were the main mechanism for transferring Western European values of women's place in society, for determining the post-emancipation sexual division of labour, and for ordering the social, and domestic organisation of communities. This role continues to the present, where they are now taking up the cause of ensuring gender equity in the region,

The international women's movement of the 1960s and the 1970s had a catalytic effect throughout the Caribbean. National and regional women's organisations established during that period have continued to actively push gender equality issues forward by lobbying and advocating for women's rights, women's health, and women's empowerment. Some have broadened or specialized their scope of work and/or offer specific capacity building in order to address new issues such as democratization and civil action, and policy monitoring. The training sessions offered

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<sup>96</sup> 'Electoral Reform and Political Participation in the Commonwealth Caribbean: Effecting Change through Electoral Reform, paper presented by Cynthia Barrow-Giles at the OAS Forum on Women's Leadership for a Citizens' Democracy

<sup>97</sup> Reddock, 1998.



by these organizations are attended by members of the public and private sectors, NGOs, and even individual parliamentarians, since parliaments do not usually offer their own training. They have sometimes been asked by governments to provide training sessions to help formulate national gender policies, or to realize their goals, depending on the country, the power of the organisations, and the individual women who lead them. Women's organizations have also been instrumental in bringing more women into the political arena.

Within the individual countries, women's organisations played an indispensable role after the Beijing Women's Conference, lobbying for gender policies and plans of action, and supporting the respective governments efforts to set up gender bureaus and women's machineries that would bring about a transformation in development. Through involving the media in all their activities, they have also played an important role in education and awareness; and they shored up advocacy actions for legislation to be passed for domestic violence and sexual harassment by providing training for parliamentarians, members of the judiciary, and the police force. However, in their advocacy and capacity building to increase women's political participation, women's organisations have rarely targeted political parties<sup>98</sup> themselves, although they often initiated formal and informal lobby groups, networks, and inter- and extra-parliamentary women's caucuses.

## Networks and Caucuses: Women Working Together

In countries with limited specialized capacity, or where partisan politics usually make it impossible for parliamentarians to work together within intra-party structures, the most effective way to collaborate on politically or socially sensitive or controversial issues is non-parliamentary or non-partisan networks outside parliament that maintain sufficient ties with government and parliament to ensure necessary follow-up through legislative reform or new policies.

Women's organizations and other civil society entities in CARICOM countries usually have direct links with communities and vulnerable groups. In addition, they often possess more expertise on human rights and gender equality issues than government

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98 CIWIL and UN Women study

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

or parliament. Therefore, they are often asked to help build awareness and capacity, to facilitate a better understanding of issues, or to provide feedback on legislation before official submission in parliament. Unfortunately, dialogue on gender equality issues doesn't always exist between parliament and civil society. Further, there are no formal or informal women's parliamentary caucuses that could undertake work across party structures and build the capacity of women parliamentarians, or support their work (See Appendix VII for an overview of the government organisations, women's caucuses, and lobby groups working for gender equality and women's rights in the CARICOM countries).

### Women's caucuses

As previously mentioned, the only CARICOM country with a formal women's inter-parliamentary caucus is Grenada. *Grenada Women's Parliamentary Caucus (GWPC)* was created in 2009 with the objective of promoting women's exchange to form collective platforms on particular policies and actions, and areas of common concern. However, other Caucuses in the region exist that focus on gender equity and women's participation

The *Vrouwen Parlement Forum (VPF)* in Suriname is an extra-parliamentary women's caucus (literal translation: Women's Parliament Forum). At its inception in 1993, the VPF announced that it would focus its attention on equal access of men and women in politics, exploring possibilities for introducing a quota system, introducing the concept of gender budgeting, lobbying for amendments in legislation that is discriminatory to women, and pushing for policies and legislation to stop violence against women. Although it has no formal relationship with the National Assembly, all women parliamentarians are special members of the forum. The year after its inception, the VPF began to act much like a shadow parliament, holding meetings and hearings to give women a platform to voice their opinions on national issues, and meet the women parliamentarians. It held seminars on issues that concerned women, conducted gender policy studies, and offered training to women who were interested in playing a role in politics.

Another example of a non-inter-parliamentary caucus is the non-partisan *Jamaica Women's Political Caucus*, formed to encourage and facilitate women's active political participation. For over 21 years, the JWPC has advocated for increased women's political representation, and has provided capacity strengthening and support for women candidates or potential candidates from both political parties at the national and local levels, and has given financial support to women candidates to pay nomination fees.



## Women's network associations

Network associations have been vital to building capacity and providing support for both women parliamentarians and women in general. The following paragraphs provide a sampling of the associations encountered in CARICOM countries, as well as an overview of their major activities.

The *Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women* has been active since 1984, and its current membership boasts over 100 civil society organisations. In 2013, the network released a women's manifesto for local government that formulated ten demands from the women of Trinidad and Tobago during an intervention in the process of local government as part of an effort to address the problems facing the nation.

The *Trinidad and Tobago Institute for Women in Leadership (TTIWL)* provided training for women from all parties who were interested in running for office in local government elections in 2013, and supported the preparations for their campaigns and their responsibilities as elected local government representatives. Such active interventions may well have proven to be a boost for Trinidad's women to contend in elections.

The *Association of Women's Organisations in Jamaica (AWOJA)*, established in 1996, was responsible for preparing Jamaica's NGO shadow reports in 2006 and 2012. The association brought together a number of NGOs and individuals in its twenty plus years of existence, and has advocated for women's rights, served as a network when the CEDAW shadow reports were being formulated, advocated for necessary changes, and helped prepare legislative amendments on occasion.

The *51% Coalition: Women in Partnership for Development and Empowerment through Equity*<sup>99</sup> was founded in Jamaica in 2011 as an alliance of 11 partner organizations. It was formed with the aim of correcting the inequality in women's participation in political activities and decision-making. The Coalition has campaigned to increase the participation of women in politics and on boards through a 60/40 quota system, that is, an immediate target of at least 40% women on Government Boards and in the Senate.

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99 The 51% coalition is an alliance of the Association of Women's Organisations in Jamaica, the Institute of Gender & Development Studies-Mona & Regional Unit, Jamaica Women's Political Caucus, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Panos Caribbean, Sistren Theatre Collective, Women's Resource & Outreach Centre, Women Business Owners, Women's Media Watch, and the Young Women's Leadership Initiative.

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Organizations such as these provide excellent examples of how research institutions, women's organisations, and individual women activists in the Caribbean have worked together to lobby and advocate in a wide variety of gender equality issues in the region.

In addition to nationally active organisations, there are a number of regional organisations that have been active in advancing women's rights, gender equality, and the political participation of women, and have interacted with national women's organisations and individual women. The *Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)* was founded in 1985 as a regional network of feminists, individual researchers, activists and women's organisations that define feminist politics as a matter of both consciousness and action. CAFRA's work has included projects and programmes on women in agriculture, women and the law, women's history and creative expression, women and development and sustainable livelihoods, women's health and reproductive rights, and gender and youth.

Individual women activists and researchers in the Caribbean have also joined the *Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)*, a network of women scholars and activists from the South who engage in feminist research and analysis of the global environment and are committed to working for economic justice, gender justice, and democracy. DAWN began in 1984 on the eve of the international conferences marking the end of the UN Decade for Women, when a group of feminists from the South prepared a platform document that, for the first time, put macro-economic issues on the agenda of the women's movement and presented it at the Nairobi Women's Conference in 1985.

Dr. Peggy Antrobus<sup>100</sup>, a leading women's advocate in the Caribbean involved in the establishment of CAFRA, DAWN, and the *International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN)*, wrote that during the Decade for Women, women's groups advocated for setting up special machinery for the integration of women in development and in promoting legislative changes on issues such as wage equity and maternity leave. Caribbean women also participated in the global conferences of the 1990s, and were heavily involved in the negotiations around the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies and the Beijing Platform for Action. Caribbean women's organisations mobilized themselves particularly around issues like violence against women, but also challenged the structural adjustment programmes, which had been a big issue in the Caribbean in the mid-1980s and early 1990s. Although women in the Caribbean were also involved in organizing and sometimes in the leadership of trade unions, women's rights were not seriously taken up in this area.

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<sup>100</sup> Antrobus, 2000.





A relatively new regional organisation is the *Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWiL)*, a non-political, non-partisan, and independent networking Institute that was established as a partnership of National Women's Machineries (NWMs), women's organizations and political institutions to monitor and strengthen the work of increasing women's political participation in the region. The institute aims to produce high quality research, documentation, analysis, training, and advocacy to advance women's transformational leadership and increase the number of women in politics, leadership, and decision-making at all levels in the Caribbean. Its specific goal is to increase women's representation in these areas towards 50 per cent by 2015. In 2010 CIWiL, with support from UN Women, the OAS, and the Commonwealth secretariat provided its first training programme in Advancing Transformational Leadership for Gender Justice in the Caribbean in collaboration with the UWI's *Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS Mona Unit)*. The organization could potentially play an important role in helping to advance women's participation and build the capacity and confidence of women politicians throughout the region to participate in elections and play a more active role in their political parties and in their parliaments.

As a university institute, the IGDS offers under-graduate and graduate courses in gender studies, as well as non-degree programmes and short courses to students from all over the Caribbean. The institute also provides public service, outreach, and activism that transform gender relations and promotes social justice. The regional coordinating unit is at the Mona campus in Jamaica, and IGDS units can be found at the UWI campuses in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The IGDS St. Augustine Unit in Trinidad has an outreach programme through which the institute has maintained linkages with the women's movement, the emerging men's movement, and the wider Caribbean society. IGDS has been building the capacity of government and non-government organisations and staff of the English-speaking CARICOM countries to better understand gender equality issues and use a gender lens in their work. Many people who are currently working for women's or gender bureaus in the English-speaking Caribbean are graduates or have been trained by IGDS. A comparison of the strategies, activities, and impact of the different caucuses, organizations, networks, associations, and coalitions working to improve women's political participation in the CARICOM countries might yield interesting lessons.

# Chapter 5: Main Findings and Recommendations

## Main Findings

### **The Context of Women’s Political Participation among CARICOM Member States Resulted in a Shift in Research Focus:**

While the original objective for the study was to show the relationship between women’s political presence and the positive effects it might have through the inclusion of gender and related inequality issues, the researchers encountered an array of cultural, structural, and political barriers faced by women politicians that negatively impact both their participation and abilities to introduce gender issues into their respective national political agendas.

### **There is a Lack of Women Who are Key Decision-Makers in the Region:**

Women in the Caribbean have been able to vote and stand for elections for over sixty years. They have been involved in politics ever since the first political parties were set up, but the region as a whole still lacks a critical mass of women as key political decision-makers. In all countries in this study, women’s presence and participation in parliaments and cabinets is highly dependent on their equal and equitable participation opportunities in political parties. To date, only small numbers of women have managed to gain a place within their party’s leadership structure.

### **CARICOM Countries are Committed to Women’s Participation, but Progress**

**has been Very Slow:** All CARICOM countries have ratified the CEDAW convention and have committed to having 30% women in decision-making positions. The English-speaking CARICOM countries are also committed to the Commonwealth gender policy, which aims for at least 30% women in all decision-making positions. By the end of 2013, only two of the CARICOM countries had achieved a critical mass of at least 30% women in parliament: Guyana, with a legislative quota system in place since the 2000 election; and Grenada, since the last general election in 2013. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as of 1 January 2014, the global average of women in parliaments now stands at 22.2%. Parliaments in the Americas had the second highest regional average: 25.2%, which is a gain of 8.7 percentage points since 2002. In the CARICOM countries however, women’s representation has remained relatively stagnant at an average 14 – 17% for the same period. For the region as a whole, there has been a mere 2.8% increase in women in elected parliaments between 2000 and 2013, which makes for an average pace of change

of 0.2% per year. At this rate of change, the CARICOM region would need another century to reach the 30% women's representation target.

**Some Countries have Addressed the Issue of Women's Participation with Affirmative Action:** Two CARICOM countries have taken affirmative action for the advancement of gender equality in women political participation, Guyana since 2000 and Haiti since 2012 (for Haiti, the quota system laid down in the Constitution that was amended in 2012 and has not yet been implemented). Only one CARICOM country (Grenada) has a formal women's inter-parliamentary caucus: the Grenada Women's Parliamentary Caucus (GWPC).

**Women's Participation in the Political Process is Relegated to Non-Decision Making Roles:** While women in the Caribbean are actively involved in the political process as voters, campaigners, election officers and in propaganda, such active involvement is hardly translated into an increased visibility as political party candidates and elected representatives, despite women making up the majority of political party memberships in many cases. The selection of political candidates is still mostly determined by the party leadership. Even when women have shown an interest in more active participation in electoral politics, the party's selection process often works against them. Although the Caribbean has produced outstanding women politicians, the numbers of women politicians in decision-making positions has remained small. Most women politicians seem to have become politically influential through their own efforts and not necessarily through support from their respective political parties.

**Political Culture Hampers Women's Effectiveness as Instruments for Women's Empowerment:** In view of the relatively small populations of most CARICOM countries, women who attain positions of power could easily be recognized as power-brokers for women's empowerment, yet experience shows that they are hampered by the male-dominated culture of politics, party loyalty, and in some cases, personal backlash and political violence.

**Harassment and Political Violence is a Problem:** UN organisations have been working intensively in the region on the eradication of gender based-violence. While it is not yet documented, political violence is one of the main barriers to advancing women's political participation.

**Women's Political Appointments to Parliaments has Increased:** In the Caribbean countries with a bicameral parliamentary system, the past years have

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

shown substantially higher percentages of women in appointed positions in the upper chambers than in the elected positions in the lower chambers. From the data available, it is not evident how the women appointed by their political parties can be held accountable for contributing to advancing gender equality legislation.

**There are no Gender Committees:** At present, none of the parliaments of the CARICOM countries has a gender equality committee. Suriname is the only country with a parliamentary committee on human rights that incorporates women's and children's rights. It is not clear how parliaments ensure that gender equality is taken into account in their debates on legislation and what role women parliamentarians currently play in gender equality legislation.

**Current Power Brokers Present Barriers to Women's Political Visibility and Effectiveness:** In CARICOM countries, democracies are dominated by powerful political executives. This often leads to a tendency for authoritarian rule, compounded by strong party control of parliament and the creation of doubts about the independence and effectiveness of the courts of justice. Further, as these executives consist primarily of men, this structure appears to hamper women's political participation and their ability to effectively introduce legislation related to gender equality.

**Women's Participation in the Judicial Branch Continues to Grow:** In view of increasing numbers of women graduating from law schools and their presence in bar associations, it is expected that the region will continue to see even more women appointed to positions in the judiciary.

**Women's Political Participation at the Subnational Level is Increasing:** Whereas in Latin America the rates of political participation at national, regional and local levels are almost the same, Local political participation in Jamaica and Suriname is considerably higher than at the national level. Findings indicate that women in the Caribbean appear to use their appointments on public boards and commissions as a route towards local political participation.

**Women's Participation and Leadership in Tribal Governments Appears to be Increasing:** Six of the nine CARICOM countries (Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) have indigenous and/or tribal local governance. In Guyana and Suriname, the number of women in traditional leadership positions seems to be increasing. Moreover, young tribal and indigenous women now complete higher education and take on new and visible decision-making roles and

responsibilities in their traditional governance structures and in the formal executive and legislative structures of their respective countries. However, not much is known about the impact this has on their communities and their life.

**Partisan Politics Further Hampers Women Parliamentarians' Effectiveness**

**in Enacting Change:** The low numbers of women parliamentarians in most parliaments of the region might render formal parliamentary women's caucuses too small an organ to enact significant change. Moreover, there is an inherent difficulty in working across party lines: the pervasive presence of party loyalties makes it hard to find common ground on which to join forces. In Guyana, for example, there is a critical mass of women parliamentarians, but the interests of partisan politics seem to be stronger than women's or gender equality issues, thus preventing establishment of intra-party structures like a women's parliamentary caucus, necessary to push the gender equality agenda further.

**Women in CARICOM Countries are Resorting to Other Methods Besides**

**Direct Political Participation to Influence Government:** Regardless of the percentage of women in parliament, women in many of the CARICOM countries have joined forces in informal extra-parliamentary women's caucuses or lobby groups to influence government decisions, or to push for legislation on gender equality or women's rights. They have played an important role in the advancement of gender equality and in providing support for women parliamentarians.

**Women's Organizations Continue to Play an Indispensable Role:**

In the individual countries, women's organisations played an indispensable role after the Beijing Women's Conference, lobbying for gender policies and plans of action, and supporting the respective governments in setting up gender bureaus and women's machineries, which would bring a transformation in development. They have also played an important role in education and awareness to include: involving the media in all their activities; providing training for parliamentarians, members of the judiciary and the police force; and advocating for legislation to be passed for domestic violence and sexual harassment. Research institutions, women's organisations, and individual women activists in CARICOM countries have worked together to lobby and advocate for a wide variety of gender equality issues in the region and have been vital to capacity-building of and support for women parliamentarians and women in general. However, in advocating for women's political participation, women's organisations and activists have rarely targeted political parties.

# Recommendations

### **Increase Women's Political Participation Through Affirmative Action:**

Given the slow pace of change in the advancement of gender equality in political decision-making in the past thirteen years in the countries studied, temporary special measures and affirmative action will be required to increase women's participation in political decision-making. Enforceable, non-compliance sanctions, such as those used effectively with political parties in Guyana, must be included.

**Improve Accessibility and Quality of Electoral Data:** Electoral data should be made more accessible and published in a disaggregated form for both local and national elections for voters, candidates, persons elected, and electoral officials. Such data allow for better analysis of relative participation rates in all stages of the electoral process and over longer periods of time than the last elections.

**Recruit and Foster Women's Participation in Political Parties:** Political parties need to encourage equal opportunities for women within their structures, and actively pursue mechanisms to recruit, train, and finance women to be candidates for public office through increased awareness, policy measures, fast track options, transparency, effective non-compliance sanctions, and targeted results-based financing.

**Address Issues Such as Harassment and Violence Against Women Within Political Party Structures:** Political parties should take steps to institute no-tolerance policies with strong sanctions on harassment (including sexual harassment) and gender-based violence. Furthermore, institutional protocols should be developed to encourage women members to officially report offenses to the political leadership and to the police if a violation occurs.

**Strengthen the Role of Gender Bureaus in CARICON countries:** The gender and women's bureaus have always collaborated closely with women's organisations to formulate policies, advocate for legislative change, and lobby government and parliament for specific gender agenda issues. However, low technical and institutional capacity, and in some cases insufficient budgets, have hampered both the interactions with civil society organisations and the gender agenda of the countries.

**Strengthen Women’s Caucuses in the Region:** The formal and informal, and intra-parliamentary and extra-parliamentary women’s caucuses need to be strengthened, as these mechanisms play an important role in providing continuous support for women parliamentarians.

**Develop a Greater Knowledge Base of Women’s Participation in Politics:**

More in-depth studies are required in the CARICOM countries on a number of issues, including the following:

- There are higher percentages of appointed women in the upper chambers in comparison with the percentages of elected women in the lower chambers. It would be interesting to gain a better understanding of their substantive leadership, and the possible correlation between their work and increased gender equality legislation.
- A further examination and analysis of women’s ministerial portfolios in CARICOM countries, as well as an analysis of junior, state, or deputy ministers, should be undertaken in order to understand why more women than men seem to be appointed to these functions.
- A further examination is needed on whether women ministers and parliamentarians of CARICOM countries remain in office for the same duration as their male colleagues, and how often they return to elected or appointed office after a first term.
- Further studies are needed to gather more (and more reliable) data on women’s representation in local government structures from all CARICOM countries in order to be able to analyse regional trends in women’s representation and function at the subnational levels.
- A further examination is needed on how increasing numbers of (young) women from indigenous and tribal communities participating in political decision-making address gender equality issues, and whether their new roles and responsibilities have an impact on gender equality and relations in their own communities.
- Further field studies, data collection, and analyses are required of women’s participation in parliamentary work and inter-party work structures, as well as their possible influence on gender equality policies and legislation.
- In countries where ethno-politics have become ingrained, an updated and deeper analysis (including a gender analysis) of voter orientation and candidate nomination per party is needed to determine if and what could bring more women into political decision-making.

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## Appendix I: Health and Education in CARICOM Countries

Table A presents overall human development ranking, human development index (HDI), life expectancy at birth, mean and expected years of schooling for the CARICOM countries in comparison with averages for the region Latin America and the Caribbean. The table also includes a comparison with the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), of which the CARICOM countries are members. Average life expectancy at birth is lowest in Haiti (63.1), which is also lower than the SIDS average. Guyana (66.3), Trinidad and Tobago (69.9) and Suriname (71.0) are also lower than the other countries. Furthermore, Haiti scores lowest in mean years of schooling (4.9), while Bahamas (10.9), Trinidad and Tobago (10.8), Jamaica (9.6), Barbados (9.4) and Belize (9.3) show highest mean years of schooling. As far as human development index (HDI) is concerned, Guyana (0.638) is closer to SIDS (0.665) than to the average for Latin America and the Caribbean (0.740), while Haiti (0.471) falls way below the averages for the Caribbean and the SIDS. More details on education and health are given in the paragraph on gender inequality.



**Table A: Human development ranking and index, life expectancy, and years of schooling in CARICOM countries**

Countries	Human Development Index (HDI)			Life expectancy at birth (Years)	Mean years of schooling (Years)	Expected years of schooling (Years)
	Rank	HDI				
Antigua and Barbuda	61	0.774	High	76.0	8.9	13.8
Bahamas	51	0.789	High	75.2	10.9	12.6
Barbados	59	0.776	High	75.4	9.4	15.4
Belize	84	0.732	High	73.9	9.3	13.7
Dominica	93	0.717	High	77.7	7.7	12.7
Grenada	79	0.744	High	72.8	8.6	15.8
Guyana	121	0.638	Medium	66.3	8.5	10.7
Haiti	168	0.471	Low	63.1	4.9	7.6
Jamaica	96	0.715	High	73.5	9.6	12.5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	73	0.750	High	73.6	8.4	12.9
Saint Lucia	97	0.714	High	74.8	8.3	12.8
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	91	0.719	High	72.5	8.6	13.3
Suriname	100	0.705	High	71.0	7.7	12.0
Trinidad and Tobago	64	0.766	High	69.9	10.8	12.3
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>		0.740		74.9	7.9	13.7
<b>Small island developing states</b>		0.665		70.0	7.5	11.0

Source: 2014 Human Development Report

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Table B gives a general overview of four health indicators: adult mortality rate, infant mortality rate and HIV prevalence for young and adult. Averages for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have been added for the sake of comparison. Adult mortality rates show big differences: they are highest in Guyana (W 258; M 379), lowest in Barbados (W 70 and M 122). Infant mortality is lowest in Antigua and Barbuda (9) and St. Kitts and Nevis (7), highest in Haiti (57). Percentages of HIV prevalence are lacking in many countries. Of the five countries where data were available, the percentage for adult prevalence is highest in Haiti (2.1%), followed by Jamaica with 1.7%.

**Table B: Adult mortality, infant mortality, HIV prevalence in CARICOM countries**

Countries	Adult mortality rate (per 1000 people)		Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	Youth HIV prevalence (% 15–24)		HIV prevalence rate, adults (% 15-49)
	W	M		W	M	
Antigua and Barbuda	164	203	9	NA	NA	NA
Bahamas	116	190	14	NA	NA	NA
Barbados	70	122	17	NA	NA	NA
Belize	139	210	16	0.6	0.5	1.4
Dominica	118	222	12	NA	NA	NA
Grenada	122	196	11	NA	NA	NA
Guyana	258	379	29	0.8	0.5	1.3
Haiti	223	258	57	0.9	0.6	2.1
Jamaica	103	188	14	0.5	0.9	1.7
Saint Lucia	88	180	15	NA	NA	NA
Saint Kitts and Nevis	83	170	7	NA	NA	NA
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	115	176	21	NA	NA	NA
Suriname	111	194	19	0.7	0.4	1.1
Trinidad and Tobago	104	222	18	NA	NA	NA
Latin America and the Caribbean	98	181	16	NA	NA	NA
Small island developing states (SIDS)	155	206	37	NA	NA	NA

Source: 2014 Human Development Report

# Appendix II: Electoral Systems in CARICOM Countries

## Overview of electoral systems and laws, candidacy requirements, current number of parliamentarians and women's representation (December 2013)

COUNTRY	Electoral system	Electoral law	Candidacy requirements	Statutory number of representatives in lower house/parliament <sup>101</sup>	Number and percentage of women
<b>Antigua and Barbuda</b>	First past the post <sup>102</sup>	Representation of the People (Amendment) Acts of 2001 and 2002	nomination by individuals or political parties	19 17 directly elected Speaker and attorney general are ex officio members	2 (10.53%)
<b>Bahamas</b>	First past the post	31 December 1969 Last amendment: 10 Jan 1992	nomination by four electors	38	5 (13.16%)
<b>Barbados</b>	First past the post	1 June 1971 Last amendment: 1 Sep 1990	deposit of 400 B\$, reimbursed if the candidate obtains 1/6 or more of constituency votes	30	5 (16.67%)
<b>Belize</b>	First past the post	29 March 1978 Last amendment: 7 Jul 1998	nomination by 4 electors	32 31 directly elected Speaker designated from outside parliament	1 (3.13%)
<b>Dominica</b>	First past the post	16 July 1951 Last amendment: 1990	deposit equivalent to US\$ 125, reimbursed if the candidate is elected or obtains more than 1/6 of the total votes cast in the constituency	32 21 directly elected 9 appointed 2 other	4 (12.90%)
<b>Grenada</b>	First past the post	1 January 1900	NA	15	5 (33.33%)
<b>Guyana</b>	Closed list proportional	25 September 1964 Last amendment: 13 Feb 2001	deposit equivalent to US\$ 184, reimbursed if the candidate obtains at least 1/8 of the valid votes cast in the constituency	67 65 directly elected Speaker designated from outside parliament 1 non-elected minister	21 (31.34%)
<b>Haiti</b>	Majority/Plurality Two Round	2 February 2005 Last amendment: November 2005	nomination by at least six registered electors of the constituency deposit of 5,000 gourdes;	99	4 (4.21%)
<b>Jamaica</b>	First past the post	1 January 1900 Last amendment: 16 Jan 1989	deposit of EC\$ 300, reimbursed if candidate obtains at least 1/8 of the constituency vote	63	8 (12.70%)

102 The "first-past-the-post" system is a plurality system that awards a seat to the individual candidate who receives most votes in an election. The candidate need not get a majority (50%+) of the vote to win. If he/she has a larger number of votes than all other candidates, he /she is declared the winner. ([http://www.caribbeanelections.com/education/electoral\\_systems.asp](http://www.caribbeanelections.com/education/electoral_systems.asp))

103 Closed list proportional representation: Voters vote for the party and therefore the list as a whole. Candidates are elected in the order they appear on the list (as decided by the party) until all the seats have been filled (<http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/party-list/#sthash.Dk5Zpjfo.dpuf>)

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

COUNTRY	Electoral system	Electoral law	Candidacy requirements	Statutory number of representatives in lower house/parliament <sup>101</sup>	Number and percentage of women
<b>St. Kitts and Nevis</b>	First past the post	23 June 1981 Constitution (1983 No.881)	membership of a political party	15 11 directly elected 3 appointed 1 'other' Note: either Attorney General or Speaker may be designated if not directly elected members.	1 (6.67%)
<b>St. Lucia</b>	First past the post	1 January 1900	party list of candidates must be supported by not less than 200 electors	18 17 directly elected Speaker designated from outside parliament	3 (16.67%)
<b>St. Vincent and the</b>	First past the post	1 January 1900	one third of the candidates nominated must be women	23 15 directly elected 6 appointed Speaker and Attorney General are ex officio members	3 (13.04%)
<b>Suriname</b>	Semi-open proportional	23 October 1987	residence in the constituency for at least 2 years member of a political party nomination by political party support by specified number of electors	51	7 (13.7%)
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>	First past the post	1 January 1900	half of the deposit is reimbursed for political parties winning at least 2 per cent of the valid votes nationwide	42 41 directly elected Speaker designated from outside parliament	12 (28.57%)

Sources: IPU Parline database; Caribbean Elections; De Nationale Assemblée Suriname

<sup>104</sup> Semi-open lists: In principle, voting is for the party. But voters may cast preferential votes for a candidate who is not placed highest on the list. This gives them a certain influence on who is elected, but most of the candidates will be elected in list order. (<http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/party-list/#sthash.Dk52pjfo.dpuf>)

# Appendix III: Women's and Parliamentary Representation and Leadership in CARICOM countries

The table below gives an overview of members of national legislative bodies and the composition of parliamentary leadership from 2000 – 2013. Unfortunately, deputy speakers of parliament and vice presidents of the senate are not always mentioned by name or gender in reports and on the websites that were consulted for the current report. Where information was available, it was added in the table. The years mentioned in the table are election years in the respective countries, while data have been added up to 2013, where available.

## Parliamentarians and parliamentary leadership in CARICOM countries 2000-2013

COUNTRY NATIONAL LEVEL 2000-2013	NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE BODIES						PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP			
	HOUSE			SENATE			WHOUSE		SENATE	
	M	W	%	M	W	%	Sp	Dep Sp	Pres	Vice Pres
<b>Antigua and Barbuda</b>										
1999	18	1	5.3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-
2004	17	2	10.5	14	3	17.7	W		W	
2009	17	2	10.5	12	5	29.4	W	W	W	
<b>Bahamas</b>					(a)					
1997	34	6	15.0	NA	NA	NA	W	NA	M	NA
2002	32	8	20.0	NA	NA	NA	W/M	NA	W	NA
2007	36	5	12.2	6	9	56.3	M	NA	W	NA
2012	33	5	13.2	12	4	25.0	M	M	W	M
<b>Barbados</b>										
1999	25	3	10.7	NA	NA	NA	W	NA	M	NA
2003	26	4	13.3	NA	NA	NA	W	NA	M	NA
2008	27	3	10.0	17	4	19.1	M	NA	M	NA
2013	25	5	16.7	15	6	28.6	M	M	W	M
<b>Belize</b>										
1998	27	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	W	NA	W	NA
2003	28	2	6.7	NA	NA	NA		NA	W/M	NA
2008	31	0	0.0	8	5	38.5	M	NA	M	NA
2012	30	1	3.2	8	5	38.5	M	M	M	W
<b>Dominica</b>										
2000	26	6	18.8	-	-	-	W	NA	-	-
2005	27	4	12.9	-	-	-	W	NA	-	-
2009	28	4	12.5	-	-	-	W	W	-	-
<b>Grenada</b>					(a)		(b)		(b)	
1999	11	4	26.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	M	NA
2003	11	4	26.7	NA	NA	NA	M	NA	W/M	NA
2008	13	2	13.3	9	4	30.8	M	NA	W	NA
2013	10	5	33.3	11	2	15.4	M	M	W	NA
<b>Guyana</b>										
1997	52	23	20.0	-	-	-	NA	W	-	-

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

COUNTRY NATIONAL LEVEL 2000-2013	NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE BODIES						PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP			
	HOUSE			SENATE			WHOUSE		SENATE	
	M	W	%	M	W	%	Sp	Dep Sp	Pres	Vice Pres
2001	47	18	27.7	-	-	-	M	NA	-	-
2006	49	20	29.0	-	-	-	M	NA	-	-
2011	46	21	31.3	-	-	-	M	M	-	-
<b>Haiti</b>										
2000	80	3	3.6	20	7	25.9	M	NA	M	NA
2006	94	4	4.0	26	4	13.3	M	NA	M	NA
2009				11	0	0.0	M	NA	M	NA
2010	91	4	4.2	29	1	3.3	M	NA	M	NA
2013	95	4	4.2	20	0	0.0	M	NA	M	NA
<b>Jamaica</b>										
					(a)					
1997	52	8	13.3	NA	NA	NA	W		W	
2002	53	7	11.7		NA	NA	M		W	
2007	52	8	13.3	18	3		M	W	M	NA
2011	55	8	12.7	-	-	-	M	W	M	NA
2012				16	5	23.8			M	W
<b>St. Kitts and Nevis</b>										
	(c)									
2000	13	2	13.3	-	-	-	W	W	-	-
2004	15	0	0.0	-	-	-	W/W		-	-
2010	14	1	6.7	-	-	-	M/W	M	-	-
<b>St. Lucia</b>										
					(a)					
1997	15	2 <sup>^</sup>	11.1	NA	NA	NA			M	
2001	16	2 <sup>^</sup>	11.1	NA	NA	NA			M	
2006	17	1 <sup>^</sup>	5.6	NA	2	NA	W		M	
2007	17 (16)	1 (2)	5.6 11.1				W		W/M	
2011	15 <sup>^</sup>	3	16.7	9	2	18.2	M	M	W	
<b>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</b>										
1998	20 <sup>^</sup>	1	NA	-	-	-	NA	W	-	-
2001	17	5	22.7	-	-	-	M	W	-	-
2005	18	4	18.2	-	-	-	M	NA	-	-
2010	19	4 <sup>^</sup>	17.4	-	-	-	M	NA	-	-
<b>Suriname</b>										
2000	42	9	21.4	-	-	-	M	W	-	-
2005	38	13	25.5	-	-	-	M	M	-	-
2010	46	5	9.8	-	-	-	W	W	-	-
2013	44	7	13.7	-	-	-	W	W	-	-
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>										
2000	32	4	11.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	M	M
2001	30	6	16.7	NA	NA	NA	W	NA	M	M
2002	29	7	19.4	NA	NA	NA	M	W	M	M/W
2007	30	11	26.8	NA	NA	NA	M	NA	M	M
2010	30	12	28.6	23	8	25.8	M	W	M	W
2012	30	12	28.6	25	6	19.4	M	NA	M	W

Sources: Country Parline Database; www.guide2womenleaders.com; National Assembly of Suriname

NOTES: NA - not available. (a)-Appointed. (b)-Elected by all members. (c)-Directly elected 11, appointed 3, other 1. <sup>^</sup>Includes members who are not directly elected

## Appendix IV: Women's Sub-National Representation and Leadership in CARICOM countries

The table below summarizes local government systems in the CARICOM countries and the legislation on which they are based, and includes data and information that were available on local elections and women's representation at the subnational level. The table reveals the difficulties encountered in attempting an exact comparison of the CARICOM countries. Even if the various political systems are accounted for, the definition of 'sub-national' or 'local' government differs according to the geography of the countries (single islands, twin islands, mainland countries), and size and composition of the population. As a result, country system and the structure difference make it impossible to compare the competences of the local authorities and representatives.

The difficulty in obtaining data on subnational governments and local elections also complicated the creation of a clear comparison over the past decade. Information was not always readily available or systematically collected in the countries concerned, making the analysis of detailed information impossible within the time and scope of this study. The data and information of the different countries are listed as collected in the available data and information, or as provided by resource persons.

*Sub-national government systems in CARICOM countries*

COUNTRY	Local Government System	Legal basis	Number of Reps	Elections	Women's representation
<b>Antigua and Barbuda</b>	Single local authority: Barbuda Council	Constitution Cap. 123 Barbuda Local Government Act 1978, Cap. 44  No constitutional provision for local govt across Antigua	11 members of Barbuda Council: 9 elected, 2 ex-officio members (Barbuda's House and Senate reps)	Every 2 years, (alternating for 4 or 5 seats)  <u>Last elections</u> 2013 Voter turnout 97%  <u>Next elections</u> 2015	<u>Membership:</u> (2013) 9% (1 of 11 members of Barbuda Council)  <u>Leadership:</u> 0%
<b>Bahamas</b>	Total of 32 government districts, divided into 13 second-schedule districts, further sub-divided into town areas and 19 third-schedule districts.	No constitutional provision  Local Government Act 1996	Third-schedule district councils: 5-9 members  Second schedule councils and town committees: Councils vary according to size of population	Every 3 years  <u>Last elections</u> 2011 Voter turnout NA  <u>Next elections</u> 2014	<u>Membership:</u> (2011): 45 elected female councillors <sup>105</sup> .  <u>Leadership</u> NA
<b>Barbados</b>	No elected local government. Voluntary constituency-based model: individuals apply to serve	Constituency Councils Act 2009	11 parishes, divided into 30 constituency councils, each with 15 appointed members (by minister)	Every 2 years  No local elections	NA
<b>Belize</b>	Single-tier local government with: municipal and village councils  Alcalde system <sup>106</sup> (indigenous people)	Belize City Council Act 1999 Belmopan City Council Act 1999 Town Councils Act 1999 Village Councils Act 1999 Inferior Courts Act (Part VIII) 2002-03	9 municipal councils 193 village councils 84 alcaldes	Municipal and village councils every 3 years  <u>Last elections:</u> Municipal 2013 Voter turnout: 51.7%  Village 2013 Voter turnout NA  <u>Next elections</u> Municipal 2015 Village 2016	<u>Membership:</u> (2012) 25.9% councillors  <u>Leadership</u> 22.2% mayors
<b>Dominica</b>	Single-tier local government with city/town, village and urban councils.  Carib council <sup>107</sup> (indigenous people)	No constitutional provision, but legislative texts now under review  Town Council Act 1937 Village Council Ordinance 1954 Carib council Act 1978 City council Act 1984 Canefield Urban Council Act 1984	13 city councillors (8 elected, 5 nominated)  8 urban councillors (5 elected, 3 nominated)  38 village councils, each with 8 reps (5 elected, 3 nominated)  Carib council (8 elected)	Every 3 years Carib Council every 5 years  <u>Last elections</u> 2012 Voter turnout 20%  <u>Next elections</u> 2014  Carib Council NA	<u>Membership</u> (2011/12) town councils 30% village councils 43% urban councils 37% Carib council 14%  <u>Leadership:</u> NA
<b>Grenada</b>	No elected local govt	Section 107 of Constitution has provision for local govt council for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, but has not yet been implemented	-	-	-

105 Percentage could not be calculated, since total number of councillors was not available

106 See also the paragraph below on tribal governance systems.

107 See also the paragraph below on tribal governance systems



COUNTRY	Local Government System	Legal basis	Number of Reps	Elections	Women's representation
<b>Guyana</b>	3- tier local government, divided into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs)</li> <li>- Municipal Councils</li> <li>- Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs)</li> </ul> Amerindian Village Councils (AVCs) <sup>108</sup> (Amerindian people)	Constitution Chapter VII enshrines local govt  Municipal and District Councils Act, 1988 and Ch 28:01, 1969 Local Government Act, 1988 and Ch 28:02, 1945 Amerindian Act Local Authorities Election Act, Ch 28:03, 1969 Valuation for Rating Purposes Act, Ch 28:04, 1969, Amended in 1971, 1972	10 RDCs  6 Municipal Councils  65 NDCs  75 AVCs	RDCs every 5 years <u>Last RDC election:</u> 2011  Municipal councils and NDCs every 3 years  AVCs every 2 years  <u>Last NDC elections:</u> 1994  <u>Next RDC and NDC elections:</u> ?? new legislation pending	<u>Membership</u> 2008 still functioning NDCs 5%  2011 RDC election: 30.7%  <u>Leadership</u> No regional chairs 2 regional vice-chairs 1 deputy mayor 2 NDC chairs 2 NDC vice-chairs
<b>Haiti</b>	3-tier local government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>departments</i></li> <li>- <i>arrondissements</i></li> <li>- <i>communes</i> (with <i>sections communales</i>)</li> </ul> <i>Departments:</i> elected departmental assembly and a departmental council  <i>Communes:</i> Municipal Council ( <i>Conseil Municipal</i> ) Town ( <i>Ville</i> ) with elected Delegates ( <i>Délégué de Ville</i> )  <i>Section communales:</i> elected ASEC ( <i>Assemblée de la Section Communale</i> ) and elected CASEC ( <i>Conseil d'Administration de la Section Communale</i> ).	Constitution of 1987 enshrines local government  2006: five decrees defining mission and duties of the three levels of local government	10 departments  42 arrondissements  140 communes  570 sections communales	Municipal councils, town delegates, ASEC and CASEC every 5 years  <u>Last elections in</u> 2006.  <u>Next elections:</u> ?? <sup>109</sup>	<u>Membership</u> (2012) <sup>110</sup> municipal councils 48.5% regional councils 45%  <u>Leadership</u> NA
<b>Jamaica</b>	Parochial Boards system (later Parish Councils) 1887-present: single-tier government	No constitutional provision  Parish Councils Act Parochial Rates and Finance Act 1900 Kingston City Corporation Act 1923 Municipalities Act 2003	Total of 14 councils (228 councillors) divided into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 12 parish councils with 175 councillors</li> <li>- Kingston and St Andrew Corporation (KASC) with 40 councillors</li> <li>- Portsmouth Municipal Council with 13 councillors</li> </ul>	Every 3 years  <u>Last elections</u> 2012 Voter turnout: 34.7%  <u>Next elections</u> 2015	2000-2003: 27% 2003-2007: 23% 2007-2012: 18% 2012 elections: 19%  <u>Leadership</u> (2012): Chairs NA  4 women mayors: Manchester Kingston St Andrew Hanover St Thomas
<b>St. Kitts and Nevis</b>	No elected local govt	No constitutional provision	-	No local elections	-

108 See also the paragraph below on tribal governance systems

109 A large percentage of the 2006 elected municipal councils, whose mandates had expired, were replaced by interim agents appointed by the Executive.

110 Information from IDEA Haiti program: <http://www.idea.int/americas/towards-genuine-application-of-the-gender-quota-in-haiti-the-importance-of-strengthening-the-c.cfm> . It is not clear what is meant with 'regional councils'.

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

COUNTRY	Local Government System	Legal basis	Number of Reps	Elections	Women's representation
<b>St. Lucia</b>	No elected local govt (suspended 1979)  15 administrative divisions, each with constituency council	Constitution makes reference to local govt, but no specific provisions  Constituency Councils Act 2012	15 constituency councils, each with 9-15 appointed members	No local elections	NA
<b>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</b>	No elected local govt (dissolved in 1973)	Local Government Act 1981	14 appointed local govt entities,  Kingstown Board serves capital headed by a warden	No local elections	NA
<b>Suriname</b>	3-tier government: 10 administrative districts each with a District Council  Each administrative divided into Local Councils  10 appointed district commissioners	Constitution of 1987 enshrines local government  Electoral Law 1987	115 district councillors  778 local councillors	Every 5 years concurrent with national elections  <u>Last elections</u> 2010 Voter turnout 75.38%  <u>Next elections</u> 2015	<u>Membership</u> (2010) Local councils 35.7% District councils 29.6%  <u>Leadership:</u> 26.7% District commissioners 30.6% Local council chairs
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>	Trinidad: Single-tier government 14 municipal corporations: - 2 city corporations - 3 borough corporations - 9 regional corporations  Tobago: single authority	No constitutional provision  Municipal corporations Act 1990 Tobago House of Assembly Act 1996  2013: Initiative to reform local govt systems and structures to deliver highly decentralized corporations <sup>111</sup>	Trinidad: 134 councillors 31 aldermen 5 mayors 9 chairpersons  Tobago: 12 elected assemblymen and 4 appointed councillors (3 by chief secretary, 1 by opposition leader)	Trinidad every 3 yrs Tobago every 4 yrs  <u>Last elections</u> Trinidad 2010 Voter turnout 39%  Tobago 2013 Voter turnout 70%  <u>Next elections</u> Trinidad NA <sup>112</sup> Tobago 2017	<u>Membership</u> (2010 Trinidad) 30% councillors 38% aldermen  (2013 Tobago) 27% councillors  <u>Leadership:</u> Trinidad 21% mayors or chairpersons  Tobago 5% mayors

Sources: [www.clgf.org.uk/local-government-profile/2013](http://www.clgf.org.uk/local-government-profile/2013); IDEA ([www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int)); <http://www.bahamas.gov.bs/>;

ECLAC Gender Observatory; Centraal Hoofdstembureau Suriname

<sup>111</sup> Cabinet approved a policy framework for local government transformation and modernization. Public consultations took place in the 14 municipalities.

<sup>112</sup> Local elections were due in 2013, but have not been held yet

# Appendix V: Summary of CARICOM Countries with Indigenous or Tribal Groups and their sub-national governance rights.

Countries	Indigenous and/or tribal peoples	Sub-national rights
Belize	Indigenous : Maya Tribal : Garifuna	Alcalde system <sup>113</sup> for Maya Annual elections are held to select the <i>alcaldes</i> . The <i>alcalde</i> has the right to judge disputes over land and crop damage. In minor cases, the <i>alcalde</i> has the authority to try and punish offenders. Decision making in the village is generally by consensus after village elders direct open discussion. Women do not participate in <i>alcalde</i> system or their public meetings.
Dominica	Indigenous: Amerindian	The Carib Council is an elected body of seven who serve for five years. It is presided over by a Chief. It has authority in the Carib territory. The Carib Territory also produces one member of parliament. The number of women on the Carib Council is NA
Guyana	Indigenous: Amerindian	The Amerindian People's Association (APA) is umbrella organisation and Indigenous Peoples Commission (IPC) is a constitutional requirement. Amerindian Act of 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amerindian village councils (AVCs)</li> <li>• National Tshaos Council (NTC) comprises all leaders of Amerindian villages. The NTC is headed by a woman</li> </ul> <p>The number of women <i>tshaos</i> (village heads) is said to be increasing, but data are NA</p> <p>The current minister of Indigenous Affairs is an indigenous woman</p>
Jamaica	Tribal: Maroon	Treaties of 1739 between Maroons and British colonial government serve as basis for self-determination, autonomous (quasi-) sovereign status with own leadership and village councils. Political and legal status of Maroon communities not addressed in constitution. Not officially recognized, but longstanding tradition of ceremonial visits by government to Maroon communities Maroon Indigenous Women's Circle (MIWC) established in 2009 to preserve Maroon heritage, but it is not clear whether they also have a gender equality agenda

<sup>113</sup> Laws enacted in 1854 and 1884 gave the system a legal foundation. Since then, the system has declined, largely as the result of a delimitation and regularization of its authority in 1952, the growth of the cash economy, and the diminished importance of subsistence farming and communal labor.

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Countries	Indigenous and/or tribal peoples	Sub-national rights
Suriname	Indigenous: Amerindian  Tribal: Maroon	<p>Amerindian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Vereniging van Inheemse Dorpshoofden in Suriname</i> (VIDS), is the association of Amerindian village leaders set up in 1992</li> <li>• Village councils and leader chosen by village in own elections, overseen by VIDS</li> <li>• Amerindian women village leadership is said to be increasing</li> </ul> <p>Maroon: 6 tribes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional clan and family system. Village councils and leadership chosen for life according to family lines</li> </ul> <p>Each tribe has a <i>granman</i> (tribal chief), <i>ede-cabitan</i> and <i>cabitan</i>, and <i>basya</i>            Maroon women now also appointed as <i>cabiten</i> (village head)  <i>Marron Vrouwenetwerk</i> is part of the national platform of women's organisations and also has a gender equality agenda</p> <p>Increasing numbers of young, well-educated Maroon women in government middle management and in Maroon political party structures and members of parliament</p> <p>The current Minister of Social Affairs (the only woman minister in cabinet) is a Maroon woman</p>
Trinidad and Tobago	Indigenous: Amerindian	<p>Not officially recognized, but double leadership: a chief and a queen, who are chosen by traditional methods and appointed for life. They appoint their own successors.</p> <p>Representatives of the Amerindian council are agitating for a law or a constitutional amendment for recognition of at least their queen at local or national level.</p> <p>Current queen has been in function since 2011, following in the footsteps of the queen who had been in office from 2000 – 2010.</p>

## Appendix VI: Summary of Relevant Legislation in CARICOM Countries regarding Gender-Based Violence (Dec 2013)

COUNTRY	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	SEXUAL VIOLENCE	SEXUAL HARASSMENT
<b>Antigua and Barbuda</b>	<i>Domestic Violence Act 1999</i>	1) <i>Offences against the Person Act</i> 2) <i>Sexual Offences Act 1995</i> , as amended by the <i>Law Revision (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2004</i>	
<b>Bahamas</b>	<i>Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act 2007</i>	<i>Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act 1991</i>	<i>Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act 1991</i>
<b>Barbados</b>	<i>Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act 1992</i>	<i>Sexual Offences Act 1992</i>	
<b>Belize</b>	<i>Domestic Violence Act 2007</i>	<i>Criminal Code “2000 Rev”</i>	<i>Protection against Sexual Harassment Act 1996</i>
<b>Dominica</b>	<i>Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2001</i>	<i>Sexual Offences Act 1998</i>	
<b>Grenada</b>	<i>Domestic Violence Act 2001</i>	<i>Criminal Code Cap. 76 “1958 Rev”</i>	
<b>Guyana</b>	<i>Domestic Violence Act 1996</i>	<i>Sexual Offences Act 2010</i>	<i>Prevention of Discrimination Act 1997</i>
<b>Jamaica</b>	<i>Domestic Violence Act 1995</i>	1) <i>Sexual Offences Act 2009</i> 2) <i>Child Pornography (Prevention) Act 2009</i>	
<b>Saint Kitts-Nevis</b>	<i>The Domestic Violence Act 2000</i>	1) <i>Offences against the Person Act Cap 4.21 “2002 Rev”</i> 2) <i>Criminal Law Amendment Act Cap. 4.05 “2002 Rev”</i>	
<b>Saint Lucia</b>	<i>Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act Chapter 4.04 “2005 Rev”</i>	<i>Criminal Code Chapter 3.01 “2005 Rev”</i>	1) <i>Criminal Code Chapter 3.01 “2005 Rev”</i> 2) <i>Equality of Opportunity and Treatment in Employment and Occupation Act 2000</i>
<b>Saint Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</b>	<i>Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act 1995</i>	<i>Criminal Code Cap. 124 “1990 Rev</i>	
<b>Suriname</b>	<i>Wet bestrijding huiselijk geweld (Domestic Violence Act) 2009</i>	<i>Wetboek van strafrecht (Criminal Code) Title XIV, Offences against morality, articles 292 – 313</i>	<i>Wetboek van strafrecht (Criminal Code) Title XIV, Offences against morality, art. 290- 291</i>
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>	<i>Domestic Violence Act 1999</i>	<i>Sexual Offences Act Chap. 11:28 “2006 Rev”</i>	<i>Offences Against the Person (Amendment) (Harassment) Act 2005</i>

Sources: UN Women Caribbean, National Assembly of Suriname, Criminal Code of Suriname

## Appendix VII: CARICOM countries with women's or gender bureaus, gender commissions, non-government umbrella organisations, and formal and/or informal women's caucuses or lobby groups

Country	Women's or gender bureau	Government or national commission <sup>114</sup>	Non-government umbrella organisation	Women's caucus or lobby group
Bahamas	Bureau of Women's Affairs In Ministry of Health and Social Development			
Barbados	Bureau of Gender Affairs in Ministry of Social Transformation	National Commission of the Status of Women in Barbados		
Belize	Women's Department in Ministry of Human Development	National Women's Commission (NWC)		Belize Women's Political Caucus
Dominica	Women's Bureau In Ministry of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Information		Dominica National Council of Women (DNCW)	
Grenada	None			Grenada Women's Parliamentary Caucus
Guyana	Women's Affairs Bureau in Ministry of Labour, Human Services & Social Security	Women and Gender Equality Commission		
Jamaica	Bureau of Women's Affairs in Office of Prime Minister	Gender advisory committee	Association of Women's Organisations of Jamaica (Awoja)	Jamaica Women's Political Caucus (JWPC) The 51% Coalition – lobbies for gender parity
St. Kitts and Nevis	Department of Gender Affairs in Ministry of Social & Community Development & Gender Affairs			
St. Lucia	Division of Gender Relations in Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs & Gender Relations			
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Gender Affairs Division in Ministry of Social Development			

Sources: UN Women Caribbean and own information

<sup>114</sup> The national commissions have members from different stakeholder groups, including civil society organisations. The Government or Intra-Ministerial commissions usually have only public service representatives.



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