



Government of the Republic of Guyana

National Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcomes of the Twenty-third Special Session on the General Assembly (2000)

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ACRONYMS

AIS	AIDS Indicator Survey	MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
APA	Amerindian People's Association	MCH	Maternal Child Health
BIT	Board of Industrial Training	MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport
BSS	Behavioral Surveillance Survey	MOAA	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	MOE	Ministry of Education
CBOs	Community Based Organisations	MOF	Ministry of Finance
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice	MOH	Ministry of Health
CCPA	Childcare and Protection Agency	MHW	Ministry of Housing and Water
CDC	Centre for Disease Control	MLHSSS	Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security
CSPo	Census and Survey Processing System	NAPS	National AIDS Programme Secretariat
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women	NCF	National Commission for the Family
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey	NCTC	National Care and Treatment Centre
ED	Enumeration Districts	NTC	National Toshias Council
EPI	Expanded Programme for Immunization	NTFCTP	National Task Force for Combating Trafficking in Persons
GACPA	Guyana Arts and Craft Producers Association	OLPF	One Laptop Per Family
GBOS	Guyana Bureau of Statistics	PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV
GBTI	Guyana Bank for Trade and Industry	PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
GECOM	Guyana Elections Commission	ROCC	Rights of the Child Commission
GLAC	Guyana Legal Aid Clinic Inc.	SBB	Small Business Bureau
GOG	Government of Guyana	SBC	Small Business Council
GRIF	Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund	SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
GRPA	Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association	USD	United States Dollars
GWLI	Guyana Women's Leadership Institute	WAB	Women's Affairs Bureau
GYD	Guyana Dollars	WGEC	Women Gender Equality Commission
HSP	Hinterland Scholarship Programme	WOW	Women of Worth
ICT	Information Communication Technology	YEAP	Youth Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Programme
IPC	Indigenous Peoples' Commission	YFS	Youth Friendly Services
LCDS	Low Carbon Development Strategy		
MAB	Men's Affairs Bureau		

INTRODUCTION

Guyana has made significant progress in the status of women since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (2000).

The Government of Guyana remains committed to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in all spheres of life. The protection and promotion of children's rights and integration of the Amerindian (indigenous) peoples are national priorities. Government policies and programmes focus on reducing poverty and improving and equalizing access to goods and services throughout the country to all, but most especially the poor and vulnerable¹.

Government initiatives and programmes to enhance the livelihoods have been prominent themes in our national budgets from 1993 to the present, however, these have significantly expanded from 2009 to present. From 2009 to the 2012 there have several key and progressive interventions to strengthen the legal framework in support of these groups.

This national review and appraisal report prepared by Guyana is in response to the call by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, resolution E/RES/2013/18 for states to provide national-level reports on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).

This report provides a review and appraisal for the period 2009-2013 of the progress made in the implementation of the critical areas to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. It identifies achievements, challenges and opportunities for integrating the gender perspective in the post-2015 MDG development agenda. This report is submitted in the context of twentieth anniversary of Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2015.

Guyana has submitted State Party reports to the UN Committees on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women² (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC) in 2010 and the Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ISECR) in 2012. Guyana was reviewed before the UN Committees for CEDAW and CROC in July 2012 and January 2013, respectively.³ Guyana was also reviewed before the UNHRC

¹ The poor and vulnerable are classified as women children, youth, the elderly, Amerindians (indigenous peoples) and the differently-abled.

² The international human rights conventions (ICCPR, CROC, CEDAW, CAT, ISCED) are integrated in the Guyana Constitution paving the way for full application of relevant articles in cases where the national laws are inadequate to address matters of gender inequality and discrimination.

³ These reports and the Committees' observations are available on the UN treaty websites.

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UPR in May and September 2010. Guyana also submitted a comprehensive response to the ICPD survey in 2012 to UNFPA and ECLAC.

These state party reports cover the periods under review in this report and provide additional information to the submission herein.

In this reporting period, Guyana has acceded to two Optional Protocols of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child—Children in Armed Conflict and the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Pornography in July and August 2010. It also ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families in 2010. Guyana signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons of Disabilities in 2007 and acceded to the ILO No.189 Convention on Domestic Workers in 2012.

In addition, as a signal of Guyana’s commitment to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, other international instruments post-Beijing Declaration include the Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2004); the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women “Convention of Belém do Para” Convention (1996) and Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2000) and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Charter of Civil Society⁴.

Guyana introduced the ILO Decent Work Country Programme in 2013 and brought regulations into effect to give it legal status in domestic laws in the same year.

The 2011 Guyana Progress Report on the MDG shows progress made in achieving these goals.⁵ The most recent postings on the www.un.org.gy provide an excellent overview of Guyana’s progress to date.

National Review Process

In Guyana the review of progress made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action has been a participatory process involving related sector ministries with support from UN Women. In fostering inclusiveness, this review process also engaged civil society and other key stakeholders on the compilation of the draft report. The dialogue was fruitful and productive. The views of participants are also included in this report.

⁴ This Charter was a result of the recommendation of the West Indian Commission, adopted at a meeting of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Region held in Trinidad and Tobago in October 1992. Under the Charter, the Heads of Government declare their resolve “to pay due regard to the principles by which they commit themselves to respect and strengthen the fundamental elements of a civil society”.

⁵ www.finance.gov.gy

The final draft of this report has been reviewed by the subject Minister of the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security and members of the Cabinet prior to submission to UN Women Regional office in Barbados.

Consultations were held by the Ministry of Labour, Human Services & Social Security with several Government departments, agencies and NGOs on April 23rd, 2014 on the draft report. Among some of the key issues which were highlighted were:-

- The recent trends of deaths of women due to violence in Guyana;
- The importance for the need to have cases in the Courts addressed expeditiously, especially with regards to sexual offences;
- Access to legal services by women in the Hinterland communities;⁶
- The importance of the Sexual Offences Taskforce and the Domestic Violence Oversight Committee meeting regularly; ⁷
- The role of the media to promote more positive messages on issues pertaining to women.

During the consultations, it was noted that the collection of data by some Government departments was not disaggregated to provide gender specific data and this was seen as a major challenge.

However, it was also noted that Government had recognized the need for improved data and statistical collection and that efforts including financial, technical and human resources were provided to key ministries such as the MOF, MOH, MOAA, MOED, MLHSS, MHW and the MOHA had improved the collection and use of data in making policy decisions.

Generally, the non-governmental organizations recognized that much progress had been made in Guyana over the past 20 years with respect to promoting women's rights, more equitable access to social services such as health, education; and women's participation in the economy.

However, many of the participants advocated for the International Development Partners to fulfill their commitments made with regards to *official development assistance* to countries like Guyana, due to limited available human, technical, financial resources in the country, in order to ensure continuity of support for developmental programmes and continued advancement and empowerment of women in Guyana

BACKGROUND

Geographically situated within South America, Guyana is geo-politically considered "the English-speaking door-way" to South America. The country shares contiguous borders with its neighbours, Venezuela (to the west), Suriname (to the east); Brazil lies to the south and is officially connected by a road network. Guyana is a member of the regional integration

⁶ Lawyers are reluctant to travel to the interior areas to represent clients when the Magistrates courts are in session in those areas.

⁷ Participants noted that some stakeholders were not participating in those bodies as stipulated by law.

movement the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

The population of Guyana is 747,884⁸ living in 215,000 square kilometers (approximately 83,000 square miles), there are 3.5 persons per square kilometer on average. The country is divided into 10 Administrative Regions⁹. The coastland is a low, flat, narrow, alluvial belt, about 15 to 70km long where 89.1% of the population lives.¹⁰ The average population density in the five coastal regions is 9.6 persons per square kilometers. However in Administrative Region 4, population density is highest with 140.1 persons per square mile. In contrast in the four (4) hinterland regions which represents two-thirds (2/3) of Guyana's land mass there is less one (1) person per square kilometer. These four hinterland regions are generally regarded as the hinterland and riverain areas where approximately 50,000 Amerindians, many of whom own communal land titles, ¹¹ reside in organized communities.

Guyana is traditionally described as “the land of six people,” referring to the population's various immigrant extractions. The 2002 National census showed that Guyanese of East Indian descent comprises 43.45 percent, Guyanese of African descent comprises 30.2 percent, Amerindians are 9.2 percent with White, Portuguese, and Chinese together making up about 0.46 percent. Those of “Mixed” descent comprise 16.7 percent.

Overall, men and women comprise almost equal proportions with 99 males for every 100 females.¹² In relation to the age distribution 25.7% of the population are between the ages of 0–14 years with men and boys accounting for 101,319 while women and girls account for 97,505; 58% of the population is below the age of 35 years and 68.7% are between the age range of 15–64 years with men accounting for 268,058 while women account for 262,595. The older population within the age range of 65 years and over account for 5.5 percent of the total population with men accounting for 17,938 while the women account for 24,883.¹³ The average national life expectancy has increased from 61 years in 1992 to 70 years in 2013 with women living longer than men.

Guyana is a multi-party constitutional democracy with a unicameral National Assembly elected by proportional representation every five years. Guyana's constitutional framework is based on a hybrid Republican-Westminster system and therefore is distinct from its English-speaking Caribbean and Latin American neighbours.

The first free and fair elections were held in October 1992 after 28 years and these elections

⁸ The preliminary results of the 2012 Census shows a slight decline in population from 751,223 in 2002. Refer to <http://statisticsguyana.gov.gy/census.htm>

⁹ The Regional Democratic Councils which administer these Regions are elected at regional elections held every 5 years.

¹⁰ 2012 Census has found that 73.6% are rural resident dwellers and 26.4% live in urban areas.

¹¹ 134 communities hold 97 communal land titles representing 14% of Guyana's land mass.

¹² 2012 Census shows a shift from the 2002 Census where 50.1% were males and 49.9 % were females.

¹³ These figures are from the 2002 Census as the new data on age, gender, ethnicity etc have not been made public as yet.

and all since have been monitored by international observers and found to be free and fair.

The Constitutional Reform Commission, a Presidential appointed parliamentary broad based commission met between 1999- 2001 and produced a new model of inclusive governance and power sharing. The human rights sections of the constitution are enshrined and protected allowing for any person to approach the courts on a constitutional motion.

The Parliament is headed by the President and includes the Speaker and the National Assembly. The President is not a Member of Parliament and is an executive President. The National Assembly is comprised of 65 elected members; 25 seats through geographic representation and 40 national top up.¹⁴

Following the general and regional elections in December 2011 for the first time independent Guyana, the Government has (32) seats and one opposition party has (27) seats and the other has (6) seats. The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are from the parliamentary opposition parties.

There are six women in the 18-member Cabinet. Women Members of Parliament have increased from 18.5 percent in 1992 to 32 percent in 2012 due to constitutional amendments and statutory changes to the electoral laws that impose eligibility criteria of one-third female candidates on political parties' lists of candidates wishing to contest elections.

The entire country is subdivided into ten administrative regions and each Region is governed by an elected the Regional Democratic Council elected during general and regional elections held every 5 years.

Local government bodies are the lowest tier of government. Elections are pending the holding of elections under a new hybrid proportional representation-first past the post electoral system for the six Municipalities and 65 Neighbourhood Democratic Councils. The 134 Amerindian Village Councils are elected very two years by the residents of their communities.

The Guyana constitution establishes a Supreme Court of Judicature consisting of a High Court and a Court of Appeal.¹⁵ The Chancellor of the Judiciary is the head of the Judiciary. The Judiciary comprises the higher judiciary (the Supreme Court of Judicature) and the lower judiciary (the Magistracy). Guyana severed ties with the Privy Council in 1970. In 2005 Guyana along with seven other CARICOM states assented to the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) as its final Court of Appeal. The constitution also provides for an Ombudsman

¹⁴ The geographic seats are allocated according to population size in each of the 10 Administrative Regions and the allocation of the 40 seats is based on a mathematical formula that ensures proportionality.

¹⁵ See [http:// www.legalaffairs.gov.gy](http://www.legalaffairs.gov.gy) under Information for a description of the legal system.

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to represent the interests of the public by investigating and addressing complaints of maladministration and violation of rights in the public service.

The Chancellor of the Judiciary and the Chief Justice are appointed after “meaningful consultation” (concurrence) between the President and the Leader of the Opposition. Judges are appointed by the President on recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission (JSC). The Director of Public Prosecutions exercises supervisory authority over all criminal prosecutions and is appointed by the JSC.

Guyana’s economy has shown remarkable resilience during the global food and fuel and the global financial crises which began in 2008. Guyana is no longer classified as a low income country having attained a lower middle income status.

In 2013, the economy recorded its eighth consecutive year of positive growth, with real GDP expanding by 2.5 percent; and by the end of 2013, real gross domestic product (GDP) was recorded at 6.3 percent. Guyana has demonstrated strong fiscal prudence in the management of its economy that has resulted in the reduction of the country’s external debt. During 2011 to 2013, the country’s external debt declined from 46.7 percent to 41.9 percent of GDP. At the same time, foreign direct investment (FDI) totaled USD507.7 million, and could be attributed to political stability in the 2006-2011 period.

Guyana’s developmental agenda is guided by the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), the Competitiveness Strategy and the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Guyana has developed a pro-growth pro-poor developmental agenda that has contributed to the reduction of poverty, improved and more equitable access to goods and services for the poor and vulnerable and expansion and diversification of the economic base.

Guyana ‘s performance with the MDG 2015 have illustrated that it has met the goals for universal access to primary education, gender parity in the educational system and reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality and TB, Malaria and HIV/Aids.

Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) has been the driving force behind national initiatives on development and the environment from 2010 onward. A Memorandum of Understanding inked between the Governments of Guyana and Norway provide payments for carbon services. More than USD115 million funding has been earned under the agreement, thus far and is focused on the development of alternatives to dependency on fossil fuels and sustainable development of the energy sector and benefit Amerindian communities with a land titling and demarcation projects, and the establishment of the Amerindian Development Fund to support the development of community-identified priority transformative projects.

Since the 2011 elections, the government has a plurality of the votes at the elections but is one seat short of the two opposition parties in the Legislature. Since the commencement of the 10th Parliament, annual national budgets of 2102, 2013 and 2014 have been cut by over

100 Billion GY (\$ USD 500 M) for transformative projects such as hydropower and major physical infrastructural works, Amerindian transformative programmes and the funds to run the Office of the President.

Like elsewhere in the Caribbean, Guyana's security environment has been threatened with an increase in violence and crime, this was especially worse during the 2002-2008 violent crime wave. This period saw a decline in national and international private sector investment, which translated into weaker growth and a protracted period of crime, violence and instability.

The Government of Guyana has undertaken a number of reforms to enhance the institutional capacity of the Guyana Police Force and the Judiciary to address the issues of prevention, protection and mitigation of crime and violence. These included but were not limited to, rehabilitation and expansion of courts, training for law enforcement officers and youth empowerment programmes. The GoG/Citizens Security Project and the Justice Modernization Project have been funded by loans from the Inter-American Development Bank. Guyana has also benefitted from the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative funded by the US Administration.

SECTION ONE

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES SINCE 1995

a) Major Achievements

Guyana has made progress towards both de jure and de facto gender equality. Our major achievements in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly have been the development of a comprehensive legal framework, complemented by institutional mechanisms for implementation of key actions; a strong cadre of women in public life; special measures to empower women economically and the integration and advancement of the Amerindian population. Political will, vibrant advocacy in civil society on specific outcomes in favour of women and girls, and continued public investment have contributed to significant movement in these areas.

The Government, recognizing limitations and gaps in the implementation of the legal framework, and deficiencies in the timeliness and efficiency of the administration of justice access to justice, has signaled its commitment to addressing these issues through further investment and partnerships with domestic civil society bodies and international development partners.

1. Legal Framework

The Guyana Constitution has enshrined equal rights of men and women in all spheres of life. The Government of Guyana remains committed to the implementation of concrete measures aimed at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Guyana's State Party reports to the CEDAW and CROC in 2010 and the UPR first review in 2010 document the constitutional provisions that promote and protect women's rights.

Moreover Guyana has consistently implemented a comprehensive legal framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment at the national level. The principle of equality and non-discrimination is enshrined in Article 149 of the revised Guyana Constitution. It guarantees the fundamental rights and freedom of people living in the state. Article 149(D) of the Constitution provides for equality of persons before the law and Article 149 (2) is explicit in defining "discrimination" as:

"Affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their parents' or guardians respective of descriptions by race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed, age, disability, marital status, sex, gender, birth, social class, pregnancy, religion, conscience, belief or culture whereby persons of one such description are subjected to restrictions to which other persons of the same or another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not afforded to other persons of the same or another such description".

Article 149 (1) (a) and (b) explicitly prohibits any form of discrimination as per 149(2).

Since the Beijing Declaration, the legal framework has been continuously strengthened to advance the rights of women and children¹⁶ through the enactment of the following legislation:

- **The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1996** provides for women's right to choose and requires counselling and family planning guidance.
- **Domestic Violence Act, No. 18 of 1996** has provided relief to women and children in domestic conflict such as protection orders, tenancy orders and occupation orders. It also made provisions for user-friendly service delivery.
- **Prevention of Discrimination Act, No. 26 of 1997** recognizes the right of women to equality of opportunity and treatment in any employment or occupation by stipulating that discrimination on the ground of sex, indigenous population, social origin, economic status, family responsibilities, pregnancy and marital status is prohibited. Women may seek redress for sexual harassment in the workplace under the provisions of this Act.

¹⁶ Guyana has reported in its state party reports including during the review process before the CEDAW and CROC updated information on the compendium of children's laws enacted between 2009 and 2011.

- ***Termination of Employment and Severance Pay Act, No. 19 of 1997*** makes provisions, which remove discrimination against a woman on the ground of her pregnancy. The legislation protects the women's rights to uninterrupted service if her absence from work is due to maternity leave. Furthermore, an employer is liable to summary conviction if (s)he fails to maintain records that demonstrate compliance with the provisions of this Act. The legislation further enhances an aggrieved woman's three approaches for legal redress; she could file a complaint with the Ministry of Labour and Chief Labour Officer; she could directly file proceedings in the Magistrates' Courts or in the High Court.
- ***Representation of People's (Amendment) Act 2000 (Section 11B, Articles 5-7)*** provides for gender representation as an eligibility criteria for political parties wishing to contest national and regional elections. It states that each political party must have at least one-third women on the list of representatives submitted to the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM). Any political party that fails to comply with this provision will not be eligible to contest elections. This Act also includes provision that at most 20 percent of the number of constituencies in which a party is contesting may contain no women on the geographic seats for the legislature and elections to regional democratic councils. In other words, lists with no women candidates can be submitted, since the one-third quota requirement is for the total of the lists submitted by each political party.
- ***Combating Trafficking in Persons Act of 2005*** prohibits trafficking and makes it a criminal offence, provides a basis for a multi-sectoral approach to combating trafficking in persons and the establishment of the Ministerial Task Force on TIPs.
- ***Age of Consent Act of 2006*** amended the Marriage Act and the Criminal Offences Act to increase the age of sexual consent to 16 years for females.
- ***Marriage Amendment Act 2006*** brought the legal age for marriage to 16 years with parental consent.
- ***Sexual Offences Act of 2010*** provides legal remedies to protect victims of various sexual offences, including rape, sexual assault, incest, sexual indecency, grooming and voyeurism. The Act is gender neutral.
- ***The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010*** requires the promotion and protection of the rights of people with disabilities. The Act is guided by principles established in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and sets out certain steps that the Government must take to make sure that the rights of persons with disabilities are respected, protected and fulfilled. It aims to prevent PWDs from being discriminated against on the basis of disability, and, sets out offences and penalties.

- ***Rights of Persons in Common Law Union (Amendment) Act of 2012*** amends the Civil Law Act to provide for the right to be a beneficiary of the estate of their deceased partner/spouse after five years together. The Act provides that a single woman living with a single man in a common law union for not less than five years or vice versa to “have the same power and rights regarding intestate succession under the law as a widow or widower or a surviving spouse.” Prior to this amendment a common-law spouse could not benefit from deceased person’s estate and the period that legally recognised cohabitation was 10 years.

2. Institutional Mechanisms

Since the 2001 amendments to the Guyana Constitution which includes provisions for the appointment of 5 constitutional rights commissions, Guyana has improved institutional capacity to effectively monitor and protect human rights. These institutional mechanisms provide for the protection and promotion of human rights, complaints mechanisms and opportunities for advocacy and recommendations to the highest decision-making forum in the society- the President and the Legislature

Article 212 of the Constitution establishes 5 constitutional bodies to protect and guarantee human rights; four of these – the Women and Gender Equality Commission, the Indigenous Peoples Commission, the Rights of the Child Commission and the Ethnic Relations Commission are appointed through a consensual parliamentary mechanism through a constitutionally provided Parliamentary Standing Committee of Appointment of Members to Commissions. The President, who is the Head of State confirms and appoints the nominees that come from the National Assembly but he has no nominee of his own.

The Human Rights Commission is the secretariat for the four other rights commissions and is comprised of the chairpersons of the 4 named commissions above with the Leader of the Opposition providing the President with 6 names from which the President appoints one as the Chairperson of this Commission.¹⁷

Specifically the appointment of the Women and Gender Equality Commission (WGEC) has contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission derives its mandate for Article 212Q of the Constitution to “promote national recognition and acceptance that women’s rights are human rights, respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality.” The first such Commission appointed under the new constitutional reforms was comprised of fifteen-members with fourteen women and one man appointed in 2009. The WGEC has been committed to capacity development, raising awareness and advocacy on women’s rights. The Commission developed a five-year strategic plan in 2013 and this provides guidance for the execution of

¹⁷ Various Leaders of the Opposition, over the last 10 years since the enactment of this constitutional amendment, have not complied with this article.

its mandate. This Commission¹⁸ is required to submit, and, does so, annually to the Speaker of the National Assembly its report and any special report it so requires.

3. Women Leaders

The World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2012 ranks Guyana at 32 of 134 countries with women's political empowerment and 25 with women in ministerial positions and 25 with women in parliament.¹⁹

Over the past 20 years the status of women in public life has been commendable. Our first female president, Mrs. Janet Jagan was elected to office in December, 1997 and served until August 1999. Women have occupied and in some case continue to occupy key ministerial positions in Home Affairs, Health, Education, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Human Services and Social Security, Amerindian Affairs, and the Public Service. Today, women hold one-third of the positions in the Cabinet.

Women also hold key decision-making portfolios which include the Director of Budget, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director of Public Prosecutions, Registrar of the Supreme Court, Registrar of the Land Registry, Registrar of the Deeds Registry, Registrar General of the General Registration Office, Chief Magistrate and Principal Magistrate. Today in Guyana, there are several High Court Judges²⁰ and Magistrates who are female and there are more female lawyers practicing at the Bar than male lawyers. Five of the fourteen Permanent Secretaries are female administering the Ministries of Home Affairs, Education, Labour, Human Services & Social Security, Foreign Affairs, and Legal Affairs. Three of the nine Heads of Missions are female in Cuba, South Africa and Brazil.

The Chief Whips for the Government and Opposition in the 10th Parliament are female and the Deputy Speaker in the 8th 9th and 10th Parliaments was a female member of the major opposition party.

4. Economic Participation and Empowerment

There has been much progress made in areas related to the economic empowerment and advancement of women in Guyana, and this is evident through the budgetary allocations provided annually as well as greater involvement of women in the economy as workers,

¹⁸ The Parliamentary Committee is in the process of preparing for the selection and nomination of the new members of the Commission. In the interim the outgoing commission is continuing to function.

¹⁹ Global Gender Gap report 2012 Profile, page 194

²⁰ Guyana has had the distinction to have retired Justice Desiree Bernard, O.R to be appointed as the first female High Court Judge; the first female Chief Justice, the first Chancellor and Head of the Judiciary in Guyana and the English-speaking Caribbean; and the first female Judge to sit on the Caribbean Court of Justice. In addition, Justice Bernard also founded the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers to promote the rights of women in the legal profession. She also served as both rapporteur (1982-1984) and Chair (1985-1989) of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

farmers, professionals, micro, small and medium sized business owners.

Guyana's State Party report to ISCED 2012 provides data on the increase of women in the work force and in the economy.(see pages 24-31, Right to Work). Some sections have been included in this report for emphasis and easy access to information. Where new studies and surveys have produced more up to date information these have been included.

The Guyana Demographic and Household Survey (DHS) 2009, found that one third of the households are headed by women (34%). However the number for the total urban areas is higher at 44% and lower for the total rural areas at 29%.²¹ This is significant to the government in planning and policy initiatives to address the needs of the poor and vulnerable, categorized as women, children, youth, elderly, Amerindian (indigenous), and the differently-abled.

Noteworthy is that Article 22(1) Guyana's constitution provides for "equal pay for equal work or work of equal value". The Global Gender Gap report 2012 ranks Guyana at 34 of 134 countries on wage equality for similar work.

"The annual 2011 Budget demonstrated statistically that the new and emerging sectors – construction, tourism and hospitality services, diversified agriculture and information-based technology/call centre industry – have contributed to a shortage of vocational and technical skills and provided greater employment opportunities. This is the first time that Guyana's dependency on sugar and bauxite as its main traditional export revenue base has been reduced.

The extractive industry with new exploration licenses for oil and natural gas by foreign companies involved in off-shore exploration has opened up new areas for the economy and demand for new skills. So too, manganese mining which had stopped in the 1960s has reopened and is expected to provide between 250 and 1000 jobs in the development phase. Three companies are prospecting for radio-active minerals and the government has invited expressions of interest in earth elements which are vital components in the electronics industry.

With the high price of gold (2011-2013), this mining sector, almost wholly Guyanese owned and operated, has expanded. Gold declarations reflect a 17.7 % increase. In relation to small and medium scale gold mining over USD100 M was invested in 2011. Two major foreign gold mining investments totaling USD \$1 Billion will create between 400- 550 jobs over the next 2 years.

However, challenges being faced in the workforce include: retention of skilled personnel, insufficient specific specialised skills, uneven participation by women and young people eligible to work, improvement of skills sets, matching supply of and demand for skills, and creating opportunities for increased economic activities through self employment and the creation of new small and medium business specially targeting support services for the emerging sectors.

²¹ Guyana DHS 2009 page 11

According to a World Bank Report (2010), the services sector accounts for half of the total employment in Guyana. Twenty-five percent of employment takes place at the agricultural sector, while the remaining 75% are engaged in the construction, extractive and manufacturing industries and the public sector. The agricultural sector provided 22% of the employment in 2002, a decline of 6 % of the level in 1991, which was then approximately 28 % of the total employment.

The shift of employees to the services-sector and higher numbers completing secondary education are most likely contributory factors to the decline in agricultural employment and a consequential increase in the service sectors from 46.4 % in 1991 to 53.1 % in the same period.

A significant contribution to the size and growth of the services-sector came from commerce, particularly “the wholesale and retail trade, repair of vehicles and motor cycles, and household goods.”

However it is anticipated that with the renewed focus on diversified agricultural development and export the employment figures in the agricultural sector will also show upward movement. The agricultural subsectors (other than rice and sugar) grew by 5.7% in 2010.

The case of the construction sector is indicative of the growth in the economy and a reflection of the availability of more money in the country for citizen personal advancement.

The Construction sector has been the fastest growing activity absorbing labour. This sector has shown that it is capable of generating jobs rapidly with an expansion in industrialization and urbanization. Large scale infrastructure projects in roads, bridges, power, sea and river defences, drainage and irrigation, housing, schools and health facilities have catapulted this sector forward.

Construction and the related Engineering Sector created 5000 jobs in the period 2002-2006. This sector in Guyana grew on average by 5.1 % for 2007 to 4.5 % in 2011 (Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Construction reflected 9.8% of GDP in 2009 and 10.3% of GDP in 2010 (Budget, 2011). This sector’s growth has been driven by high public investment in infrastructural works; in 2011 this amounted to G\$16 billion-the third largest allocation after health and education; public investment in housing- estimated at G\$9 billion in 2010 and substantial private investment in housing with 2,500 building approvals issued in 2010 and commercial approvals averaged 600 per year (Pitt, 2011)²².

The global call centre industry is a completely new sector in Guyana and in the relatively short period it has absorbed 3,200 employees (2002-2010) and is expected to require up to 5000 more employees over the next 2 years with projected expansion by the companies operating in Guyana. In total, there are 6 call centre providers in Guyana in 2011 employing 2500 workers and these have also encouraged the formation of ancillary services to meet their needs.

However, tackling unemployment and underemployment remains a significant challenge for the government. Unemployment levels are higher for youth and women. The

²² See Table 3 in Guyana’s State Party report to the IS CER Report 2012.

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unemployment rate for women has consistently declined from 1992-2006 but levels have still been higher than those for men for all years under review.

With new and emerging sectors and the modernization of some of the traditional sectors, new and improved technical skills are needed to enhance greater participation and integration into the economy.

Access to education and training and the provision of incentives and support systems to facilitate the entry of women into the workforce and self employment include a variety of training programmes offered by the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute; the Board of Industrial Training; the Institute for Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE), the Single Parent Assistance Programme²³; the National Training Programme for Youth Employment Programme; and the Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training Programme, as well as a multitude of privately-run training programmes in the wider society.

The average unemployment levels mask the male-female differential, as 15 % of females are unemployed, whereas 10 % of males are unemployed.²⁴ At an overall unemployment rate of 10.72% in 2006, there is a significant disparity between male unemployment rates at 9.18% and 13.95% for females.²⁵

The IFC/World Bank Entreprises Survey 2010 (Guyana 2010) states the permanent full time female workers is 39.1%, higher than the average for Latin America and the Caribbean (37.5%) and lower middle income countries (32.6%). The study desegregates the data of percentage of permanent female workers in small, medium and large firms (40.3 %, 36.6%, 42.5 % respectively)²⁶

The average number of permanent full time workers is 80% with 12.8 % being temporary workers, in both cases Guyana is higher than the averages for Latin America and the Caribbean and lower middle income countries (49.1% and 47.8 5 respectively).²⁷

The percentage of firms with top female managers is 17.7% is slightly below the average for LAC (20.8%) and lower middle income countries (20.4 %). However the percentage of firms with female participation in ownership is 58.3 %, higher than LAC (42.7 %) and lower middle income countries (37.6%).²⁸

The proportion of women who are own account workers and contributing family workers has increased from 21% in 1991 to 33% in 2006 for own account workers and 35% in 1991 to 52% in 2006 for the latter category.²⁹

²³ The Single Parent Assistance Programme offers day care vouchers to subsidize the cost of childcare, supports the participation of single mothers in the workforce and provides training in selected 'child-friendly' professions, such as cosmetology, catering, information technology, office procedures, childcare and care for the elderly including areas such as driving heavy vehicles

²⁴ See Guyana State party report to CEDAW Table 4

²⁵ See Guyana Bureau of Statistics, HBS (2006)

²⁶ IFC/World Bank Entreprises surveys 2010 Guyana profile pages 13-14, see www.enterprisesurveys.org

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Data collection excludes women declared housewives who do business in their home such as hairdressing, catering, sewing, cultivating greens, rear chicken and eggs and sell in the markets on a daily or weekly basis. These person though engaged in economic activity are not incorporated into employment data as they are classified as unemployed.

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The Guyana DHS 2009 report states that 66.3 % of women are self employed in the agricultural sector and 21.3 % in the non-agricultural sector.³⁰ This is a significant improvement.

This trend is also reflected in the increase in the number of contributors to the National Insurance Scheme. According to the 2009 annual report of the National Insurance Scheme, a total of 12,481 new persons were registered as employed, 54% male and 46% female, and 75% between the ages of 16-24 years of age, and 20% were between 25-39 years of age. These new entrants represented an increase in 10% over the previous year. The overall average age was 23 years.

The number of contributors to the NIS who were self-employed person also showed an upward trend between the years 2005-2009 with 68% males and 32% females, with 82%% being under the age of 45.³¹

The World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2012 ranks Guyana as No. 1 with regard to female professional and technical workers with female-male ratio of 1.42.³²

Women in the unionized agricultural production comprise 20 percent of the work force, the largest percentage work in the Guyana Sugar Corporation.

Women are also engaged in their own plots or family owned plots in agricultural production.³³

In 2012, the Guyana Women Miners Association was formed by women who own mining (gold) enterprises to represent their own interests while at the same time being members of the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners' Association. A recent report by the group stated that there were 700 women employed in this sector. This development illustrates the movement of women into non-traditional areas of economic activities and their greater participation in economic life.

In recent times, women also make up a significant percentage of employees in the private security firms, what is now referred to in the Caribbean as the "feminization of the private guard services."

Of note, is that the employment statistics do not capture women who are engaged in economic activities in the home as they consider themselves (and as they are classified as) "Unemployed". The GoG acknowledges that the informal work performed by women is not captured in official statistics. These trends can serve to depress the overall estimate of the total employment-to-population and gender ratios.

The findings of the Guyana Occupational Wages and Hours of Work (GOWHW) Survey 2010 may be of interest to the Committee³⁴.

³⁰ Guyana DHS Report 2009, page 44, based on responses of 1992 women who were surveyed.

³¹ For more information on the National Insurance Scheme see www.nis.org.gy

³² Global Gender Gap Report 2012 pages 194, Guyana Country Profile.

³³ There is no gender disaggregated data of women who are owners of agricultural land under production but women are owners of rice producing farms as well as small and medium agricultural plots.

“The attained educational level of the 2246 persons who were sampled from the 9263 respondents indicate that 29 % gained primary education, 52 % completed secondary school education, 9% obtained technical education, 8% attained tertiary level education and 2% did not indicate. Thus, tertiary and technical levels account for 17 %. It is important to note that more men than women have been consistently noted in the total samples for these 3 years. Men out-number women at the primary and technical education levels and for those not stated for the 3 years. However, it should be noted that in 2009, women attained a greater proportion at the secondary education level and in 2008 at the tertiary level. Overall, the highly skilled workers were almost entirely in the services sector”

Therefore, the first and critical contributor to enhanced participation of women in the economy and improvement in their economic independence and empowerment is through access to education from nursery to secondary and then post secondary and tertiary education.³⁵

The second contributor is provision of and access to a variety of skills training programmes for those who either did not complete their secondary education or who for a variety of factors need to be trained or retrained with new skills.

One example of these skills programmes which is specifically focused at single mothers is the Single Parent Assistance Programme (SPAP) which began in March 2009 providing training in selected ‘child-friendly’ professions. This has benefited 1106 single parents to 2012. From 2012 to 2013, an additional 400 single mothers have benefitted. Upon successful completion of this training, graduates receive grants of G\$65,000 (US\$325) to enable the start-up of a business in their area of training. A follow-up study on the success of this programme is currently being conducted. The second component of the SPAP offers day care vouchers to subsidise the cost of childcare.

The third contributor is access to micro-credit to allow women to develop their own economic activity to supplement their families’ incomes or as the main bread winner of the household.

In addition to training the Government introduced the Women of Worth (WOW) micro-credit facility in June 2010 which emerged out of a GOG/locally owned commercial bank partnership specifically targeting women between the ages of 18-65. This facility allows women to access low interest loans without collateral to start up or develop businesses. From 2010 to date, 1500 women have been able to access these low interest loans and 100 are second time borrowers totaling G\$154M (US \$ 770,000).

The fourth contributor is progressive labour laws and policies that uphold the constitutional provisions of equality for women and men in all spheres of life.

³⁴ These findings are detailed in the **Tables 5- 10** in the **Appendix 1** of Guyana’s State Party report to CEDAW 2010 and illustrate a positive shift in women’s status and participation in the labour force in comparison to the 2002 Census data.

³⁵ Section 11 in this report provides data on Guyana’s achievement with gender parity in school enrollment at the nursery and primary levels, and, the target of universal secondary education in 2 years.

In order for women to attain greater economic autonomy and equality in the workplace Guyana has since Beijing introduced labour legislation in place to further enhance the protection of workers in both the public and private sectors. There are policies for the protection of all workers including domestic workers. These policies are implemented through programmes formulated by a tripartite body comprising representatives from government, organised labour, private sector, civil society and employers.

In Guyana, women are granted maternity leave up to thirteen weeks. All Domestic Workers and Care Givers in a recognized employment relationship are paid and covered by statute.

On July 1, 2013, the National Minimum Wage Order was introduced for regular working hours (for all workers in Guyana), made under Section 8 of the Labour Act, Chapter 98:01. The Government approved a national minimum wage and a forty-hour work week for both private and public sector employees. The national minimum wage specifies that a minimum wage shall apply, but is not limited to workers employed in all the sectors, and shall be applicable to all workers in similar categories.

The fifth contributor relates to providing the opportunity to the population, specially the poor and vulnerable, to equal access to new technology.

Since 2010, the Government identified information and communication-based technology as an emerging growth sector, which identified the need for greater diversification of the labour pool.³⁶ Subsequently Government has been promoting an information communication technology project the “One Laptop Per Family” (OLPF) programme that is aimed to provide 90,000 households with a lap top each and computer training free of cost. Those who benefit are low income and women headed households. The programme also provides adapted laptops for differently-abled persons. Amerindian communities and interior villages will have ICT hubs to expand the information communication skills of our Indigenous populations and equalize access to new technology.³⁷ To date, over 45,000 lap tops have been distributed under this programme.

5. Empowerment of Indigenous Women

In recent years the situation of Amerindian³⁸ (Indigenous) women has improved significantly. This is most visible with the number of Amerindian women holding public office. The current Executive has two Amerindian female Ministers of Government who hold the portfolios of Foreign Affairs and Amerindian Affairs. Of the 6 Amerindian Members of Parliament, 5 are female.

³⁶ Dr. Ashni K. Singh, Minister of Finance (2010), Budget Speech 2010, Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2010 Ministry of Finance, Georgetown

³⁷ Dr. Ashni K. Singh, Minister of Finance (2014), Budget Speech 2014, Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2014 Ministry of Finance, Georgetown

³⁸ There are 9 distinct linguistic Amerindian groups in Guyana.

For the first time since the establishment of National Toshias Council (NTC) a woman toshao³⁹ was elected as the Chairperson (2009-2012). The NTC as the highest legitimate representative of the Amerindian communities according to the Amerindian Act 2006, Part IV, Sec. 41) is mandated:

To promote good governance in Villages including investigating matters as requested by the Minister and making recommendation ...

To ensure that any person involved in the investigation is given a reasonable opportunity to be heard;

To prepare strategies and plans for reducing poverty and improving access to health and education in Villages;

To prepare strategies and plans for the protection, conservation and sustainable management of Village lands and natural resources

At present there are 186 elected toshaos and senior councillors, of which 10 percent are women. Amerindian women hold the positions of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Indigenous People's Commission (IPC), which is mandated by the Guyana Constitution to promote Amerindian rights. Out of ten (10) commissioners, four (4) are women. This is in adherence to the Constitutional provision that of the three nominees from the National Toshias Council "one must be a woman" and of the two nominees from the Amerindian organizations one must be a woman (Constitution 212 S, para b) in the constitution of members of the Indigenous Peoples' Commission.

Access to education has been a critical contributor to the empowerment of not only Amerindian girls and women but all Amerindians. In 1992 there was only one secondary school in the interior (2/3 of Guyana); in 2014 there are 13 secondary schools with dormitories in the 4 Administrative Regions in the interior catering to over 5500 students. This access to secondary education for Amerindian children over the last 15 years has opened many opportunities for advancement and further training as teachers, nurses, doctors, and law enforcement and defence.

6. Partnerships

The Government of Guyana continues to facilitate and collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organisations (INGO) and international development partners to advance women's rights. Some notable activities conducted were: Supporting seminars and workshops hosted by the Women and Gender Equality Commission (WGEC) on sexual harassment in the workplace and access to justice. Government has planned and commemorated international observances such as IWD, IDEVAW (16 Days of Activism) and others with the international community and NGOs.

The Government of Guyana has continuous constructive engagement with international development partners on programmes and projects in keeping with national goals. Through

³⁹ A Toshao is the captain or head of an Amerindian Village and s/he is elected along with the Village Councillors every 2 years.

programme support from UNIFEM/now UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, PAHO-WHO, UNFPA and UNAIDS-- country programme cooperation agreements, support programmes and interventions on child protection, health, education, environment and promotion of human rights with several Ministries and non-governmental organizations. The UNDAF (2012-2016) and the UNICEF CPAP 2012 -2016 are cases in point.

With funding from USAID and UNDP, the MLHSSS has conducted workshops on Trafficking in Persons (TiP). There are also two shelters for victims of domestic violence and TiPs victims with a third coming on stream supported by the government and national stakeholders and run by local non-governmental organizations.⁴⁰

b) Major Challenges

Guyana's major challenges in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women remain one of the availability of limited human, technical and financial resources. The shortage of specialized skills in a small population puts a strain on how effective and timely the implementation of programmes can be delivered. As a result the Government has to focus on the sustainability of whatever programmes are introduced.

Levels of interpersonal violence, uneven implementation of the laws, access to legal representation for those in hinterland communities; limited gender disaggregated data and socio-cultural norms and traditional practices also provide challenges.

However, the government has continued to address these challenges through investment in greater budgetary allocation to education and social services, post graduate training and scholarships, enhancing training of the judiciary, magistracy, and law enforcement officials; more public awareness programmes to sensitize the population on their rights and access to services and redress.

Government allocated more resources through the Justice Sector Modernisation Programme to facilitate improved infrastructure for Courts throughout the country. There were several appointments of new magistrates to serve in hinterland communities, and continued advocacy and dialogue with private sector and civil society on various issues pertaining to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

1. Violence against Women

Section 2, No. 4 Violence against Women, of this report provides detailed information and data on the progress made and challenges faced.

⁴⁰ The Government continues to develop and strengthen partnerships with civil society. It provides an annual subvention of GYD15M to support the work of Help and Shelter –a local NGO--to provide counseling and shelter for survivors of domestic violence and their children. It also provides annually GYD \$ 40 M to the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic Inc to expand access to legal representation for the poor and vulnerable across the Administrative Regions. ChildLink another NGO focuses on working with the ChildCare Protection Agency.

As the Minister of Human Services and Social Security stated at CSW 2014 when speaking on behalf of CARICOM,

“We have recognized that the endemic culture of violence and widespread gender based violence in particular, demands intensive and extensive strategic action and multilayered interventions by all of us. The trafficking of humans for sexual or labour exploitation is also a growing concern for CARICOM Member States as the victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking are predominantly young women and girls. Traffickers now routinely use the lure of lucrative job opportunities to target women and girls across the region through the Internet. It is anticipated that as the region becomes a more networked society, the Internet will increasingly facilitate the transnational marketing of sex workers.”⁴¹

According to MLHSS/UNFPA study conducted in 2010, women across all strata in society have experienced gender-based violence at some point in their lives thus supporting the view that gender-based violence is rooted in women’s lack of power in relationships and in society relative to men. In Guyana, like many other societies, women were expected to be submissive and sexually available to their husbands and partners at all times, and it was considered both a right and an obligation for men to use violence in order to “correct” or chastise women for perceived transgressions. These views were not only held by men but by more than 30 percent of women who participated in study.⁴² The Sexual Offences Act 2010 specifically prohibits rape in marriage.

2. Enforcement of Laws

In an effort to facilitate the provisions of the legal framework, government under its *Citizen Security Programme* has upgraded police stations to include facilities for reporting crimes of sexual and domestic violence in privacy. There have been mixed reports from victims of domestic violence about the effective use of these facilities and appropriate attitudes of law enforcement officials.

This situation points to the on-going challenge with regard to behavioral and attitudinal changes with respect the violence against women. Gender-based violence sensitization is a critical component of the human rights training provided by the Police Officers Training School for young cadets.

⁴¹ Minister Jennifer Webster, Minister of the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security on behalf of the Caribbean Community “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls” at the Fifty-eight Session of the Commission on the Status of Women United Nations Headquarters, New York, March 10, 2014

⁴²Roxanne Myers, 2012 “Survey Research on Gender-based Violence in Guyana - The Incidence and Drivers”, MLHSS/UNFPA, Georgetown

At the same, there are notable successes in the Magistracy with regard to upholding the sexual and domestic violence statutes thus imbuing greater confidence by the victims that the courts are taking these cases seriously.

3. Access to Justice

Many women especially interior and rural women have not been fully exposed to human rights education, people-friendly IEC materials and are not familiar with the operation of the courts. Given the topography of the country, law enforcement services in some areas have been limited and/or ad hoc thus rendering access and administrative challenges for victims.

Government through the Judiciary continues to address this challenge through various mechanisms, which include streamlining court schedules and prosecution of offenders in hinterland Regions while improving coordination between police and the court system to provide effective and timely justice for victims. Decentralised legal aid services offered by the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic Inc in rural areas have improve women's access to justice.

The Ministerial Task Force on Combating Trafficking in Persons is a multi-agency multi-sectoral body that works towards prevention of TIPs and monitoring the reports and cases of TIPs. The Minister of Home Affairs chairs the TaskForce. Thus far, though there are not many cases, the number of victims is disproportionately female of various ages.

The MHLSSS, one of the agencies in the Task Force, has distributed counter-trafficking material countrywide and more particularly in rural and hinterland communities vulnerable to such activity. Awareness-raising about TIPs in schools has also been another method utilized by the MLHSSS to reduce the vulnerability of young girls to trafficking and sexual exploitation. Further the Ministry's effort to combat trafficking in persons in Guyana was boosted further by the "Training of trainers" workshop on counter-trafficking in persons. Thirty-eight participants selected from Government and civil society throughout the ten administrative regions in Guyana, received training to enable them to become better equipped with the requisite tools and skills to contribute to the national response mechanism through victim identification and assistance, and public awareness strategies. Additionally, the Ministry of Amerindians Affairs, another agency in the Task Force, in collaboration with local NGOs has been distributing educational material through the media and community outreach activities.

While efforts have been made by the Government to address Trafficking in Persons, Help and Shelter (2012) recorded 16 girls between the ages of 12-17 years who were referred to the shelter for protection, psychosocial support and counseling.

The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MOAA) has Community Development Officers (CDO) in the Amerindian Villages in four interior Administrative Regions as well as 100 plus Community Liaison officers in the Amerindian Villages who provide public awareness,

victim identification and referral to the relevant authorities as well as assist with access to services, representation etc.

Continuous training must be maintained to sensitize and change behavioural attitudes of communities, businesses, transportation providers of goods and services to and from the hinterland communities and law enforcement personnel.

4. Gender Disaggregated Data

The Committee is asked to refer to Section 111 on Data and Statistics.

5. Negative Socio-Cultural Norms

Guyana is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society and therefore religion, traditions, practices and beliefs still play a critical part in the socialization of people. In general, whilst the society's norms still subscribe to patriarchy, the changes in the society go against these attitudes as more women work, are educated and become more independent. One of the interesting factors in Guyana is that at the national average of 34% of households are headed by women and therefore there is a major social problem of absentee males as fathers, partners etc. Many of the unevenness of development indicate a society in transition where adult males will have to make the greatest transitions.

Even though women have made significant progress in education and employment, the greatest challenge posed to women reaching their full potential are the many demands on them as the main care givers, workers, and providers..

Global media coverage of women and the social media foster negative stereo-types of women as sexual objects. So too, the local media-advertising sector also perpetuates gender stereotypes and promulgates sexual images of women. Direct and subliminal messages about the body, beauty and power have captivated most of our youth through the dominance of the media, social media and Internet.

The task of preventing and reducing gender-based violence is now probably more complex and challenging than years ago as a small developing country cannot control the immediate relay and access to information via the social media and internet. Guyana recognizes that there are positive and negative impacts on the society.

Another negative cultural norm is the society's support for the use of corporal punishment against children in schools and homes.

The Child Protection Act of 2009 prohibits the practice of corporal punishment in childcare and residential institutions; however, corporal punishment is still permissible in schools under the provisions of the Education Act.

In keeping with Government of Guyana's commitments to the UNHRC UPR 2010 to consult widely on the issue of the abolition of corporal punishment in schools, the Minister of Education in 2012 and 2013 held country-wide consultations with parents, teachers at the community levels on the abolition of corporal punishment in schools.⁴³ The Government brought a Resolution (No. 23 of 2012) to establish a Parliamentary Special Select Committee to examine the attitude of Guyanese children and parents to the possible abolition of corporal punishment in schools. The Committee has held hearings with individuals, civil society bodies, including the Guyana Teachers Union and has not completed its work at the time of reporting.

c) Setbacks/ Reversals

The emergence of a relatively new trend over the last twenty years in Guyana, the Caribbean, and in fact in many parts of the world, has impacted on gender equality. As women's position has shown improvement parallel to this is the trend of a steady decline of males pursuing higher education. Male absenteeism in the home is growing concern.

The general underperformance of males in academia coupled with 34% of the households being headed by women contributes to complex and long lasting social problems. Consequently, the demand on the state for increased services in the social and security sectors has placed a strain on already limited financial resources.

The establishment of the Men's Affairs Bureau in the MLHSS recognizes the issues of male absenteeism and focuses on working with males to address their concerns and help them to be responsible partners and fathers. Increased attention on and availability of skills training programmes for school drops and low achievers, with a male bias, has assisted in providing more opportunities and a second chance for males.

While Government encourages and facilitates the empowerment of women, men still predominate as executives in the private sector and the labour movement, whilst women remain in the majority from the lower to middle management levels in the private sectors.

d) Main Constitutional and Legal Developments

This has already been highlighted under earlier under **Major Achievements, Legal Framework.**

There are no new laws/regulations in this reporting period that have a negative impact on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

⁴³ Guyana Chronicle, December 2013 "Corporal punishment is also a national issue"
<http://guyanachronicle.com/corporal-punishment-is-also-a-national-issue/>

e) Budgetary Allocations

As stated earlier, the Government has consistently placed emphasis on the access to and delivery of social services to its citizens with specific and special focus on the poor and vulnerable within available resources.

In general terms budgetary allocations in Guyana are targeted towards gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors. Government is of the view that budgetary support for social sector spending on water, health, education, housing and human services etc targeted at the poor and vulnerable benefit women. **Table1** below shows budgetary allocations for key ministries that provide services for all including women and girls.

Noteworthy is that the budgetary allocations for the social sector- Health, Education, Water, Housing, Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Amerindian Affairs – assumed 34.5 % of the 2014 national budget.

Budgetary allocation over the past five years have funded special programmes for single parents apprenticeship; subsidised water and electricity for senior citizens; and scholarships for hinterland students to attend higher education institutions in the urban centre and overseas; increased in the monetary value of the assistance under the universal old age pension scheme; increased support to persons in difficult circumstances; universal school voucher allowance and a new transportation allowance in 2014 for school children from nursery to completion of secondary education in the government run education system.

Table 1 below provides data for the years 2009- 2014 with regards to the percentage of the national budget that goes to Education, Health, Water and Housing, Amerindian Affairs, Labour, Human Services and Social Security.

Table 1: Budget as a percentage (%) of the National Budget 2008-2014

Sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Amerindian Affairs	488.4	497.0	486.4	598.9	833.8	1,554.4
As a % of national budget	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.7
Education	19,908.7	20,825.3	23,861.8	25,888.3	28,036.7	31,664.4
As a % of national budget	15.4	14.6	14.8	13.4	13.4	14.4
Health	12,788.0	13,243.7	13,917.7	16,851.3	19,034.1	23,259.7
As a % of national budget	9.9	9.3	8.6	8.7	9.1	10.6
Housing and Water	6,286.6	5,833.2	5,756.4	7,489.8	8,928.3	9,757.1
As a % of national budget	4.9	4.1	3.6	3.9	4.3	4.4
Labour Human Services & Social Security	5,590.4	5,648.2	5,963.1	5,748.7	9,182.8	9,789.3
As a % of national budget	4.3	4.0	3.7	3.0	4.4	4.4
Youth	364.0	396.7	439.4	506.3	525.4	564.9
As a % of national budget	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
National Budget (As presented)	128,882.5	142,775.6	161,430.2	192,781.3	208,840.4	220,046.7

Figures: G\$ Million

Source: Ministry of Finance, National Estimates and Social Sector Table

f) Dialogue between Government and Civil Society

The Government of Guyana has several mechanisms in place for regular dialogue between Government and civil society, which include:-

- the National Commission on the Family
- the National Commission on the Elderly
- the National Oversight Committee on Domestic Violence
- the Sexual Offences Task Force
- the National Commission on Disabilities
- Ministerial Task Force on TIPs
- the Minister of Home Affairs and the Houses of Justice and the Community Action groups who work together to prevent crime at the community levels.
- the National Stakeholder Forum headed by the President

All these bodies are comprised of representatives from Government, the private sector, civil society, faith-based organizations and non-governmental organisations who discuss social issues and consult with communities throughout the country. Government remains committed to dialogue on national issues. Countrywide issues lead to specific engagements. In the case of the National Commissions, they have specific mandates many provided for in statute that they execute.

There are constitutional and statutory mechanisms for complaints and redress through:-

- The Police Complaints Authority
- The Public Service Commission
- The Judicial Service Commission
- The Police Service Commission
- The 4 rights commissions--Women and Gender Equality Commission; the Rights of the Child Commission, the Ethnic Relations Commission, the Indigenous Peoples Commission⁴⁴
- The Ombudsman
- The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- The Judiciary

g) Strategic Partnerships and h) the Millennium Development Goals

Government of Guyana continues to build its strategic partnerships with international development partners to effectively address the issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment through its commitment to the implementation of the Millennium

⁴⁴ Nos 2- 5 in this list are appointed in accordance with the constitution through a parliamentary consensual mechanism.

Development Goals (MDGs) 2015. Monitoring the progress of the MDGs provided opportunities for re-prioritization of programmes, resources and technical assistance to allow the Government to accelerate progress on gender-related goals, in particular MDG 5.

Further, Government has ongoing direct monitoring of the critical areas of concern in Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through honoring its reporting obligations and responses to recommendations of UN Committees and Treaty bodies.

Partnerships with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UN Women, PAHO-WHO, CARICOM, CIDA, USAID, EU other bilateral partners and International NGOs have contributed to an enhanced legal framework, stronger institutional mechanisms, skilled professionals with related knowledge and improved programmes and services in favour of women and girls. Apart from the financial support, these partnerships also provide exposure to global best practices that have in some cases been adapted to the national situation.

Guyana is proud too that it has been able to provide and share some models of “good practices” with regard to its model of Low Carbon Development, low income housing programmes, youth friendly programmes, Amerindian land titling and integration and rights commissions.

SECTION TWO

PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION (2009-2013)

a) Status of Progress in Critical Areas of Concern

For the period under review only **eleven** of the twelve critical areas are relevant to Guyana. This section provides an assessment of achievements and progress on strategic objectives related to women and poverty; education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women and the economy; women in power and decision-making; Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women and the media; women and the environment; and the girl child.

1. Women and Poverty

Overall Guyana has made good progress towards eradicating extreme poverty. The proportion of the population living in extreme poverty has declined from 28.7 percent in 1993 to 18.6 percent in 2006. In order to meet the MDG target for poverty reduction, the extreme poverty rate must be reduced by a further 4 percentage points by 2015.

Government has a pro-poor policy that focused on a poverty reduction strategy programme (PRSP) supported by budgetary allocations for education, health, water and housing and a pro-growth policy that focused on diversifying and expanding the economic base.

Over the last decade, Government has implemented direct and indirect programmes to combat poverty and improve women's economic development and status relative to their male counterparts.

While government pursued this strategy to advance the conditions and opportunities for access to services for all families, the empowerment of women was simultaneously advanced. More specifically pro-poor female-targeted programmes such as the public assistance programme, the universal old age pension, the single parent assistance programme, the Women of Worth (WOW) project, the universal school uniform programme and the school feeding programme provide for an enabling environment for the creation of opportunities and advancement for girl children in particular, and women who are poor and vulnerable.

Access to adequate and affordable shelter has been a priority of the Government, which has a multi-pronged approach of facilitating property acquisition by low-income earners. Government has also developed a programme which has regularized almost all the squatter settlements. Women in particular women have been able to improve their living standards and acquire land in their name as house lot owners under concessional terms.

Government distributed approximately 82,000 house lots between 1993 and 2009 at concessional prices, and continues to prioritize the expansion of access to housing to the lowest income groups. No gender specific data available was retrievable about house-lot distribution at the time of writing this report. However, in the last 5 years, the Ministry of Housing reports that 50% of all persons who applied and were allocated government low income houselots were women.

For the first time a significant percentage of women have access to property and the security and collateral it offers them. This is a major achievement for women's empowerment.

Government has shown commitment to improving living conditions for all families in the hinterland communities through improved access to services and general public goods. Development for people in the hinterlands including girls and women has been tangible through various policies and programmes, including presidential grants, national hinterland secure livelihood projects, land demarcation and titling, hinterland solar electrification, road and water improvements, school feeding and school uniform programmes.

Government through the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs released GYD993M over the last 7 years, for community development projects benefitting 187 communities and villages. For instance, the hinterland solar electrification project is aimed at providing access of hinterland communities to electricity.. In 2011, Government approved the procurement of approximately 11,000 65W Solar Home Systems, financed from the national treasury that were distributed to Amerindian Households in indigenous communities across the country.

This programme has continued in 2013 with the acquisition of more solar home systems until every Amerindian Household that is off the electricity grid have a solar home system.

2. Education and Training of Women

The Guyana MDG Progress Report 2011 states, that “Guyana has made excellent progress towards achieving universal primary education. The country is on track to meet the education target, ensuring that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.”⁴⁵

The Global Gender Gap report 2012 ranks Guyana as number 1 in comparison with 134 countries for all 3 categories of female enrollment in primary education, enrollment in secondary education and enrollment in tertiary education and an overall rank of 28 in educational attainment⁴⁶.

The Constitution of Guyana guarantees the right of free education from nursery school through secondary school, including non-formal schooling. The Education Act makes education for every child compulsory to age 15. Data from the Ministry of Education reveals that one thousand, one hundred and seventy (1170) public and private educational institutions are accessible throughout the country. The slight decrease in the number of institutions shown in Table 2 has resulted from the amalgamation of Primary Tops or primary schools with secondary departments to provide more even access to general secondary schools.

Table 2: Educational Institutions and Student Enrollment

Year	No. of Institutions	Student Enrollment – Nursery to Tertiary			
		Female	Male	Total	Percentage of females
2008 – 2009	1219	105,620	106,476	212,096	49.7
2009 – 2010	1269	110,467	108,790	219,257	50.3
2010 – 2011	1181	115,816	115,988	231,804	50.0
2011 – 2012	1170	110,173	108,980	205,598	53.5

Source: Ministry of Education, Statistical Digest 2008-2012

Student enrolment of females and males is almost the same at nursery through primary schools, however more females (73 percent) than males (66 percent) of secondary school age are enrolled in secondary schools at the national level. Government provides tuition free education, which includes the provision of textbooks, from primary to secondary levels for public schools. The school life expectancy for primary to tertiary education is 13 years for males and 14 years for females.

⁴⁵ Government of Guyana, MDG Report Progress Report 2011
<http://www.finance.gov.gy/publications/mdgreport2011>

⁴⁶ Global Gender Gap report 2012, Guyana Profile, page 194

Government policies on primary education are focused on improving access for students in hinterland regions as well as improving the inclusiveness of education with regard to students with learning disabilities. In addition to access to and completion of primary schooling, Government is committed to the improvement of the quality of education offered. To this end, the Government has identified two key priorities: improving the training and availability of qualified teachers and increasing the attendance rates of both students and teachers.

At the post-secondary level, there are several state-run institutions – three Nursing schools, the Guyana School of Agriculture, the Cyril Potter College of Education and in-service teacher training programmes in each region, seven Technical/Vocational Institutes in six regions, the Carnegie School of Home Economics and the Felix Austin College of Police. The tech/voc institutes cater to the training needs of youth with non-academic talents; many youth including girls enrol annually in these programmes that are offered at minimal or no cost.

University enrolment is higher among women resulting in a significantly higher proportion of women completing university degrees compared to their male cohort⁴⁷ as shown in Table 3 below.

Two campuses of the University of Guyana (Turkeyen and Tain) offer certificate, diploma, degree and post-graduate programmes. The University has a Law School and a Medical School. Government advances tertiary education through student loans at concessional rates. An average of 70 percent of female students graduate each year from the University of Guyana as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: University of Guyana Student Enrollment and Completion

	University Enrollment				University Completion			
	Female	Male	Total	%	Female	Male	Total	%
2008 – 2009	3607	1968	5575	64.6	554	207	761	72.0
2009 – 2010	3834	2081	5915	65.0	489	202	691	71.0
2010 – 2011	4185	2361	6546	64.0	902	422	1324	68.1
2011 – 2012	4555	2783	7338	62.1	n.a	n.a	n.a	--

Source: Ministry of Education, Statistical Digest 2008-2012

In the hinterland areas and in the Amerindian communities, increased budgetary support for the school-feeding programmes and the provision of free uniforms have had a tremendous impact on enrollment, attendance and performance in schools. Teachers working in remote areas also receive incentives, and the *Teacher Training Certificate Programme* is now being delivered by distance education. As pointed out earlier in Section 1 the number of secondary schools with dormitories in the interior provide access to secondary education for over 5000 Amerindian and interior children.

⁴⁷ Ministry of Education, Summary of Education System 2008 – 2012, Georgetown
http://www.education.gov.gy/web/index.php/downloads/cat_view/8-downloads/60-digest-of-education-statistics

Access to education for Amerindians living in hinterland and riverain communities has improved through the construction of nursery and primary schools in every Amerindian village, provision of 13 secondary schools with dormitories for over 5500 students in the 4 interior Administrative Regions, access to local and international scholarships for Amerindian students to pursue secondary and tertiary education in various disciplines. Furthermore children from hinterland communities can also access to scholarships to attend secondary schools in coastal areas. The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs manages the Hinterland Scholarship Programme (HSP) that offers lodging, book allowance and round-trip travel to community of origin.

During 2013, Government invested GYD74.6M under the Hinterland Scholarship Programme for the benefit of 430 hinterland students. In addition, GYD200 million was spent on the Youth Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Programme (YEAP) launched in four geographical Regions --1, 7, 8, 9-- where the majority of Amerindians reside. A total of 198 persons were trained in basic computer skills and solar panel repairs, installation and maintenance.

The education system also addresses the need for second-chance and continuing education and Government has embarked upon several initiatives through special youth skills training programmes offered by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, which are both residential and non-residential, for school drop-outs and low achievers. Several non-governmental organizations also offer skills training and life skills programmes to youth to support employability.

A special programme by the UNFPA working with an NGO, and the Ministries of Health and the ChildCare Protection Agency offer focused attention and support to teenage mothers and work towards reintegrating them with skills and services.

3. Women and Health

The Government ensures that all health services are consistent with a human rights approach including the rights to privacy, confidentiality, informed consent and choice. The principle of confidentiality is embedded in all medical laws including the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act No. 7 of 1995 (s. 14); the Medical Practitioners Act; the Mid-Wives Act and other medical protocols. Partner consent or parental consent is not a requirement to access medical attention including family planning services of any kind. There are limitations for persons who cannot give informed consent include mentally ill persons and very young children.

Guyana's public health care system is the only one apart from Cuba in the Region that provides free health care to all citizens.

Guyana offers a comprehensive health care delivery system and national strategy to promote women's health throughout their lifespan. Health legislation, plans and policies are based on scientific and ethical research and assessment of the health status and needs of the Guyanese citizens, in particular women in Guyana. The public health sector receives technical support from the Pan American Health Organization-World Health Organisation (PAHO-WHO), UNICEF and the Centre for Disease Control (CDC).

Both nationals and non-nationals (even if not legally in the country) residing in Guyana have access to free medical attention at the main tertiary care and city referral public hospital, nine (9) regional public hospitals, 21 secondary /district hospitals, 2 specialist hospitals, and 342 primary health care facilities. Medicine in the public sector is also free. There are also seven private hospitals.

Government through the Ministry of Health and its Regional Health Services play an integral role in service delivery with financial and technical support in the decentralized public health care system in the 10 Administrative Regions. "Guyana's per capita health expenditure compares very favorably with other Latin American Caribbean countries with an increase from US\$45 in 2005 to US\$194 in 2010."⁴⁸ Over the last two years, there has been an increase in financial allocations to women's health..

Some of the key indicators of health show that women are living longer with life expectancy increasing from 66 years in 2003 to 67 in 2007 as compared to males at 60 years respectively.⁴⁹

The main issues affecting women's health and well being relate to maternal morbidity and mortality, diabetes, hypertension, and specific cancers.

Strategic Objectives

Guyana's Health Vision 2020 which was launched in January 2014 embraces the World Health Organisation's definition of health. It is underpinned by the values of human rights, equity and solidarity in health, as well as principles and approaches that emphasize individual empowerment, social participation, evidence-based planning, primary health care, and sustainable development.

Primary Health Care

Women have access to primary health care facilities which are located in surrounding communities free of cost. These centres offer pre-natal and post-natal clinics, as well clinic days for the prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment of diseases including HIV/AIDS,

⁴⁸ WHO- Country Cooperation Strategy at a glance: WHO country page <http://www.who.int/countries/guy/en/>

⁴⁹ WHO, Guyana Country Profile, 2012 at <http://www.who.int/countries/guy/en>

STIs, tuberculosis and malaria. Common problems that fall within the non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension are also provided in the Non-Communicable Disease clinic days. Immunization of children up to the age of five years is universally available at no costs with a complete coverage against preventable childhood diseases.

Whilst Guyana as reported in the 2011 Progress Report on MDGs had high immunization of children under the age of five,⁵⁰ and that infant and child mortality had been reduced, maternal mortality still remained of serious concern.

Maternal deaths in general have declined from 270/100,000 in 1990 to 86/100,000 in 2012⁵¹. The attendance of expectant mothers at antenatal clinics is approximately 80% in the public sector and the attendance of an expectant mother to at least one ANC has increased from 82% to 97.2% in 2008.

In this regard one of greatest challenge to reducing maternal mortality is ensuring that women go to their ANC/PHC in the first semester of their pregnancies so that complications or risks can be identified early where possible and proper treatment and monitoring is put in place to protect mother and child. The other factor relates to well trained and well equipped health practitioners who are capable of addressing the safe delivery of mother and child.

Preventive programmes that promote women's health

The continued integration of HIV services into the Antenatal Care (ANC) services guarantees a package of antenatal, maternal, child health and reproductive health services. This is in keeping with the objective that commits Guyana to eliminate vertical transmission of HIV (from mother to child) by 2015. It also commits Guyana to reduce substantially AIDS related maternal deaths by 2015. This integration also ensures the management of STIs, unwanted pregnancies, sexual violence among others.

There are a total of 183 Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) sites across the 10 Administrative Regions, which provide services during the antenatal period, labor and delivery and post-partum including provision of breast milk substitute. HIV prevalence among the antenatal population remains below 1 percent. Fewer babies are born HIV positive, a drop from 5.8 percent in 2010 to 2 percent in 2012.

Additionally, to enhance awareness and uptake of treatment to prevent transmission, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were produced by the National

⁵⁰ For 2013, Government spent GYD142, 782,000 on Maternal and Child Health (MCH), with another GYD137,970, 000 spent on vaccinations of children (EPI). For 2014, GYD120, 411,000 was allocated to MCH while an additional GYD193, 254, 000 to EPI. Guyana now funds its immunization programme.

⁵¹ Refer to UN Guyana website for Guyana's MDG progress.

AIDS Programme Secretariat with technical oversight from the Maternal and Child Health Unit. Not only did the materials seek to prevent transmission but it also aimed at having greater involvement from males, from the time of conception to birth.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Recognizing that youth in particular have been shown to be at higher risk for HIV and that young women are at increased risk because of gender inequalities and early age of sexual debut. The national programme continues to invest particular attention to MDG 3, the empowerment of women and MDG 6, Access to Reproductive Health Services.

Women in Guyana have the freedom and right to decide on family planning and the number of children they conceive. Non-governmental organizations located in all regions of the country as well as a number of health centers and private hospitals offer services on family planning. Women and girls have access to contraceptives and usage had increased from 32% to 46%. Safe abortions are legal and are offered at all private medical institutions and at one not for profit clinic.

During 2013 the Ministry of Health commenced the consultations for the Sexual Reproductive Health Policy (SRHP) with support from UNFPA. All organisations that participated in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Capacity Building Forum had the opportunity to provide inputs.

UNFPA's advocacy focused on MDG 5, which may not be achieved in 2015 unless there is robust action by all stakeholders to address the bottlenecks. One of the identified bottlenecks is the lack of authorisation for midwives to perform certain basic and emergency functions during the delivery process. This requires revision of the legislation and the midwives curriculum. In this regard one area of UNFPA focus is review of the *Midwives Legislation (Scope of Practice) and Curricula*. In 2013 the Ministry of Health in collaboration with UNFPA hosted a five day (5) workshop to the review the scope of practice for midwives to bring in line with the ICM standards as well as revise the midwifery training curriculum and review and finalize the framework for continuing education of nurses in the system.

Fifteen (15) participants representing various regions, nursing schools and organisations participated in the workshop and successfully reviewed and revised the *Scope of Practice and Midwifery Training Curricula*.

The second challenge identified is the lack of an SRH Policy, which includes family planning. This gap resulted in the MOH with support from UNFPA embarking on the development of a sexual and reproductive health policy for Guyana which is intended to establish the technical, administrative, financial and political commitments for the delivery of SRH services and commodities at the national level with the aim of achieving universal access to SRH services in the country. Further, the policy will detail the principles that should

underpin and guide the design and delivery of SRH programmes and services by all providers. An SRH strategic plan is being developed concurrently to delineate the activities and actions that will be taken to realize the policy commitments. Several activities were completed as part of the process towards the development of the SRH policy, including a desk review of policies, domestic and international laws applicable to SRH in Guyana; and interviews and consultations with key stakeholders to better understand the issues involved including the practices in health care settings and cultural norms which affect access to SRH services, and to garner feedback and input for the policy. A Technical Committee on Sexual and Reproductive Health charged with oversight of the policy formulation was established and functioning to provide guidance, input and support for the policy development.

UNFPA with the Ministry of Health was able to integrate SRH in the Health Vision 2013-2020. UNFPA Youth Advisors also actively participated in the youth consultations for the development of the national Health Vision 2013-2020.

Further NGOS like the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA), Guyana Family Planning Association, Women Across Differences, Help & Shelter and the Youth Advisory Group facilitated several workshops, medical outreach clinics and satellite tables focusing on family planning methods including the male and female condoms. These sessions have been held in rural, underserved and urban communities. Condoms and brochures on the different family planning methods were distributed during all the sessions. In addition, television programmes are facilitated by the GRPA in collaboration with other NGOs sharing information on the importance of family planning.

Condom Social Marketing and Women's Empowerment Campaign

Behavior Change Communication (BCC) is a model that goes beyond mass media communication. Interactions at the community level are a key component of BCC. It seeks to promote a change in the mindset and attitude of individuals in efforts to foster positive behavior changes. The condom social marketing campaign targeted women in general as well as female sex workers. It sought to encourage women to negotiate for safer sexual practices. The television advertisement utilized model behavior to demonstrate how condom negotiation is done. It sought to educate and empower women to protect themselves against the HIV virus and other sexually transmitted infections.

A Women's Empowerment Campaign was designed to empower women to foster healthy relationships. The campaign utilized female role models to teach women their rights and the need to end unhealthy relationships especially those that involve domestic violence and sexual violence. The campaign educated women explicitly that they have the right over their own bodies and that right is to protect themselves against the ills of society.

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with UNFPA introduced the fc 2 (female condoms) to the population. There has been an annual increase in the number of female condoms distributed from 1,100 pieces in 2011 to 882,102 pieces in 2012. These were distributed primarily to commercial sex workers primarily for the prevention of STIs. This is in addition to those distributed through family planning programmes.

Gender-sensitive initiatives

Cervical cancer is the main type of cancer, closely followed by breast cancer being diagnosed in women in Guyana. Guyana has moved leaps in its screening, diagnosis and treatment of cervical cancer. With the help of JHpiego (an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University), and funding from PEPFAR through USAID, a single visit approach to cervical cancer testing and treatment utilizing visual inspection with acetic acid and cryoscopy, has been implemented across almost all ten Administrative Regions.

Previously a cytology-based testing was utilized. With the use of acetic acid the health care provider knows immediately if there are any cancer lesions on the cervix and makes the diagnosis on the spot. The Georgetown Public Hospital is the center for cervical cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment. There are an additional 18 sites in 9 of the 10 administrative regions of the country.

The importance of cervical cancer screening cannot be overemphasized as it is this screening that allows for an early diagnosis and if in its early stages this can contribute to prevention of the spread of the cancer and improved changes of survival and a longer life. These screening, diagnosis and treatment of cervical cancer proved to be very effective for women of indigenous background mainly in the interior areas where the largest percentage of cervical cancer diagnoses are made.

In addition, women who are HIV positive have been proven to be at greater risk for cervical cancer. Testing and treatment for cervical cancer among women living with HIV is routinely conducted at the 18 treatment sites located across the country. In efforts to prevent the development of cervical cancer at a later age, the Ministry of Health launched in January 2012 a cervical cancer vaccination programme where girls aged 13 are vaccinated against the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) 16 and 18 subtypes of cervical cancer.

A total of 5,920⁵² cases of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) other than HIV were reported to the Ministry of Health Surveillance Unit in 2012. Of the total number of cases, females accounted for more than 80 percent, which has been a trend in the last 8 years. However, the National Care and Treatment Center (NCTC) on the contrary showed that over 40 percent of diagnosed STI cases were among males.

⁵² Over 95 percent of the cases for the last 6 years are related to genital discharge and genital ulcer disease.

In efforts to educate the general public and heighten awareness the NAPS produced Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials targeting the 15-29 age groups since they are most vulnerable to STIs. It included a specific focus on gender. The brochures encouraged the population to seek more information on STIs and highlighted that STIs are important and relevant issues in lives of sexually active young persons. The objectives of the campaign were: -

- To clear the confusion between STI and HIV, as people do not view HIV as an STI;
- To increase health seeking behaviour (calling for information on STI and getting a medical check-up);
- To prevent unprotected sex and the spread of STIs and to build awareness of STIs, Human Papillomavirus (HPV) screening and prevention.

Posters were created to target health care providers in the diagnosis of genital ulcer disease and genital discharge syndrome. In addition, one billboard was also produced to prevent the spread of STIs.

Female Sex Workers

The National AIDS Programme Secretariat (NAPS) provides services and interventions geared towards reducing HIV transmission among the general population and among the key population, one of which is Female Sex Workers (FSWs). The NAPS in collaboration with NGOs have worked to reach FSWs with a comprehensive package of services which includes: risk education counseling; condoms and lubricant demonstration, distribution and promotion; peer education outreach; screening and treatment for drugs and alcohol; voluntary counseling and testing, HIV care and treatment; Reproductive health services and STI screening and treatment. A total of 909 FSWs were reached in 2012 from across eight of the 10 Administrative Regions⁵³.

Research on women's health

Several special studies were conducted that addressed issues surrounding women's health. One in particular, included modules on women health, using data from a number of studies such as the MICS and DHS with regard to understanding the factors associated with repeated pregnancies among the HIV positive women and contraceptive uptake.

In addition to research, routine surveillance and programmatic data collected is disaggregated by gender and information is used for programming.

4. Violence against women

⁵³ It should be noted that prostitution is illegal and therefore poses challenges to health workers to make contact and to ensure they are well informed and have access to condoms and regular medical checks.

Report of the Republic of Guyana on Beijing+20

The Parliament signaled its collective commitment by unanimously passing a Resolution condemning Violence against Women in November 2008 and repeated this with Resolution No. 47 on Interpersonal Violence in May 2013. These resolutions condemn all forms of interpersonal violence and supports existing and new programmes in Ministries, agencies and civil society bodies. The latter was sent to a Parliamentary Special Select Committee.

Notwithstanding the commitment of Government and law makers of Guyana, the incidents of violence against women especially domestic and/or intimate partner violence is disturbing. Approximately between 9-10% of all murders annually are of females. An examination done by the Governance Unit of the Office of the President on the number, ethnicity, age, and geographic locations of the female victims of murders between 2009-2012 revealed the following as captured in **Tables, 4, 5, and 6 below.**

Table 4: *Disaggregated Data on Gender Related Murders of Women and Girls For the Period 2009-2013*

Year	Number of Murders (female)	Ethnicity-				Charges Laid	Ongoing Investigations	Suspects committed suicide
		Afro	Indo	Amerindian	Mixed			
2009	11	3	7	1	0	8	1	2
2010	13	4	8	1	0	3	10	0
2011	19	6	10	1	2	12	4	3
2012	15	9	5	1	0	9	4	2
2013	18	2	13	1	3	9	6	4
Total	77	24	43	5	5	41	25	11
	Total %	31.1%	55.8%	6.4%	6.4%	53.2%	32.4%	14.2%

Table 5: *Number of murders within the Geographical Regions*

Year	Region	Number of Murders	Percentage
2009-2013	Region 1	1	1.3%
	Region 2	3	4%
	Region 3	13	17.5%
	Region 4	40	54%
	Region 5	2	2.7%
	Region 6	11	14.8%
	Region 7	0	-
	Region 8	0	-
	Region 9	2	2.7
	Region 10	2	2.7
Total		74	100%

Table 6: Number of Murders According to Age Groupings

Year	Age Group	Number of Murders	Percentage
2009-2013	< 5	0	0
	5-10	2	2.6%
	11-15	1	1.3%
	16-20	5	6.6%
	21-25	9	12%
	26-30	10	13.3%
	31-35	11	14.6%
	36-40	11	14.6%
	41-45	11	14.6%
	46-50	8	10.6%
	51-55	4	5.3%
	56-60	3	4%
Total		75⁵⁴	

The evidence of this study suggests that violence has no geographical limitations and is common across all the boundaries of class, ethnicity, socio-economic status and religious beliefs. However, for the period 2008-2013, the majority of victims are of Indo-guyanese origin (43) and the age of the largest per cent age of victims is between 21- 45 years of age (52 cases). Noteworthy is the number of incidences where the perpetrator commits suicide (14.2%) which is noted as a new emerging trend.

In a study on Gender Based Violence conducted by the MLHSSS in 2010 across four regions of the country, it was found that 3 in every 5 women experience physical violence by an intimate partner; 1 in every 2 women were sexually abused by an intimate partner at some point in their lives and about 3 in every 4 women has been emotionally abused by their spouse or partner.⁵⁵

The Ministry of Home Affairs collects statistical data on domestic violence and the types of measures to advance the rights of victims. During 2010 there were 7521 domestic violence offences reported (reflecting a major upsurge from 2009) of which 10 percent were warned, 27 percent were charged and 4 percent were referred to the Probation and Welfare Services. In contrast in 2009, 4706 cases were reported to the police. The figures have fallen over the last 3 years as **Table 7** illustrates.

⁵⁴ 75 cases out of the 77 murders of females were as assessed due to unavailability of data regarding the specific age of 2 women who were murdered.

⁵⁵ MLHSSS, Statistical Unit, 2013

Table 7: Data on Domestic Violence from 2011 to 2013

Year	Persons Charged	Persons Warned	Matters Pending	Matters sent to Probation	Missing	Other	Total No. of Reports
2011	1918	260	2956	558	nil	nil	5692
2012	1715	106	1406	149	nil	nil	3376
2013	1640	60	841	86	12	5	2644

Source: Guyana Police Force 2014

The MLHSSS works along with a number of NGOs to implement programmes to address violence against women and children.

Over the past 18 years, Help and Shelter –a local NGO-- has played a significant role in raising awareness of violence against women countrywide through public education programmes-- including workshops and awareness sessions, dissemination of public educational materials, public service announcements-- and technical support to other public and private sector organisations. Help and Shelter along with other NGOs benefit from public funding for their critical role in addressing the challenge of violence against women.

Help and Shelter reported that between November 1995 and October 2013, 15,300 victims/survivors of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence received face-to-face, hotline and court support counselling, and over 40,000 people were reached through public education programmes. Since November 2000, over 840 abused women and their children have been provided with a place of safety at their shelter.⁵⁶

During the period under review Table 8 below shows that the highest incidents for spousal abuse occurred in 2009 with a small but significant decline in 2011. However, spousal abuse peaked again in 2012. At the same time non-spousal or intra-family abuse was highest in 2009 and 2013 with minor decreases in 2010 and 2011. Reported cases of rape of girls from 15 years old to women 60 years old were highest in 2010 but have declined for the following three consecutive years.

Table 8: Reported cases of abuse to Help and Shelter (NGO)

Reported Cases of Abuse	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Spousal	332	318	269	324	303	1546
Non-spousal/Intra family	86	60	68	77	91	382
Rape (15 - 60 years old)	7	21	2	2	4	36
	425	399	339	403	398	1964

⁵⁶ Help and Shelter, Kaieteur News, Letter to the Editor, November 25, 2013

Source: Help and Shelter, Statistics 2009-2013

Data on the abuse, violence and remedies for victims/survivors are not centralized. This fragmentation could unwittingly reflect duplication in incidents of violence, as there is no one-stop-shop for women reporting violence.

Government has invested in improving physical infrastructure in a number of police stations, for example victim interview rooms or facilities, and one way identification mirrors. However, women and girls still report that they encounter problems when interfacing with the police.

Guyana has a National Task Force for Combating Trafficking in Persons (NTFCTP), chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs. Other members are drawn from the Ministries of Human Services and Social Security, Legal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Amerindian Affairs, as well as several NGOs. The NTFCTP monitors and reports on the nature and magnitude of trafficking in persons in Guyana, conducts public education and undertake prevention measures.

Government in collaboration with civil society has developed a National Plan of Action in response to trafficking in persons. This plan covers prevention and awareness-raising, direct assistance to victims of trafficking and criminal justice response to combat the issue of trafficking in persons. The National Plan of Action comprises of sixteen (16) specific objectives to provide information about trafficking in persons; to improve cooperation mechanisms among key stakeholders to prevent trafficking; to enhance capacity of hinterland communities; to provide appropriate and comprehensive direct assistance to victims; to enhance capacity of stakeholders to identify victims; and provide direct assistance through training. To strengthen this initiative there is a national referral mechanism and an inter-agency protocol to enhance the capacity of the law enforcement agencies to investigate, prosecute and convict traffickers. One of the successes of this Plan was the formation of a task-oriented group whose primary objective is to standardize training materials and eliminate gaps in geographical coverage of awareness programmes.

It is noteworthy that the Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in Persons also publishes annual reports on its website.

The Government holds the view that TIP has to be addressed from a multi-sectoral perspective involving government and civil society and communities with a view to identifying and reducing persons' vulnerabilities either due to poverty or social factors. Programmes such as the Hinterland Scholarship Programme, the universal school uniform programme, economic assistance to single mothers and skills training for youths are all aimed at reducing poverty, creating equality of opportunities and access to the delivery of services to reduce the vulnerabilities of women, children, and Amerindian communities to TIPs.

Integrated Measures

Efforts to eliminate violence against women and trafficking in persons assume a multi-sectoral and multi-pronged approach. Government through the Ministries of Home Affairs, Amerindian Affairs, Human Services and Social Security has disseminated informational and educational material on these issues throughout the country to raise public awareness.

Prior to the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act (SOA) 2010, the government held widespread public consultations to garner recommendations on strengthening protection against sexual offences and published a consultation paper entitled, "Stamp it Out" in 2007. By way of the SOA 2010, the state implemented measures to reduce violence against women by broadening the definition of rape and criminalizing marital rape. The Prevention of Crimes Act No. 11 of 2008 allows for the mandatory supervision of persons convicted of scheduled sexual crimes and crimes against child victims.

Soon after the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act (2010) government in collaboration with USAID, UNICEF and UNDP provided training for one hundred and twenty-five police officers to investigate and prosecute sexual offences cases; social workers and officers of the Probation and Social Services to provide support for survivors of gender based violence countrywide. This training has been continued by UNICEF in 2011 and 2012. Sexual and domestic violence protocols for police, social workers, court staff and police prosecutors have also been developed.

Public consultations have been instrumental to policy changes in Guyana and promote collaboration between Government and civil society in addressing the challenges of violence against women. In 2011, the Government in collaboration with multi-religious Guyanese Faith based organizations in the Diaspora trained 600 community religious (Christian, Hindu and Muslim) activists in six of the Administrative Regions to address the issue of domestic and sexual violence among their congregations and trained them with actions to be taken to intervene to protect the victims and to recognize when the situation was escalating and what measures to take.

Furthermore, in keeping with the commitment to eliminate sexual and domestic violence the government in collaboration with Community Based Organizations launched national anti-violence campaigns "*No More Black and Blue*" and "*White Zones*" in several communities identified across the country for victims of abuse.

In 2012 the MLHSSS facilitated a National Conversation on Domestic Violence under the theme "*It's Our Problem, Let's Solve It*" with a view to generating a broad-based coordinated response to domestic and sexual violence.⁵⁷ A preliminary report of the countrywide conversations posited that a major obstacle to addressing this challenge at the national level is the paucity of specially skilled and qualified personnel. Further, the report highlighted the need for acceleration in pre-marital counseling; educational programmes in communities;

⁵⁷ Guyana Chronicle, National Conversation on Domestic Violence Launched <http://guyanachronicle.com/national-conversation-on-domestic-violence-launched> June 28, 2012

strict application of laws; strengthening the efficiency of the Courts; and public-private partnerships.⁵⁸ Besides affording citizens, survivors and perpetrators a safe space to discuss domestic violence, the ultimate objective of the National Conversation was the formulation of a revised National Action Plan on Domestic Violence. The NAP is aimed at prevention and eventual elimination of domestic violence with the inclusion of a communication strategy, a monitoring and evaluation plan for domestic violence cases and other types of gender based violence in keeping with the Sexual Offences Act.

UNFPA lent critical support to the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act 1996 and the Sexual Offences Act 2010. The 2013 national plan of action identifies areas for each sector to address so as to provide support and justice for victims and survivors of violence including the judiciary and magistracy as well as capacity building of relevant law enforcement officials. The Plan of Action addresses actions to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and also receive the relevant interventions to prevent gender-based violence.

Further, the UNFPA Branch Office supported two programmes implemented by the Men's Affairs Bureau to build capacity of prison officers, prisoners incarcerated for violent crimes and mini-bus drivers and conductors to address traditional norms and practices associated with gender based violence. Thirty prison officers and approximately 300 prisoners from three prison locations in Region 4 benefited from a course which included the areas of self discovery, taking responsibility, developing discipline, anger management, suicide prevention and conflict resolution. Officers also benefited from training on effectiveness in addressing conflict and how to avert potentially confrontational situations among the prison population, which could lead to violence. A resource pool of 20 peer educators/trainers benefitted from the sessions, who would be able on release to assist with ongoing anger management programmes in their communities.

UN Women has also collaborated with government on gender equality programmes in Guyana. Specifically the agency supported the implementation of *Strengthening State Accountability And Community Action For Ending Gender-Based Violence* for two years from 2009; the CEDAW Project on *Responding to Gender Dimensions of HIV in the Caribbean* in 2012 and this Beijing+20 national review. In addition to the aforementioned programmes, UN Women also funded government officers to attend workshops and conferences overseas.

In 2010, the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) provided grants to three civil society organizations to implement domestic violence issue-based activities. The activities included training of local officials to deal with domestic violence, the promotion of domestic violence court protocols, improved counseling services for victims and

⁵⁸ Rosanne Purnwasie, Preliminary Report on National Conversation on Domestic Violence, April 2013, MLHSSS, Georgetown

perpetrators, and public outreach to strengthen understanding of the rights of victims and survivors of violence.

USAID also funded a faith-based organisation, the Roadside Baptist Church to establish BeMAN - a Men's Forum that seeks to increase the awareness of men to attitudinal and behavioral issues and encourage and equip them with knowledge and skills to become agents of change.

In addition, UNDP supported NGOs addressing violence and health issues affecting women in six Regions (No. 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10). Activities included training and financial support for women and girls affected by Trafficking in Persons, Human Rights and other HIV-related training for women, and training and provision of grants for youths from six regions including young girls.

Apart from initiatives taken by the government, and international developmental partners, community based and faith-based organisations have also become more active partners in the fight to eliminate gender-based violence all over Guyana.

5. Women and the economy

The Government continues to advocate and to encourage by several initiatives, already mentioned such as equitable access to land, microcredit, skills training and higher education, the greater and active participation of women in the economy as employees and employers/self employed, and thereby promote the equality of women in all spheres of life.

The Committee is asked to refer to Section 1, Part 1, Women in the Economy for progress made and challenges.

The two most glaring areas where women are not satisfactorily represented at the decision-making levels remain the private sector and the trade union movement. A recent survey conducted by the private accounting firm stated that among 113 director positions in the private and public companies, only 10 were held by women.⁵⁹ Furthermore, in all cases studied except one, there is only one woman on the board.

The National Working Group on the Public/Private Partnership for the Millennium Development Goals has developed a survey of private sector companies and women in lower and middle management positions in this sector to ascertain what are the main impediments to them moving up the corporate ladder. This survey will include about 300 firms and it should be completed by 4th quarter in 2014.

Women have the right to participate equally in trade unions. Although women comprise a

⁵⁹ Ram & McRae, 2012, p. 45

significant percentage of the organized labour force and are active at all levels, their presence is not satisfactorily reflected at the leadership levels of the labour movement. The WGEC has been advocating with trade unions to improve women's representation.

The Government has facilitated the participation of women in the labour force by enhancing the legal framework⁶⁰, equal access to education at all levels, equal pay for work of the same value⁶¹, as well as creating incentives and providing support for women to become more actively involved in the labour market. Women in the public service as well as those in the private sector who are contributors to the National Insurance Scheme are entitled to 12 weeks paid maternity leave and all other benefits as the male contributors.

Government also ratified the following ILO conventions, which are relevant to women and access to employment and decent work:

- Underground Work (Women) Convention (No. 45)
- Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No.111)

Cognisant of all the variables that affect women's full participation in labour force and promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities Government has extended measures to single parents. Following a voluntary registration of all single parents⁶² in 2008, of which the majority were anticipated to be majority women, the Single Parent Assistance Programme (SPAP) was introduced in 2010. Skills training programmes were offered at no cost with stipend in the areas of cosmetology, computer repairs, electrical installation, garment manufacturing, catering, welding, operation of heavy duty machinery and other skilled artisan areas. Over the past three years the number of beneficiaries who accessed these programmes have grown by 33 percent as indicated by and analysis the following data 2011 (332), 2012 (697), and 2013 (961). Vouchers for childcare alternatives are made available to those doing skills training. At the end of the training each single parent can made a proposal for funding up to \$ 250 USD to assist them in starting some economic venture. Although the programme is not gender specific, the majority of beneficiaries are single mothers and single women who head households.

The Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (GWLI) annually runs short training programmes for women.⁶³

⁶⁰ Article 29 provides for the encouragement of women's participation in the various management and decision-making processes, whether private, public or state

⁶¹ The Equal Rights Act No. 19 of 1990 enacted to enshrine the principles of Article 29 provides for inter alia, women and men to receive equal remuneration for the same work or work of the same nature and for non-discrimination on the ground of gender in respect of employment, appointment or promotion

⁶² A single parent was defined to be any person who was single-handedly managing and maintaining a family. Therefore it included grandmothers, aunts, and single men headed households.

⁶³ Guyana Women Leadership Institute is managed by a Board and funded by the MLHSSS which advances the rights of women with structured training residential and non-residential programmes.

As part of a programme to reduce interpersonal violence and youth and female unemployment at the community level, the Ministry of Home Affairs/Citizen Security Programme, Community Action Youth Skills /Vocational Training Programme reported in May 2012 that it had trained a total of 1,377 young people in 24 skills areas, of these 897 graduates were females and 480 males.

The National Poverty Reduction Strategy, the National Competitiveness Strategy and the Low Carbon Development Strategy identified the important role that small businesses can play in the development of the private sector and the economy as a whole and the impact these can have on women's involvement in the economy.

Increasingly women also are becoming participants in micro and small businesses.

As a special measure to advance women's participation the economy the Government established of the Women of Worth (WOW) project in 2010 in partnership with a locally owned commercial bank. This small business loan facility resulted in GYD180 million in start-up capital being disbursed to 1,760 single mothers to date. There are plans in 2014 to expand the WOW programme to hinterland communities. Part of the loan arrangement is that the beneficiary goes through training in such areas as basic entrepreneurial skills, networking, basic accounting, advertising and packaging⁶⁴.

The MOAA embarked on a National Hinterland Secure Livelihoods Programme in 15 Amerindian Villages to advance economic development in these villages through micro-enterprise. Using vertical integration as a core strategy, value added products from Agriculture and Aquaculture are then produced. Seven projects have been started, with the public investment of GYD88M. Markets have been identified for pineapple, crab wood oil, and honey, which won several awards in the Caribbean Region.⁶⁵ Marketing and operational (technical) strategies are being implemented for the rest of the projects. The crabwood oil industry employs women who create beauty products such as soap and body lotions and oils out of crab wood oil. Youth received GYD.5M each to start a small business through a savings programme. As reported already herein the 2014 Budgetary allocation for the expansion of this programme to community-driven and executed transformative economic projects was defeated by the majority opposition.

Special training programmes offered by non-governmental organizations such as EMPRETEC and the Small Business Council facilitate women's access to small loans and increase their economic activity.

⁶⁴ In the recent 2014 Budget Speech while the Minister of Finance expressed concern over "the level of nonperforming loans" and added measures that were underway to (provide additional training and coaching)to borrowers.

⁶⁵ Under this programme ten (10) Amerindians, five of whom are women from various villages were trained by international experts in pest management, aquaculture, agriculture, apiculture and agro processing in order for them to gain skills that would make them gainfully employed in the future.

Another major intervention to provide support for women's economic empowerment was the enactment of the Small Business Act that provides incentive regimes and support programmes for small businesses. The Small Business Council (SBC), the Small Business Bureau (SBB) and the Small Business Development Fund (SBDF) were established to execute the mandates of the Act. The Small Business Council's (SBC) role as the governing body to SBB is to act as an oversight and advising body to the Bureau. The SBB has made three types of support available to women as detailed below; training, grant assistance and facilitation of marketing opportunities.

i) Training

Training was provided and is being provided to women since the SBB began operations in June 2010. The Guyana Arts and Craft Producers Association (GACPA) is one of the very first groups that benefitted from general business management and standards and conformity training. Specifically, 142 women entrepreneurs were trained to produce simple business plans with the objective of qualifying for a GYD300,000 grant. Though this group comprises both women and men; mostly women benefit from classroom training as men are often reluctant to attend these training programmes.

ii) Financial Assistance

A main mandate of the SBB is to facilitate access to finance for small businesses and this has been made possible through Government's allocation of USD10M from the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund. One of the financing facilities is a grant that can be made available to vulnerable business owners, who cannot qualify for a bank or micro financial institution. This facility became operational in September 2013 and the SBB has already received two hundred and fifty three (253) applications from micro and small-scale women entrepreneurs. The SBB has commenced small business management training with 142 women, who are now submitting business proposals for grants that will be disbursed beginning June 2014.

iii) Facilitation to attend trade shows and exhibition

Another key mandate of the SBB is to facilitate access to markets for small businesses. The SBB has been collaborating with many agencies towards this end, more so with CUSO International. Women entrepreneurs have benefitted tremendously via subsidies and transportation logistical assistance to attend local and regional and international marketing events. Some of women's groups that benefitted from this kind of support are described in **Annex 2 Good Practices Part 1.**

iv) Incubatory Services

The SBB has been providing incubatory services to all registrants as required since it began operation 2010. This usually comes in the form of printing services, typing of letters, production of brochures and magazines, business cards etc. Business advice is also provided on a day-to-day basis to walk-in clients who may be interested in starting a business, expanding or seeking marketing opportunities.

Non-state agencies also play in integral role in women's economic empowerment

The Chambers of Commerce have also been involved in programmes for women entrepreneurs. During 2012 the Berbice Chamber of Commerce and Development Association in collaboration with a commercial bank provided small medium enterprise development training to 22 of the 27 participants who were women. Participants were exposed to management of a small business, including the legal and compliance framework, accounting and financial management, and customer service and consumer affairs. On completion of the seminar a number of the women accessed funds for expansion and some commenced new small businesses.

The "Venture Out! Programme" is a collaboration between Republic Bank (Guyana) Ltd. and EMPRETEC, which targets Women and Women Entrepreneurs across Guyana. The "Venture Out! For Women Programme," has become an anticipated event where a number of women register annually, to benefit from a highly motivated forum that facilitates the identification of persons to a linked business opportunity. The forum allows women to meet new women in businesses, create business linkages and develop the confidence that allows them to venture out into their own business enterprises. The programme which commenced in 2010 under the theme "Empowerment through Self Sufficiency" focuses on building the capacities of women entrepreneurs and targets women in five of the ten regions across Guyana. To date, approximately five hundred (500) women have benefited from the Venture Out! Programme and have progressed significantly in their businesses. Please see **Annex 2 Part 1 Good Practices.**

Today, more women are breaking free from traditional gender specific roles and venturing into the business world. There is a steady increase over the years in women entrepreneurs operating at various levels in different sectors in Guyana.

Whilst this trend is extremely positive, women are still challenged to access what facilities are available due to competing family responsibilities and duties as they remain the main caregivers for the their families- children, elderly and ill, and homemakers.

As mentioned earlier in this report Guyana has implemented strategies to equip women for the changing technological labour force. Most notably have been efforts to provide laptops, training and ICT hubs to benefit 50,000 families.

6. Women in power and decision-making

Guyanese women participate in politics as voters, candidates and political leaders. The system of governance (parliamentary and local government) ensures the freedom to vote and stand for elections and the freedoms of associations and assembly. The right to vote is established by law at periodic and genuine elections and is based on universal and equal suffrage. According to the Constitution, every person may vote at an election if she/he is 18 years of age, who is a citizen of Guyana or a Commonwealth citizen domiciled legally in Guyana for one year. Additionally, subject to the Constitution, a person may compete for elected office in Guyana subject to Articles 53 and 59 of the Constitution.

The government has taken a menu of measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in leadership and decision-making as fully elaborated in **Section One** under Major Achievements. Not least among these has been a legislative quota to increase women's political participation.

The impact of the enactment of this law was evident in the configuration of the 8th Parliament (2001 to 2005) and in the 9th Parliament (2006 to 2010) where women held 30 to 33 percent of parliamentary seats respectively. As shown in Table 9 below there has been steady progress in the women decision-makers at the level of Parliament and the Cabinet. While comparative data is not available for the local government during 1997 to 2005, the data below shows that approximately one-third of all Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs) on the passage of the law were comprised of women.

Table 9: Women in Political Positions (1997 -2011)

Type	1997-2000			2001-2005			2006-2010			2011-2013		
	M	W	%	M	W	%	M	W	%	M	W	%
Parliament	53	12	20	52	13	20	49	20	29	46	21	31
Regional Democratic Council	n.a	n.a	--	n.a	n.a	--	141	64	32	135	64	31
Cabinet	16	2	11	14	4	28	16	5	31	15	5	33

Source: IPU, Parliament of Guyana and Ministry of Local Government

Even as the government continues to take measure to ensure equal and full participation of the Amerindian population, women's political participation from hinterland communities has been bolstered by the ascension of two Amerindian women to Ministerial positions within the government.

This is evident in the appointment of a woman chairperson of the National Toshias Council in 2009-2011. Both the chairperson and deputy chairperson of the Indigenous Peoples Commission are women. According to the MLHSS, in Region One women represent 10

percent of the Toshaos, in Region Seven women comprise 15 percent and Region Nine a mere proportion of 2 percent comprise women Toshaos. Of Amerindian Village Councillors in Region One women comprise 28 percent; Region Seven 39 percent, while Region Nine 35 percent women.

In terms of increasing women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership this has been accomplished mainly through training, CSO capacity building and awareness raising actions. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security and the Women's Affairs Bureau educate women about their rights. Women NGOs are active in advocating for women's rights, encouraging women to take on the challenge of public leadership and civic responsibilities, advocating for change and making representation. Some women's organisations and CBOs organizations have held training programmes in communities to encourage women to become candidates and prepare them for the demands of holding office at the local government level.

Parliament Outreach programme to primary and secondary schools educates students about the purpose and operations of the Legislature.

7. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

Since its establishment, the WGEC embarked on raising awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace and access to justice. During the past two years the WGEC completed successful outreaches to all 10 regions on access to justice, in addition to meeting with a wide cross section of women, men and members of the Magistracy.⁶⁶

The Women Affairs Bureau (WAB) of the Ministry of Labour Human Services and Social Security is the national focal point for gender and development⁶⁷. The Bureau coordinates programmes and projects that promote gender equality with governmental, civil society and international organisations. It also provides a forum for consultation and advocacy in general and specifically with the 10 Regional Women Affairs Committees.

⁶⁶ This exercise resulted in recommendations in its annual report that include piloting of the Center for Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse (CISOCA), a best practice from Jamaica. The WGEC advocates the creation of an integrated center offering multiple services would encourage victims to report incidents of sexual offences and child abuse and ensure efficient and effective investigation into allegations of abuse.

⁶⁷ The Women Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services & Social Security is the national machinery whose main functions are:

- (i) To contribute to the formulation of a gender awareness policy for the advancement of women in Guyana
- (ii) Provide administrative and technical assistance to non-governmental women's organizations in the planning and implementation of programmes.
- (iii) Provide a referral service for women.
- (iv) Initiate gender based research and provide disaggregated data to inform policy and programme formulation.

Much of its work is complemented by the National Oversight Committee on Domestic Violence, the Sexual Offences Task Force, TIP Unit and the Men's Affairs Bureau (MAB). The latter seeks to address the issues of men and boys both as perpetrators and as victims. The MAB engages stakeholders to raise awareness among men and boys about gender norms and the consequences of violence against women. Interventions are carried out in schools, prisons and communities throughout the country.

National Oversight Committee on Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Task Force are multi-stakeholder bodies mandated to develop and monitor national plans of action for the prevention of domestic violence and sexual offences.

8. Human rights of women

The human rights of women are publicly promoted and discussed nationwide by government, civil society, NGOs and development partners. The individual rights of all citizens, women, men, girls and boys with permanent or temporary residence within the jurisdiction of Guyana, are protected under the Constitution.

As already cited in **SECTION ONE**, the Constitution of Guyana clearly guarantees the fundamental rights of all citizens without regard to race, place of origin, colour, religion or sex, gender, political opinion, creed, age, disability, marital status, birth, social class, pregnancy, religion, conscience, belief or culture. The principle of equality and non-discrimination is enshrined in Article 149 of the revised Constitution and the articles guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms of people living in the state. Article 149(D) of the Constitution provides for equality of persons before the law and Article 149(2).

National laws are constantly updated and harmonized with international laws and conventions as noted in **Section One** under *Major Achievements* in the legal framework to redress matters of elimination of discrimination against women and girls.

In practice women and men have the constitutional right to seek redress for violation of rights through the courts. The rights conventions Guyana has ratified- ICCPR, ISCED, CROC, CEDAW, and CAT- are enshrined in the Constitution and the executive, legislature and judiciary can refer to and use them in decisions making and in the judiciary.(Article 154A)

Section One under *Major Achievements* also documents the rights commissions which provide remedies to complaints of discrimination. These commissions are involved in widespread sensitisation and education programmes on the related international conventions, treaties and national laws. Also, the Ombudsman and the Police Complaints Authority have authority to investigate and address complaints of maladministration and violation of rights.

The most fundamental of all human rights; the right to a name and identity or recognition by name and nationality is provided for in the constitution and statute. The October 2011 UNICEF/Rights of the Child Commission's "**Report of Assessment, Policy, Practice of Birth Registration**" showed that 91 % of all children's births under the age of 5 were registered. The Report found no gender disparity with regard to birth registration (51% girls were registered) nor did poverty or education levels play a role on mothers registering their babies' births.

In September 2011 President Jagdeo signed the Universal Declaration for the Birth Registration of Children.

The General Registrar's Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages, work specifically with the Community Development Officers in the Welfare Department of the MOAA to facilitate late birth registration for Indigenous persons who were never registered and or those who do not possess a birth certificate. Late registration of birth certificates is mechanism is in place for ensuring that children born before 2000 and who were never registered can do so with support from MOAA. Birth certificates are essential for citizens to access other social services and to exercise their political right to vote.

The Ministry of Health and its health practitioners document the birth of children that are delivered in homes, health huts, health centres and hospitals for the public sector. Private hospitals also document births.

Public sensitisation and education about gender equality and women's empowerment in particular is also promoted through public fora on national days of recognition, awards to women change agents, conferences, workshops, public service announcements and daily news by government, civil society and NGOs. Over the past five years gender based violence training workshops are specifically targeted to schools.

9. Women and the media

The Media Code of Conduct 2006 and revised Media Code of Conduct 2010 coupled with the Broadcasting Act 2011 provide the policy guidelines with regards to constitutional rights, prohibition of discrimination, stereotypical and denigrating portrayals of women, vilification of any religion or ethnic and racial incitement, and coverage of violence and graphic images of violence, pornography that would be seen by children. Government consistently counters stereotypes and prejudices through education and awareness campaigns in the mass media including print, radio and television. Further in collaboration with CIDA and UNDP human rights (HR) training and conflict sensitive reporting workshops have been held for journalists, media owners and operators. Through advocacy from government and civil society all media houses have subscribed to a code of conduct for reporting on children with technical assistance from UNICEF.

Since 2009, UNICEF Guyana has been advocating, promoting and offering training to media personnel on balanced reporting and non-stereotyped images of girls and boys. In 2010 a booklet on positive reporting for children was produced for and with the media houses. The challenge is high turnover of media staff and the lure for sensational reporting. In 2013 more than 30 percent of journalists from all media houses in Guyana and university media students were trained on ethical reporting on children and given techniques in disguising images of vulnerable situations.

10. Women and the environment

Guyana has recorded multiple successes in the national quest to ensure environmental sustainability. The country has satisfied the target of integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and is committed to significantly reducing biodiversity loss.

Specifically, Guyana achieved MDG target of integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes through an innovative Low Carbon Development Strategy 2009 (LCDS) premised on the idea that it would build a Low Carbon Economy by reducing carbon emission through sustainable use of its pristine rainforest. The LCDS was negotiated internationally and benefited from grant of USD250M from Norway as payment for Carbon credits, which means Guyana, is committed to maintaining targets for its forest cover and its sustainable development.

The Guiana Shield Facility (GSF) is a multi-donor funding facility set up and operated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Guyana country office during the period 2010-2014. The aim of the GSF is to support the conservation and sustainable development of the ecosystems of the bio-diverse 2.7 million km² Guiana Shield eco-region through supporting activities needed to ensure the ecological integrity of the eco-region.

One of the objectives of III International Congress on Biodiversity of the Guiana Shield, held in Suriname from 5-8 August 2013 was to identify impacts of economic development within the Guiana Shield on the environment and to define measures to reach real green development within the region. Special attention was given to how the rural communities, with their traditional lifestyle and extensive traditional knowledge, live in a more sustainable way. As part of the Conference programme the Guiana Shield Facility also organized a Side Event on gender and biodiversity.

The WWF Living Guianas 2012 report documents Guyana achievements with regard to the environment protection and sustainability.

Water and Sanitation

The MDG targets of halving the proportion of the population without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation have been met, and there have been notable improvement of the population's, particularly the poor and vulnerable, access to adequate housing.

According the MDG Report 2011, "vast improvements in access to safe drinking water have been made, which place Guyana ahead of its MDG target". Survey data in 2006 found that 91 percent of households had access to safe drinking water compared to 83 percent in 2000, and an estimated 50 percent in 1991. Government is continuing to expand the provision of safe water to the hinterland regions and in remote areas. There have been substantial improvements in access to sanitation.

Census 2002 results showed a high level of sanitation coverage at 96.9 percent of households. According the MDG 2012 preliminary survey, data from 2009 point to almost universal access to sanitation.

The key priorities for the Government in improving sanitation include increasing access to facilities in hinterland regions, maintaining existing facilities and promoting standard sanitary practices.

Secure Livelihoods

A total of 187 Amerindian Villages and Communities have submitted economic projects for financing under the Guyana REDD+Investment Fund (GRIF). The sum of US\$5M from GRIF is allotted for said projects under the Amerindian Development Fund (ADF). Twenty-seven (27) projects from across all regions have been chosen for the initial implementation of the project, which commenced in 2013. Sixty-seven (67) percent of all the projects are in agriculture with the aim of securing Amerindian livelihoods. Operational procedures of the CDPs define that women must be represented in the management teams; Government has also financed eco-tourism projects for 19 Villages, each receiving approximately GYD1.5M. In 2013, twenty villages will be receiving grants at GYD1.5M each to the eco-tourism industry in their respective regions. Women play an important role in these projects through the promotion of Amerindian cultural products including songs, dances, pottery, handicraft, and other marketable products.

Noteworthy is that the opposition majority in the National Assembly opposed the entire capital budgetary allocation of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs which contained funds for these above-mentioned projects and continued demarcation of Amerindian lands for titling purposes.

Modest gains have been made but these are under duress as the parliamentary guillotine by the majority opposition can threaten programmes on stream and those new programmes which took years to develop.

Work still needs to be done to mainstream gender in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use programmes. The study, *Main Gender Issues Related to Biodiversity in Guyana* revealed that even though there has been the promotion of opportunities for both men and women in areas of awareness, education and training, sustainable livelihoods, and general sustainable human development, the involvement of men and women in programmes and activities as influenced by the cultural norms of communities and there is still need for specific policies that directly address gender and biodiversity".⁶⁸

11. The girl child

Government has developed a constitutional and legislative framework to eliminate discrimination against the girl-child in compliance with the international conventions cited in **SECTION ONE**. Article 38 B provides for the "best interest of the child shall be primary in all judicial proceedings and decisions in all matters concerning children and Article 149 E , provides for all children being born equal whether born in or out of wedlock. New children's laws elaborated in detail in Guyana's State Party report to the Convention on the Rights of Child in 2010 and reviewed in 2013 include:-

- The Status of Children Act 2009
- The Adoption of Children Act 2009
- The Protection of Children Act 2009
- The ChildCare Protection Agency Act 2009
- The Child Care and Development Services Act of 2011
- The Custody, Care, Guardianship and Maintenance Act 2011

Government has been urged by Committees on CEDAW⁶⁹ and CRC⁷⁰ at periodic review conferences held in 2012 and 2013 respectively to "expand awareness-raising and education programmes and campaigns, in order to promote positive and alternative forms of discipline and respect for children's rights, with the involvement of children." The UNHRC UPR also recommended that corporal punishment be abolished in the schools.

Government cognisant of the adverse consequences of corporal punishment on children has conducted countrywide consultations in the school system with parents and children on abolishing corporal punishment.. The findings of these consultations revealed a stark lack of consensus on whether to abolish. In general, public sentiment is divided almost equally amongst those in favour of retaining corporal punishment in the schools and those in favour of alternative forms of discipline. However, noteworthy is that the Childcare and Development Services Act 2011 prohibits corporal punishment in residential child care institutions. The issue is now under review by a Parliamentary Special Select Committee

⁶⁸ Dr. Paulette Bynoe, Final Report on Main Gender Issues related to Biodiversity Conservation in Guyana, http://guianashield.org/index.php/publications-home/cat_view/89-publications/75-gsf-publications/100-gender-and-environment-study-reports

⁶⁹ Concluding observations on seventh/eighth report, 7 August 2012, CEDAW/C/GUY/CO/7-8, para 29

⁷⁰ Concluding observations on second to fourth report, 18 June 2013, CRC/C/GUY/CO/2-4, para 33

that is benefitting from submissions from civil society and experts.⁷¹ Despite the status of the law and practice, it has not been ascertained that girls are disproportionately affected by corporal punishment. In fact the data shows that boys are in majority.

The sections in this report that have addressed Women in Education that girl children have attained gender parity in the nursery and primary educational systems with regards to enrollment and completion and at the secondary level they are surpassing males in retention and completion of their secondary education. At the post secondary levels their enrollment surpasses males.

Labour and the Girl Child

Government has taken measures to eliminate economic exploitation of child labour in collaboration with the ILO⁷² and implemented the TACKLE project hailed as a national best practice. From 2009-2012 the MLHSSS and MOE tackled child labour through identifying and addressing the barriers to school attendance for disadvantaged children and youth.

Besides awareness raising, sensitization and public advocacy on this issue, targeted actions focused on keeping children in the school system. The GoG implemented a multifaceted three-year program informed by consultations with parents from three schools that benefited directly from EU1M grant. A committee of teachers, parents and community members guided the intervention that offered support to children and their families including free transportation to and from school, nutritional support, after-school tutoring, counselling for parents and children and parenting education for 100 parents, guardians and children.

Health of the Girl Child

There is no discrimination with regard to girls access to health care and the figures for infant and child mortality and morbidity do not show any disparity where girls are concerned.

The longevity of girls is higher than boys from birth to adolescence as is the case in many parts of the world.

The figures show no increase in female morbidity or mortality in the pre-pubescent years.

⁷³The legal age of consent is 16 years for girls. Adolescent girls have access to services such as counseling, HIV testing and other reproductive health issues at youth-friendly health centers. These centers employ health care providers who are cognizant of the issues faced by young people and are able to guide and provide counseling in a confidential manner. The

⁷¹ Guyana Chronicle, December 2013 "Corporal punishment is also a national issue"

<http://guyanachronicle.com/corporal-punishment-is-also-a-national-issue/>

⁷² See Guyana's state Party report and review before the Committee on the Rights of the Child Convention in January 2013U

⁷³ The average age of first sex for in-school youths, both boys and girls is 13 and half years, according to the recent 2009 Behavioral Surveillance Survey (BSS).

in-school youth population has access to information through the Health and Family Life Education programme.

Further information is disseminated through the School Health Initiative led by the Ministry of Health targeting school health clubs, parent teacher associations and other youth organisations. In order to strengthen this programme, UNICEF commissioned an assessment aimed at contributing towards the development of a comprehensive programme for the Secondary Schools Health Clubs' Programme. The assessment identified the challenges and made recommendations for the improvement of the programme. The data collected informed the revision of critical documents that guide the operation of a Health Club namely, policy, guidelines, minimum standards, and curriculum of the health club programme.

Recognizing the priority of health placed on youth especially for the adolescent girl, UNICEF has provided Technical Assistance and financial support to the Ministry of Health's Adolescent Unit in the expansion of its Youth Friendly Services (YFS) to several areas in Guyana. UNICEF conducted a review of these services and supported revised policy, guidelines and minimum standards, curriculum and health providers training package. The initiative grew out of recognition that youth in general are not keen on attending health services, either because they do not feel welcomed or because the adolescent years tend to be seen as healthy periods, and they fear being labeled as sick people.

The YFS initiative was also created to fulfill the gap in the provision of dedicated health services for the youth population, including preventive services and education in reproductive health and to prepare the health system to better understand and serve the needs of youth in a welcoming environment, free of any stigma or discrimination, operating at convenient hours and providing the services with privacy and confidentiality to allow youth to discuss their health and doubts. Some of these services provided include but are not limited to, sexual and reproductive health services (including contraceptives for girls and boys, STI management, and HIV prevention education).

The Ministry of Health vision for young people in Guyana, is that "adolescents and young adults live in a health promoting environment that responds to their health needs, fostering the highest attainable standard of health and development, enabling them to achieve their full potential". .

Protection of the Girl Child

The Child Care and Protection Agency (CCPA) was established in 2010 by statute within the portfolio of the MLHSSS to promote and protect the rights of all children, with special sensitivities to the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.

The establishment of a national foster care programme, the expansion of institutions of care for children such as Sophia Care Centre and the Mahaica Children's Home, the enactment of

the Childcare and Development Services Act ⁷⁴ contribute to greater protection of the girl child. Over the past five years the MLHSSS has extended services by assigning resident officers to seven of ten Regions and visiting child protection officers and probation officers in three of ten Regions to ensure that childcare and protection services are accessible to all children.

The CCPA has a 24 hour hotline that children can contact as well as adults to make reports of abuse or assist children in danger.

The Childcare and Protection Agency (CCPA) has been involved in addressing these cases through improved access to services and prevention outreach. The latter involves community outreach programmes; parenting workshops through parent teacher associations to assist parents/guardians with better parenting practices; child abuse awareness sessions and information sharing on the functions of the CCPA for teachers, caregivers and children across several communities and an annual Youth Development Camp focused on empowerment of adolescents and positive decision making.

Table 10 below bears out the fact that that more girls (60%) than boys (40%) experienced some form of abuse or witnessed abuse in the home or community among all reported cases over the time period 2009-2013.

Table 10: Summary of reported cases of abuse by sex of child

Sex of Child	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Boys	352	1343	1539	1543	1337
Girls	534	2034	2460	2146	2005
Total	886	3377	3999	3689	3342
Percentage of Girls	60	60	61	58	60

Source: MLHSSS, Child Care and Protection Agency Annual Reports, 2009 -2013

Pro-active and redress for reported incidents of violence against children has also been conducted by the CCPA through strengthened partnership with the Guyana Police Force and non-governmental organisations working on child-related issues. Services provided include group counseling and therapy, court support for clients and their families, school placement for children and prevention of separation from family where this option is the most appropriate and in the best interest of the child. The types of services provided by MLHSSS over the past five years are shown in shown in **Table 11** below.

⁷⁴ Regulations are being drafted.

Table 11: Types of Social Services provided to families

Type of Service	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Counseling for clients	651	10371	11710	6654	3693	22057
Court Support for clients	61	n.a	386	299	145	830
School Placement for children	116	444	524	305	103	932
Birth Certification Assistance for Clients	51	259	331	233	108	672
Medical support for children	n.a	600	1103	462	307	1872
Prevention of separation	262	1975	2226	2345	2432	7003
Poverty & Homeless Assistance	176	426	446	243	123	812
Parent Counseling & Capacity Building	115	2282	5792	5292	5190	16274
Other	31	55	74	136	166	376

Source: MLHSSS, Child Care and Protection Agency Annual Reports, 2009 -2013

Legal Support for the Girl Child

In order to protect the rights of the girl child, in September 2007, the Children's Legal Aid Pilot Project was launched under the auspices of the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic (GLAC), UNICEF and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. This project offered children legal advice on criminal and civil matters, and provided free access to a dedicated phone line which allowed children to seek counseling or report abuse. The GLAC reported that 124 children used their services between September 2007 and June 2008. The statistics include both male and female children.

In 2010, the Ministry of Education (MoE) piloted an after school six-week programme for teen mothers in collaboration with UNICEF. Recommendations were made to the MoE, which are now being considered for policy options. Some of these are:

- a) full-fledged mainstreaming process for those academically inclined
- b) placement of teen mothers and pregnant girls in specialized programmes/facilities which will serve a cluster of schools and offer vocational education and parenting / positive child care practices
- c) offer parenting and child care programmes only

The challenges are again a resource issue-- based on available financial, technical and human resources—and improved coordination of this multi-sectoral intervention across line Ministries.

In 2012 – 2013, UNICEF Guyana and the MOE optimized on the concept and momentum of the out of school children campaign and the MoE's drive for inclusive education to develop a more proactive and positive response in favor of the affected girls. Initiatives for a more structured approach are to be included in the new strategic Education Plan 2014-2019 currently being prepared.

Females account for one third of juvenile offenders (between the ages of 11 and 17) in the one juvenile correctional and rehabilitation institution in Guyana. This ratio has not changed over the last 20 years. However, the profile of the offences of the girls who are sent to the institution has changed from what was wandering, begging and “pick pocketing” at ages between 11 and 12 years to stealing, drugs pushing and robbery with a weapon at ages 13 – 15 years.

Strategic Partnerships for the Girl Child

The CCPA cognisant that elimination of violence and specifically violence against the girl child requires a multi-sectoral and “all of society” approach has reached out and included a number of NGOs and individuals and partnered with international development partners. The CCPA has highlighted the sterling contributions of some of these groups in annual reports. Four NGOs are highlighted in **Annex 2**.

Traditionally and culturally Guyana's family unit is not a nuclear unit but an extended family. With 34% of households in Guyana being headed by women (mother, grandmothers, aunts and other relatives) the social and economic repercussions can be immediate and have long term effects on the development of children. Civil Unions are legally recognized and all children whether born “in or out wedlock” are equal and recognized. Art 149E in constitution provides for equality among persons whether born in or out of wedlock and equal status and are entitled to equal rights.

Government therefore promotes stable and cohesive families and underscores the role that the family unit plays in the evolution of contemporary society. To this end the National Commission for the Family (NCF) has been established to give greater support to the family. The NCF is mandated to raise awareness on the significance of promoting good family life, parenting, leadership, social interaction in the home, preventing violence and gender-based violence and the protection of women and children.

The NCF has focused on parenting workshops; relationship building fora; review of the 1912 cinematography legislation; media monitoring of television, radio and other printed

material. The Commission cognisant of the need for an innovative programme methodology that would capture the 'hard to reach' men has commenced collaboration with the Men's Affairs Bureau.

b) Obstacles and challenges

In addition to the Major Challenges highlighted in **Section One**, the two other challenges to advancing gender equality in Guyana are low capacity monitoring and evaluation systems and the availability of specialized skilled professionals.

Monitoring and evaluation systems that collect data and indicators across all sectors have improved. In some sectors this has been more robust than others depending on the availability of skilled professionals and resources. The current data collection system requires multi-sectoral commitment to gender-related information that could improve policy analysis and national planning.

The availability of professionals with diversified skills and competencies to provide services and implement prevention programs has been improving but not in proportion to the demand for such services. For instances, the country could benefit from a wider pool of child counselors, mental health professionals and medical specialists.

c) Impact of the Global Financial Crisis 2007/2008

The government took pre-emptive measures during the global food and fuel crisis to cushion the impact on the Guyanese people, especially the poor and vulnerable, and these were maintained and expanded during the global financial and economic crises that followed. These measures included:-

- removal of VAT on basic dietary staples,
- removal of all taxes on kerosene (fuel used to cook by poor and low income families)
- reduction of the excise tax on diesel at a concessional rate
- reduction of excise tax of fuel products including gasoline⁷⁵ ,
- temporary cost of living support to public servants, teachers and members of the Disciplined Services which led to salary increases of between 10% to 24 % in 2008 with the lowest paid levels receiving the higher percentage of salary increases.
- Cash transfers of \$10 Billion GY to the Guyana Power and Light Company to ensure no tariff increases on the consumers.

⁷⁵ The reduction of the excise tax on fuel products cost \$4.2 Billion GY.

- Cash transfers to the local flour mill to provide flour and its products to the public at subsidized prices (same done for rice and sugar)

The inflation rate was kept down and actually fell from 14% in 2007 to 6.4 % in 2008.

Guyana is a primary producer (rice, sugar, bauxite, gold, timber and diamonds) and it was impacted by the decline of commodity prices on the world market and increases for construction materials, fuel etc.

Growth rate of real GDP was at 3.3 % (2009) , 4.4 % (2010) , 5.4 % (2011) 4.8 % (2012), and 5.2 % in 2013.

In 2013, Guyana economy recorded its eight consecutive year of growth, with a real GDP expanding by 5.2%.Ironically the period 2006-2013 represents the longest period of uninterrupted real economic growth in independent Guyana.

Guyana experienced one major fallout during the global crises in the insurance industry, as a result of the collapse of a regionally owned company, the Colonial Life Insurance Company (CLICO) in 2008⁷⁶ during the crisis. The rest of the banking sector was able to maintain stability. Noteworthy is that the commercial banking sector is administered by 2 locally owned companies and 3 foreign owned companies.

Recently, Minister of Finance stated that,

“The insurance industry has since rebounded successfully. The recovery of the industry was evident by the significant increase in assets, capital and net premiums from the amounts reported in 2008 when the CLICO crisis hit the industry. For the year ended 2013, the insurance sector was adequately capitalised in keeping with the requirements of the Insurance Act 1998. Both the long-term and general insurance sectors had assets in excess of liabilities by 72.3 percent and 103.8 percent respectively. This was complimented by the sectors’ ability to meet their expenses from growth in net premiums.”⁷⁷

SECTION THREE

DATA AND STATISTICS

a) National Indicators

Guyana has not established a core set of national indicators for monitoring progress of gender equality. The Government has utilised indicators related to the attainment of MDGs to assess and produce progress reports. Currently data is compiled within statistical

⁷⁶ The Government has honoured claims of long term insurance policyholders and these were for both women and men. Of the 11,271 individual holders of CLICO long term insurance policies, 61.6 percent (6, 946) of them were women.

⁷⁷ Dr. Ashni K. Singh, Minister of Finance, Budget Speech 2014, Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2014 Ministry of Finance, Georgetown.

departments of Ministries of Finance, Education, Health, Housing and Water, Home Affairs and Human Services and Social Security, Local Government and Regional Development and the various institutions under the purview of Legal Affairs, as well as the National Insurance Scheme, the Guyana Elections Commission, the Guyana Registrar's Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages and the Guyana Revenue Authority.

The Guyana Bureau of Statistics (BoS) serves as the central repository.

Currently, the BoS is closely engaged with the in the implementation of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) round number five. This round of MICS is particularly important, as it will inform Guyana's final report on the Millennium Development Goal. The most recent in country household survey is the 2012 National Census.

In 2013 UNICEF as part of the 2012-2016 CPAP assisted in lending support to the Ministry of Health, UNDP, UNFPA, PAHO/WHO and UNAIDS for the conduct of this MICS. Data collection for this survey is currently underway and is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of this year.

The use of DevInfo in Guyana started in 2006 and was revitalized in 2012 to update Guyana's adaptation of DevInfo with available in-country data from all major sources since 2002 - Census, MICS, DHS and AIS- disaggregated by age, sex, location and ethnicity. A user training of 61 persons from government ministries, CARICOM Secretariat, the Bureau of Statistics, the University of Guyana (both Campuses - Turkeyen and Tain), civil society organizations and the UN Agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNAIDS and IOM), was conducted to ensure in-country capacity for the utilization of GuyD_Info. At the culmination of this training, the database was hosted online and launched in December 2013 with the Bureau of Statistics, demonstrating strong ownership of this high quality product. The launch of GuyD_Info as a complete product was a major success and will significantly increase access to data in a short period of time. In addition, UNICEF has been supporting the strengthening of data collection systems for education, health and child protection.

The Ministry of Home Affairs under the Citizen Security Programme funded by the IDB recently established an Integrated Crime Information System to compile security and crime related information. This data is gender-specific and the data will be available to policy makers and the public in another 12 months.

The recent collaboration with UNFPA and BOS in conducting Capacity Enhancement ⁷⁸training for its staff is aimed at equipping the Bureau's personnel with the

⁷⁸ Guyana with support from UNFPA conducted its sixth Population and Housing Census September to November 2012 to take a snap shot of the status of Guyana's socio-economic situation; availability of data for the monitoring and evaluation of changes in the structure and location of the population, major socio-economic indicators such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and benchmarks for development planning. Again with support from UNFPA the Bureau returned to the fields in 2013 to validate the information captured for

requisite knowledge of the Census and Survey Processing System (CSPro) software in preparation for the editing and cleaning of the census data during the verification stage of the data processing phase.

This report has documented a number of creative and successful measures to empower women, however this data is not readily available.

b) Gender –related data collection and compilation

The Ministry of Finance conducted training in monitoring and evaluation for officials of line Ministries to facilitate improved monitoring and evaluation of programmes under implementation in the various sectors – education, health and social services.

There are plans to implement a policy that requires mandatory national data collection and annual reporting to the Bureau of Statistics. Tools will be developed to capture gender equality and the minimum set of gender indicators will be included. Government is committed to implementing systems that could facilitate the electronic storage and cataloguing of relevant information to assist with access to data at the national level with international technical assistance. Substantial efforts will be needed to prepare the Bureau of Statistics (BOS) to lead and coordinate efforts to reorient sector Ministries; work effectively with other ministries, civil society and local communities.

SECTION FOUR

EMERGING PRIORITIES

a) Key Priorities

Unpredictable global financial developments

Based on the present status of global financial and economic stability and forecasts for the next 5 years, developing countries such as Guyana will have to keep adjusting and expanding social services support to the population, especially the poor and vulnerable, to ensure that the impact of these shifts will not reverse gains made while at the same time expanding and competing globally for markets.

The reduction in available official developmental assistance will also place greater burdens on Guyana to ensure that critical programmes such as PMTCT, ART and EPI are sustained thereby reducing budgetary allocations to other programmes which may be just as necessary.

Threat to Parliamentary Democracy in Guyana

selected Enumeration Districts (EDs).

After 28 years of struggle to restore democracy and 21 years of restoring and reconstructing a collapsed economy and social services, Guyana once again faces a profound and growing threat to parliamentary democracy. Guyana has documented these developments to the Organization of the American States (OAS), the Commonwealth, the UNDP and UN family as well as multi-lateral developmental agencies.

This growing threat introduces a level of unpredictability and uncertainty in planning, programming and implementation of programmes in the government and the business sectors. The legislature's struggle to manage the executive and assume the executive's role and functions and not oversight as provided in the constitution has created an unstable political environment.

The refusal of the majority opposition to pass the CFAT driven AMLCFT Amendment Bill 2013 has placed Guyana in jeopardy and has led to it being referred to FATF⁷⁹ for "targeted review" in June 2013. The impact of precautionary measures by the global financial and banking system against Guyana is already being felt in the economy.

Therefore the priorities for Guyana are ensuring and protecting the gains that have been made- the constitutional and legal rights framework, economic and financial management, expansion and diversification of the economy, the improvement in the quality of life, especially the poor and vulnerable and most especially the gains made in women's advancement and empowerment.

Some specific on-going priorities:

On-going Enhancing Capacity and competency- Training for Public Officials and Capacity Building

Law enforcement mechanisms including on-going gender equality training for the police force, prosecutors and magistrates is a priority, as well as prevention training, legal assistance and youth-friendly medical care and counseling services.

On-going development of national and regional technical competencies to deliver gender-sensitive programmes throughout the country is also considered important.

On-going work will continue to build and expand the capacity of oversight bodies dealing with gender-based violence and gender equality.

Monitoring and Data Collection

Efforts will continue to develop capacity in Government ministries to provide cogent gender-specific data collection, dissemination and diffusion of information to all 10 Administrative Regions. Eventually with connectivity capacity expanding to all of these Administrative Regions, each Region's capacity to monitor progress on government programmes will be enhanced.

Education and Awareness

⁷⁹ Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

The consistent and sustainable development of Community-sensitive IEC material information on gender equality will continue.

Enhanced Coordination

With a small population and relatively large land mass per capita with limited skills and other resources, Guyana's model of multi-sectoral and public/private partnerships has been found to effectively improve coordination and responses to specific issues. It also avoids duplication, provides more intense and targeted efforts.

The Ministerial Task Force on Combatting the Trafficking in Persons, the Tri-partite Board on Labour issues, as well as the rights commission are good models that work. Guyana also has an exemplary country coordination mechanism for HIV/AIDS led by the Ministry of Health.

The challenge is to ensure that mechanisms have and include adequate coverage and information-sharing to all 10 Administrative Regions and Amerindian communities.

The NGO community is relatively new over the last 22 years since the restoration of democracy. Most are based in the capital and have limited access and bases in the rest of Guyana. Many have serious challenges of internal governance, accountability and transparency. Those that are dependent on foreign funding have sustainability issues. The largest groupings of NGOs are Community based organizations and Faith Based organizations. Therefore capacity building of the NGO sector is important.

The most effective NGOs are those in the business sector, religious community and women's organizations.

a) Recommendations for Post-2015 SDG

Resource Mobilisation

In this period of austerity at the international multilateral level, and the drying up or reduction of funding for critical programmes- for instance, HIV/Aids, Malaria and Tuberculosis, and Immunization, government has to move limited funds to continue these programmes. The support and pledges at the international level for the MDGs were never met and therefore it is hoped that the financial and other support for the post 2015 agenda will not suffer the same fate.

There is no indication over the next 5 years that there will be a radical change in the post 2008 trend with multinational developmental aid.

The Government of Guyana recommends a critical feature of the discussions at international and regional bodies --when the state of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Plan of Action 2015 are examined—must include mechanisms on how to address the issue of insufficient and dwindling availability and mobilization of resources to implement the new Plan of Action.

ANNEX 1

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ANNEX 2, Good Practices, PART 1

Small Business Bureau Examples

Seven examples of women led small and medium enterprises that have been supported by the Small Business Bureau.

Waini Naturals and Blue Flame Group are comprised of Amerindian women living in the interior Administrative Region no.1; the Pomeroon Women Agro-Processors Association are from the riverain area of Administrative Region No 2 and are majority Amerindian women. Aranaputa Processors Friendly Society, Helping Hands Women Producers Cooperative Society and the Women 's Agro-Processors Association are based in the interior Administrative Region No 9 and are all Amerindian.

These examples illustrate that Amerindian women can access financial and technical support to develop successful micro and small businesses.

The seventh group the Guyana Arts and Crafts Association which represents artisans and craftsmen and women from across the country.

1. Waini Naturals

This group is located in Region 1 and produces mainly crab oil products, such as crab oil, crab oils soap and crab oil cream. This is a small two person group and unlike most of the other member organisations it did not start as a women's group. Waini works with 16 farmers who collect the fruit from the crabwood tree which is used to make the crab oil products. In some cases the farmers would perform intermediate processing of the oil, but final processing of all the other products are done by the group. Marketing is done by the group and involves both direct marketing where the products are sold to end users and retailers as well as through a distributor who ensures that the products get into mainstream supermarkets locally. The group has recently entered into a partnership agreement with a larger manufacturer in Georgetown, who will buy their soaps and repackage it for the local and possible export markets.

Waini is located in one of the remote communities of Guyana, and is only accessible by boats, which makes communications and transporting its products to market difficult as well as more costly. There are also no telecommunications or internet services and although the group has access to cell phones, they have to go to a particular point in the river to get signals, so cell communications are not instantaneous.

2. Blue Flame Women's Group

This group is located in Region 1 and produces mainly cocoa sticks and cassava bread. They also produce seasonal products such as fruit juices and ground coffee. There are currently 9 member of the group who are all local women. Blue Flame supplies products under the North West Organics label to supermarkets and also under their own label, which is *Hosororo Naturals*.

3. Pomeroon Women's Agro-Processors Association

This group started in 2001 with 14 members, who came from households that were primarily engaged in farming activities in the Pomeroon riverain area. Given the low prices paid for their produce as well as the lack of markets, which often resulted in wastage and spoilage, the women decided to engage in value added processing as a way of improving their livelihoods and adding value to their primary products. Members initially worked 2 days per week on a rotating basis and produced carambola fruit mix which was used to make fruit/black cake, a popular Guyanese tradition particularly at Christmas time. The group's product range has widened over the years and includes their popular pepper sauce, which has enjoyed market acceptance and more recently an award-winning virgin coconut oil.

Today, eight of the original founder members of the association are still active, while others have joined over time, but the overall size of the group has remained at 14. The group now provides employment for 5 of its 14

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members and has been able to pay annual dividend to all members in 2011. The Association also provides income to as many as 50 farmers in the community who supply raw materials for the processed products.

This is one of the more successful and organised groups in the network that is always striving to improve their operations and diversify their product range. They have recently benefitted from the intervention of a VSO business development advisor who spent 2 years assisting them with record keeping, business and market development as well as product development. They have also been the recipient of several grants, training and technical assistance from the donor community, which has helped them to secure equipment, premises, and other needed inputs.

In 2011, the group won the first prize at a Caribbean Regional Contest for Rural Innovative Projects, which was held in Barbados. Fifteen groups from around the Caribbean competed and 5 were shortlisted. Pomeroun won with their Virgin Coconut Oil product.

4. Aranaputa Processors Friendly Society

This association has been in operation since 2005 and produces mainly peanut butter and fruit juices. The Group has 15 members who rotate the work between them so that they all get employment and income from their operations. Aranaputa's peanut butter has a reputation for quality and is well known in the local community. Through a school feeding programme, the group has been able to market its peanut butter beyond the local community; however, given the distance from Georgetown, as well as the development of transportation infrastructure, there are logistical challenges in seeking to exploit markets in the city and other areas. The group makes a regular contribution from its profits to the local school and to local community projects.

5. Helping Hands Women Producers Cooperative Society

This group has been in existence since 1996 and was registered as a co-operative in 2009. Their main products are peanut butter, processed cashew and peanuts and cassava bread, which is sold primarily in the local community. There are 11 members, about half of whom are active and participate in the processing activities on a paid basis, including a full-time bookkeeper/administrator. Some of the other members work on a voluntary basis. There are indirect benefits for up to 30 farmers who derive income from their supplier relationship with the group. Some of the products, such as cassava bread and peanut butter are widely utilized in the school feeding programme in nearby villages, which provides a stable and guaranteed income until 2014, when the programme ends.

6. Wowetta Women's Agro-processors Association

The initial motivation for the formation of this group arose out of the desire of the local women to share the traditional tasks of cassava growing and processing as well as to engage in other small-scale economic ventures such as sewing and weaving. In 2009 they started operations under the name of 'Wowetta Business Enterprises Inc.' and focused on growing cassava, which was processed into farine. The group has 57 members, not all of whom are active, with about 50% benefitting financially from their participation in planting and processing activities. Benefits are in the form of part-time employment since farine production is dependent on the cassava crop.

7. Guyana Arts and Craft Association

Before 1992, Guyana's Arts and Craft Association were literally unknown since the small number of producers was primarily involved in subsistence activity. The industry began as a cottage industry with seven craft producers including retailers selling out of bags and suitcases on street corners and sidewalks and culminated with plans for a state of the arts retail outlet to house retailers. The journey began in 1992, when the late President Cheddi Jagan encouraged local producers to begin selling craft products in the local market on a commercial level. In 1993, the Guyana Arts and Craft Association (GACPA) was formed and the Hibiscus Craft Plaza was constructed to assist craft producers in retailing their products in a cost effective manner. This was done with the assistance of the Prime Minister, Samuel Hinds and the Guyana Post Office where the Hibiscus Craft Plaza is located.

Throughout the years, the industry continued to grow with several producers and limited market access. In 2008, this situation prompted Government to provide market information to facilitate growing number of producers. The Ministry of Tourism, Go Invest and the Guyana Bureau of Standards initiated plans to streamline the craft industry by creating a centralized representative body to promote the industry, which saw the formation of the Guyana Arts and Craft Producers Association (GACPA) in March 2008. The membership to date is approximately 345 persons, predominantly women.

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As the sector continued to grow, the SBB via the Government intervened to allocate a plot of land. The SBB has been integral in their growth and development and lobbied to Government in 2011 for a plot of land in Georgetown to house a state of the art craft complex where member's from all regions can sell and market their products. The Mission of the Association is to represent arts and craft producers in all administrative regions without prejudice; demonstrating unity in the diversity of their culture and fostering sustainable livelihoods within communities through formal and informal education and training programmers in the pursuit of sound business opportunities.

EMPRETEC Examples

Over the past eleven years women have been actively participating in the EMPRETEC hallmark programme, the Entrepreneurship Training Workshop (ETW). EMPRETEC has been celebrating the achievements of some of our outstanding women entrepreneurs over the years. We are pleased to share with you a brief synopsis of three outstanding EMPRETECO's:

- 1) **Mrs. Tracy Douglas:** EMPRETECO Ms. Tracy Antoinette Green Douglas owns and manages Pandama Wines in Guyana. Her business focuses on producing fruit wines, fruit soaps and art products from local resources. It is a place of retreat where the local community and tourists can connect with nature. Mrs. Douglas was recently accredited among the top ten women entrepreneurs in the EMPRETEC network globally in this year's UNCTAD Women in Business Award 2014.
- 2) **Lucia Desir:** EMPRETECO Lucia Desir is the Director for D&J Shipping Service located in the capital, Georgetown. Her business is a locally owned which focuses on Shipping and shipping related operations such as imports, exports, customs brokerage, packing and moving. D&J shipping has been in operations for the past twelve years. EMPRETECO Lucia was nominated as a finalist in UNCTAD/Women in Business Award 2010. She employed over fifteen persons of which 45 percent are women and four in managerial positions at the time of her nomination.
- 3) **Irene Bacchus-Holder:** EMPRETECO Irene Bacchus-Holder is a pyrographic artist, who specializes in burning design onto wood or leather. In 2008, Ms. Bacchus-Holder was nominated as one of the ten finalists in the UNCTAD/EMPRETEC International Women in Business Award.

Part 11, Good Practices

2 model NGOS working with the CCPA

EveryChild Guyana

During the period under review the MLHSS signed a memorandum of understanding with EveryChild Guyana concretized an existing partnership through provision of child care counsellors to the Agency. This project has since ended but a new partnership has evolved with the *Foster Care Programme* being the central point. This programme sees the placement of children from Residential Care Centres into the family based care option of Foster Care. EveryChild Guyana has partnered with the Agency to offer after placement support through follow-up visits with foster children and families.

Help and Shelter

This non-governmental organisation has been in the forefront of the campaign to end Domestic Violence consistently for the last decade and offers support by way of shelter and counseling for victims. Since the work of this organisation is interrelated to that of the CCPA there have been a number of areas for collaboration and these have necessitated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2010 to effect smoother partnering.

Among the support offered by this organisation include the short-term provision of shelter for children in need of immediate removal from their primary residence in cases where alternatives are not immediately available. Help and Shelter and CCPA have also developed a referral system that allows for the sharing of information on cases reaching the attention of either Agency and involves monthly feedback meetings between officers of both organisations.

ANNEX 3

List of Policies and Action Plans

Domestic Violence Policy

Local Carbon Development Strategy Update 2013

National Competitiveness Strategy

National Development Strategy 2001– 2010

National Health Sector Strategy 2008 – 2012

National HIV/AIDS Strategy 2007– 2011

National Framework on Orphans and Vulnerable Children 2005

Commission on the Rights of the Child Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016

Gender Mainstreaming in Health Collaboration Plan 2011 – 2013

Guyana Health Vision 2020

Indigenous Peoples Commission Strategic Plan 2011- 2015

Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme II 2008 – 2012

Strategic Education Development Plan 2008 – 2013

Women and Gender Equality Commission Strategic Plan 2013 – 2020