



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Combined fifth to ninth periodic reports submitted by Saint Kitts and Nevis under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2014*

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMSP	Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol
BNTF	Basic Needs Trust Fund
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CFBC	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College
CGA	Country Gender Assessment
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FAWCS	Fahie Agricultural Women Co-operative Society
GBS	General Budget Support
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEPAP	Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan
GSKN	Government of St. Kitts and Nevis
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBSE	Inquiry Based Science Education
IUF	International Union of Food Workers
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NACHA	National Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS
NAS	National Adaptation Strategy
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NHC	National Housing Corporation
NSTP	National Skills Training Programme
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PBL	Problem Based Learning
PEP	People's Empowerment Programme
ROC	Republic of China on Taiwan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SEAF	Small Enterprises Assistant Fund Programme
SIDF	Sugar Industry Diversification Foundation
SKN	St. Kitts and Nevis
SKNIS	St. Kitts and Nevis Information Service
SKIPA	St. Kitts Investment Promotion Agency
SNAPD	St. Kitts Nevis Association of Persons with Disabilities
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
STEP	Skills Training and Empowerment Programme
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WED	Women's Entrepreneurship Day
WHIP	Women's Health Improvement Plan
WHO	World Health Organisation
WICT	Women in Construction Trades
WiMAC	Women in Maritime Association, Caribbean

Executive Summary

1. This report covers the review period January 2002 to 2018 in fulfilment of obligations under Article 18 and the measures undertaken to implement the provisions under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The reporting period covers two government administrations (2002 to 2015 and 2015 to present).

2. The methodology used to produce this report consisted of primary data including interviews, review of statistical data, legislation; and secondary data sources which comprised reports, published papers and internet resources. Data collection presented some challenges as data was not always available, nor available in the format required, i.e. disaggregated by sex.

3. As a member state of the United Nations, the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis is involved in a number of UN (United Nations) strategy plans and goals and works steadily towards achieving those objectives. Improvements in the quality of the lives of women are evidenced in the success of measures introduced in response to inequalities. Legislation has been revised and new legislation instituted to provide protection for women and children; wider education and training opportunities are available; healthcare outcomes have improved; and the teenage birth rate is declining. In the arena of leadership, decision-making roles, and political life; progress has stagnated with relatively small numbers of women occupying positions in politics; however, headway is promising with increased appointments of female permanent secretaries and representation at international level.

4. The Country Gender Assessment for St. Kitts and Nevis (2014) highlighted issues that affect women who face obstacles in the access to, and control of resources associated with the challenges of employment, poverty and violence. Existing socio-economic practices affect the life chances of women and continue to perpetuate disadvantages. The development of strategies which focus on women has, in some cases, created marginalisation of men who perceive they are criticised for the discrimination that women face. Finite public resources are available to invest in addressing gender issues; therefore, robust monitoring and evaluation of policies and initiatives that address the root causes of discrimination are necessary to achieve effective results.

5. The 2011 Census shows that 43.1% of households in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis were headed by females, compared to 56.9% by males. Many families in St Kitts and Nevis are headed by women who bear the burden of raising families single-handedly. Women and children can slip into poverty easily mainly for health and economic reasons and also experience different types of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and financial) but endure them for economic and emotional reasons. There is income disparity between men and women as females tend to be employed in the lowest paid occupations. Statistical evidence shows females have lower labour force participation rates than males, and higher unemployment rates. Although females graduate from institutions of education in greater numbers than men this is not reflected in leadership roles within employment. Men and young boys commit violent crimes against each other and against women and children. As more men and boys are incarcerated this impacts the family and family support, particularly for children.

6. The Government, in collaboration with private enterprise and non-government organisations (NGOs) demonstrates its commitment to address and respond to challenges and establish effective remedies through legislation, policies and programmes designed to improve socio-economic conditions; e.g. strengthening of social protection measures. The Department of Gender Affairs plays a fundamental role in advancing the cause of women through awareness raising, monitoring and

implementing of policies which has resulted in much progress. Although improvements have been slow in some areas, St. Kitts and Nevis remains committed to addressing the equality and empowerment of women.

Introduction

7. The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis (SKN) is a small open economy which produces a narrow base of goods and services. An English-speaking, twin-island nation located in the middle of the hurricane zone of the Eastern Caribbean at 17.2 degrees north and 62.5 degrees west, SKN has a combined land area of 269 sq. km and an estimated population of 47,195¹. SKN was once a colony of the United Kingdom but achieved independence on September 19, 1983. The Sugar Industry dominated the social and economic landscape of SKN for over three centuries until external pressures including the erosion of market preferences caused by trade liberalisation and globalisation led to a decision to close the industry in July 2005.

8. Subsequent to significant changes made to the European Union Sugar Protocol and the consequent closure of the sugar industry on St. Kitts in 2005, the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis (GSKN) launched the National Adaptation Strategy 2006-2013 (NAS) in 2006 as the blueprint to guide the socio-economic transformation of the economy. Since the commencement of the implementation in 2006, substantial progress was made in pursuing critical development objectives outlined in the NAS. The four (4) foundational pillars identified in the NAS as key to the transformation process included, Agriculture Diversification, Information and Communication Technology, Tourism and Financial Services. However, limited inflows of capital due to the occurrence of the global economic and financial downturn in 2008 sought to threaten and decelerate the execution and completion of a number of planned initiatives. In light of this, GSKN decided in 2013 to extend the period of implementation of the NAS from 2006-2013 to 2006-2017.

9. Recognising that a stable macroeconomic environment is a key element to promote social and economic development, St. Kitts and Nevis continued to enjoy strong macroeconomic performance during 2015 as the Federation recorded GDP growth of 5.1%, a slight decline when compared to the growth rate of 2014 (6.1%). The growth rate can be attributed to expansions in the transportation and storage (13.7%), construction (9.5%), wholesale and retail (8.4%) and tourism (4.4%) sectors. The growth in the transportation and storage sector can be attributed to increased activity in the construction and tourism sectors. The increase in the construction sector was reflective of the advancement of work on a number of major private sector development projects such as the Park Hyatt Hotel, Koi Resort and Residences, and Golden Rock Commercial Park, as well as major public sector investment projects primarily the repaving of the South East Peninsula and Frigate Bay roads and the construction of the tunnel at Timothy Hill. In the wholesale and retail sector, economic activity rose in keeping with the increase in the total importation of construction materials and consumer demand for retail items. The expansion in economic activity in the tourism sector can be accredited to the increase in stay over arrivals from major source markets including the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

10. The GSKN envisions the continued support of its valued donor for the implementation of the NAS related initiatives. A significant commitment of resources has been received from the European Union under the Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol countries (AMSP) utilising the General Budget Support (GBS) modality. The GBS is a critical source of financial support for the implementation of

¹ Source: Population and Housing Census (2011).

the NAS and maintenance of the economic stabilisation programme. Other important sources of support for the GSKN transformation programme include the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), World Bank (WB), Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and a number of bilateral partnerships.

Responses to concluding comments of the Committee² on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Saint Kitts and Nevis

11. The combined initial, second, third and fourth periodic CEDAW reports for Saint Kitts and Nevis was issued in January 2002. The concluding comments of the Committee raised a number of specific concerns and included recommendations, some which are responded to below in general.

12. The Committee noted that one of the main obstacles to the full implementation of the Convention in St. Kitts and Nevis was the impact of natural disasters which devastated the country, destroyed housing stock and affected economic progression. Specifically, Hurricane Omar (October 2008) severely damaged the Four Seasons Hotel causing a twenty six (26) month closure; re-opening on 15 December 2010 (it's fifth re-opening since its launch on Nevis on 14 February 1991). The accompanying ravages and extensive damage affects in particular, infrastructure, tourism, agriculture and fishing industries. The Four Seasons Hotel is a large resort and a major employer that contributes significantly to the employment rate on Nevis. These disruptions and difficulties were in addition to the setbacks caused by the closure of the sugar industry in 2005 and the global financial crises of 2008.

13. The Committee recommended that the Government continue wide dissemination of the Convention and their general recommendations; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)³; and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". Public education and awareness raising activities have been conducted which included utilising the media to disseminate information via the radio and press, in addition to workshops and visits to schools. This will continue to be an ongoing activity for the Department in the forthcoming years.

14. The remainder of this report will address and respond to other concerns raised by the Committee.

15. It should be noted that a number of challenges were experienced obtaining data. Whilst some data was available from a number of institutions, comprehensive data collection and analysis is not widely practiced. Captured data was not always accessible in the format required, i.e. disaggregated by sex; consequently, raw data was limited in terms of quantity and quality. Lack of human and physical resources are recognised as contributing factors to the paucity of data, which as a consequence hampers the ability to measure policies and services effectively. Improved

² State compliance with the obligations of CEDAW is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, a body made up of 23 experts on women's rights from around the world. The Committee asks questions about specific articles of the Convention and prepares concluding observations which may include specific recommendations for improvement measures.

³ An agenda for the empowerment of all women which includes 'removing obstacles to the active participation of women in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making'.

mechanisms for data management to enable accurate monitoring and evaluation and decision making processes are fundamental.

Part I

Article 1

Definition of Discrimination Against Women

16. For the purposes of the CEDAW Convention, the term “discrimination against women” means any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Article 2

Obligations to Eliminate Discrimination

17. Under the Saint Christopher and Nevis Constitution, Chapter II (Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms), Section 15 affords protection from discrimination on grounds of race etc. Sub-section 3 specifically states:

“In this section the expression “discriminatory” means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, place of origin, birth out of wedlock, political opinions or affiliations, colour, sex or creed whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages that are not accorded to persons of another such description”.

However, gender or women are not specifically mentioned. A framework of legislative measures include the introduction of, and revisions to existing laws. Relevant legislation includes, but is not limited to the following.

18. Offences Against the Person Act, 1873⁴ makes provision regarding offences against the person and related matters. It includes aggravated assaults on females, rape, abduction, defilement of women, attempts to procure abortion and concealing the birth of a child.

19. Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act, 2008⁵ prescribes measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, with particular regard to victims who are women and children.

20. Status of Children Act, 1983⁶ recognises that all children are of equal status independent of whether the child is born out of wedlock. The Status of Children (Amendment) Act, 2013 further amended the Act in respect to the presumption of paternity, including the right of the mother to choose for the child to use her last name instead of the father’s last name.

⁴ Revised in 2009.

⁵ Amended in 2009.

⁶ Revised in 2009.

21. Guardianship, Custody and Access to Children Act, 2012⁷ defines and regulates the authority of parents and guardians of their children; parents' powers to appoint guardians; and the powers of the Courts.
22. The Electronic Crimes Act, 2009 has penalties for persons committing the offence of child pornography which include fines and imprisonment.
23. Equal Pay Act, 2012 makes provision for the removal and prevention of discrimination based on the sex of the employee in paid employment.
24. Maintenance of Children Act, 2012⁸ acknowledges the need for shared family responsibilities and that equal duty should be placed on each parent in the care of the child. It provides for the equal treatment of children without discrimination based on the marital status of the parents or the status of the child at birth. An obligation is placed on each parent to provide for the child's maintenance irrespective of whether the child is in their custody and also gives fathers the opportunity to take women to court for child maintenance.
25. Children (Care and Adoption) Act, 2013 provides for the care and protection of children including operation of adoption services.
26. Domestic Violence Act, 2000 makes provision for the protection of any person subjected to domestic violence, and provides for related or incidental matters. Victims may apply for injunctions and protection orders against perpetrators. Where a person is convicted of an offence under this Act, the court may, instead of imposing a sentence, make a rehabilitation order programme or rehabilitation programme. The court may, on making an order under this Act recommend either or both parties to participate in counselling of such nature as the court may specify. A person who commits any of the offences under this Act for which no penalty is prescribed is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or both.
27. Domestic Violence Act, 2014⁹ provides protection for victims of domestic violence including violence against women and children and makes provision for the granting of protection orders. Under the Act domestic violence is defined as "any controlling or abusive behaviour that harms the health, safety or well-being of a person or any child" and the various forms of domestic violence are detailed. The Act has been passed in Parliament but needs to be enforced urgently. This delay may be accounted for by the dissolution of Parliament in 2015 following elections and the change of Government. Efforts are currently being made to have the legislation brought into force.

Article 3

The Development and Advancement of Women

28. A number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹⁰ have been progressed. The gender elements of these goals comprised tackling gender inequality, including reducing child mortality (Goal 4) and improving maternal health (Goal 5); both of which have realised significant development.

⁷ In force in 2013.

⁸ In force in 2013.

⁹ Not yet in force. Preceded by the Domestic Violence Act, 2000 (in force 2004).

¹⁰ The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were made at United Nations conferences in the 1990s and set to be achieved by 2015. A set of 8 goals including social, economic and environmental advances.

29. Moving forward, work is ongoing towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals¹¹ (SDGs). Goal 5 of the SDGs specifically speaks to gender equality, an area which has received attention. The Nevis Island Administration hosted a Women's Forum (November 2016) with civil society stakeholders to discuss the SDGs in relation to the role of girls and women. A Sub-Regional Women's Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals followed, in March 2017, with policymakers from throughout the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The forum identified challenges and explored best practices to implement the relevant SDGs. For example, within the education system, social attitudes that manifest as machoism and misogyny are apparent as gender stereotypes at very early ages; and increased gender sensitising of parents, teachers and society is recognised as an instrument to promote changes in mindsets, as well as a means to combat traditional attitudes.

30. Examination of the policy and institutional frameworks that promote gender equality revealed the implementation of measures in favour of advancing the human rights of women. Specific examples, described below, include Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Women in Construction Trades (WICT). However, the initiatives did not meet their objectives as anticipated and are currently being restructured.

31. TVET is a vehicle for sustainable development which aims to contribute to an enhanced, skilled, and employable labour force; with certification, recognised at national and regional level. TVET provides formal and non-formal programmes from school to tertiary level (no formal programmes are offered in Nevis at post-secondary level). TVET has been reformed to empower young women to take advantage of economic fields traditionally occupied by males, e.g., engineering and construction trades. Such trade skills are in high demand, and for which employers pay higher salaries. TVET is not without its challenges, and low participation and high drop-out rates were attributed to a variety of reasons; including accessibility (programmes available in city areas only); lack of financial support, and perceived value. Training for less academic students, pitched at low levels, restrict individuals to entry level employment with little upward progression; the consequence of which is an inability of women to break the cycle of poverty. The Prime Minister's Budget Address of 2017 revealed the Government's plans to restructure the TVET project at a cost of EC\$30 million over a five year period with financial assistance from the CDB. Facilities will be upgraded and the quality of instruction improved. Enhanced support systems to help reduce gender disparities will include gender-responsive career counselling in secondary schools to support skill selection and the retention and completion of programmes. National consultations on the St. Kitts and Nevis TVET and Gender Policy commenced with stakeholders, including education planners and policy makers in 2018. Work is ongoing in collaboration with the CARICOM Education for Employment Programme to create strategies to mainstream gender in workforce training and development.

32. The Women in Construction Trades (WICT) programme, which formed part of the People's Empowerment Program, commenced in 2013 and sought to develop and equip women with skills to enter more lucrative professions e.g. as carpenters and electricians. However, no graduation was conducted as women fell out of the programme gradually. WICT was phased out, and a new programme introduced in 2017. Facilitated by the National Skills Training Programme (NSTP), the Skills Training and Empowerment Programme (STEP) has an emphasis on certification to increase participants' marketability in the workplace nationally and regionally. STEP aims to develop entrepreneurial and human resource capabilities and integrate

¹¹ Adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, the SDGs comprise 17 goals aimed at addressing poverty, inequalities and climate change to be achieved by 2030.

participants into the workforce. Opportunities exist for candidates interested in working in construction trades, and the hotel and hospitality industry; and it is hoped to place such persons in the newly established hotels within the Federation. The payment of a weekly stipend for participants or provision or micro-financing for small entrepreneurs (where applicable) contributes household disposable income and facilitates national social and economic transformation.

33. The Nevis Women's Council is an organisation without religious or political affiliations. Open to all women over age 18 years, it exists to help women deal with issues that affect them and aims to strengthen relationships between women in the community. The St. Kitts National Council of Women Inc. was established in 2013 as a non-government organisation. It is an umbrella organisation for other women's groups and exists to assertively empower people, centred on collaboration and initiatives to advance the rights and interests of females.

34. As part of their focus on the advancement and empowerment of women the Department of Gender Affairs facilitates entrepreneurial training for low income women and other groups. In 2016, a "Women in Middle Management" workshop was conducted for women from the public and private sectors with the goal of career and personal development. The Women's Prison Programme teaches life and technical skills to female residents of Her Majesty's Prison. The "Engaging, Empowering and Advancing Women" Entrepreneurship Workshop was delivered to a group of six women at the prison in September 2017. The women received intensive training to develop business ideas and business plans and learned skills to start their own businesses upon their reintegration into society. To date, three participants of the Prison Programme have been released from prison and are gainfully employed, including one who runs a day care facility.

35. Incarcerated women are a group who face multiple forms of discrimination. Women are often the primary carers of children who are impacted by parental detention and imprisonment. The Department facilitates two luncheons at Her Majesty's Prison annually; prior to the start of the school academic year, and before Christmas to give incarcerated women opportunity to spend quality time with their children and extended family. The donation of back-to-school supplies and small gifts at these events assists children who would otherwise be disadvantaged by having an incarcerated parent. Since the Prison Programme was restarted in 2017 there have been no repeated offences. Where appropriate, the Department of Gender Affairs also provides advocacy services on behalf of inmates.

36. Concern exists amongst stakeholders about the cessation of global/social funding mechanisms and the resultant negative impact on initiatives, many of which are currently accessed by, and benefit women.

Article 4

Acceleration of equality between Men and Women

37. The Department of Gender Affairs is a unit within the Ministry of Community Development, Gender Affairs & Social Services. It was first established in 1986, as 'The Department of Women's Affairs' in the Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs. In 2000, the Department assumed its new name 'Department of Gender Affairs' in keeping with the state's commitment to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all of its policies and programmes, as well as to ensure specific impact on men and women. The Department has major responsibilities for raising awareness; monitoring and improving the status of women and girls in the country through the implementation of a number of International Conventions and declarations; as well as the Constitution of Saint Christopher and Nevis which speaks to equality between men and women.

The Department's priority areas include the formation of a National Gender Policy, the empowerment of women and girls, the reduction of all forms of gender based violence, poverty elimination, governance and democracy, and programmes for men and boys.

38. In 1997 a Cabinet policy decision clarified the right of student mothers to continue their education. In St. Kitts, Project Viola, established since 2002, is run by the Department of Gender Affairs and creates an enabling environment in which teenage mothers can complete their education. With support from the Basic Needs Trust Programme, a project was implemented in 2016 to 2017 which sought to enhance the structures and programming of the Project. As a result, a project manual and handbook was developed and has been issued to school principals to ensure that they are guided by the process. Assistance is provided to remove financial barriers to education, e.g. cost of day care for babies, extra tuition, books and uniforms. To date, 200 teenage mothers have been helped, with many progressing to tertiary education. In 2018, 5 of the 13 teen mothers (38%) in Project Viola were enrolled at continuing and tertiary education institutions. Students advancing to further education may receive additional financial support and benefit from scholarships. Project Viola is recognised by UNICEF as a best practice model in the Caribbean region.

39. In Nevis, the Ministry of Social Services and the Division of Gender Affairs run programmes that support women. In 2007 a similar programme to Project Viola was implemented in Nevis; the 'Second Chance Teen Mothers Program' aims to reintegrate teenage mothers into school and provides valuable assistance; program activities include workshops on parenting skills and professional development, career exposition and financial assistance to facilitate educational advancement. "Baby Think It Over" is a program aimed at teens to build awareness of the difficulties of pregnancy and the responsibilities of parenthood. Nevisian Pearls is a closed group, counselling and social activities programme for female students in secondary schools who are deemed to be at high risk of social influences. Evolving problems are met with early intervention and the girls are able express themselves freely and build confidence in a supportive environment.

40. At the time of this report, no legislation exists that specifically speaks to reproductive rights.

41. Funding of the National Gender Policy was delayed due to government austerity measures. However, following submission of a proposal to UNESCO by the Department of Gender Affairs, funding was approved in 2018. The Department of Gender Affairs is the official implementing agency for the St. Kitts and Nevis National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (GEPAP). Formally launched in November 2018, the GEPAP is guided by a Multi-sector Steering Committee. The project is of 12 months duration and is expected to conclude in December 2019. The general objective of the Gender Equality Policy is to provide an institutional framework, an important tool that will assist the government of St. Kitts and Nevis in facilitating gender equality and empowerment, in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals and other international instruments to which the state is a signatory. The policy will ensure that men and women have equal access to resources, participate equally in every area of national endeavor, and that cultural barriers to the realization of equality are addressed.

Article 5

Sex Roles and Stereotyping

42. The Committee expressed concern about the persistence of cultural practices and strong stereotyped attitudes towards the roles and responsibilities of women and

men. Recommendations were made to increase awareness in society, of the need to change discriminatory attitudes; including through specific programmes directed towards boys and men. In particular, recommendation was made to extend to all communities, the pilot parenting programme for fathers run by the Ministry of Social Development to promote the concept of shared parental responsibility.

43. Consideration has been given to the important role of men in families and communities. Educational programmes were designed to support and progress equality under the Men's Programme, established in 2007 by the Department of Gender Affairs (St. Kitts). Programmes equipped males with life skills and practical domestic skills. International Men's Day (19 November) is celebrated annually with a range of activities including panel discussions on family, education, and church services in St. Kitts and Nevis. The St. Kitts National Men's Council, launched in November 2016, works in conjunction with the Department of Gender Affairs. The National Men's Council seeks to empower and engage men, and has involved men on matters of domestic violence, parenting, equality and equity; including representation at regional gender based violence workshops. The Men's Programme also conducts awareness raising exercises via visits to male-dominated workplaces where men are engaged and educated on gender identity and gender based violence through discussions. Similarly, men's programming in the Gender Affairs Division (Nevis) incorporates activities which foster discussion i.e. radio broadcasts, events promoting interaction, healthy relationships, togetherness and physical activity e.g. walks, bike-a-thon; attended by both sexes; and education to raise awareness of health matters.

44. A Single Father's Project (funded by UNESCO) ran in St. Kitts from 2014 to 2016 for 90 fathers in collaboration with the Ripple Institute¹². The project encompassed social skills, effective parenting, discipline, communication, counselling and role play. The project was well received by attendees and evaluation revealed a positive impact on fathers and their children. The Gender Affairs Division in Nevis also has a Men's Forum. A support group engages men to become empowered with knowledge to foster positive lifestyles and mindsets. Their activities include sessions on parenting, gender, domestic abuse/violence and family life.

45. 'Gender mainstreaming' is a strategy embraced by the Government that promotes gender equality within institutions when planning actions such as policies and programmes. The implications and interests of men and women are considered in order to address unequal social structures. In 2016-2017 the Department of Gender Affairs received funding from the Basic Needs Trust Fund for a Gender Sensitization Project designed to provide the wider society with a more sophisticated understanding of gender; to improve gender mainstreaming in the public sector, and to enable the private sector to address and provide more substantial reporting about gender-related issues. Deliverables from this project included the creation of three sector specific training guides and a manual for use with adolescents, the private sector and focal point units within the public sector. Approximately 116 focal points across St. Kitts and Nevis in the private and public sectors, and civil society were trained. Gender sensitization training continues to be delivered through the Departments of Gender Affairs.

46. Parenting programmes are primary shaping agents in terms of gender roles. Although there are no formal national parenting programmes available in St. Kitts, there are local and faith based initiatives targeted at teen parents (both genders) and single mothers which aim to educate. The initiatives cover life skills and technical skills, including improving standards of living, sexual health, and promotion of healthy lifestyles. Examples include a women's empowerment retreat (2014), gender sensitisation training (2016) and Single Mother's Advancement and Resilience Training (SMART) (2017). In Nevis, the Single Parents Support Group, established

¹² A national social development and community service NGO.

over 10 years ago, meets weekly to offer support and educational sessions to its members in the community. The programme, which forms part of the Family Services Division of the Social Services Department, also conducts an annual Parenting Workshop designed to provide support, explore different ideas on parenting, and develop good parent/child relationships. The Second Chance Teen Mothers Programme in Nevis includes a parenting skills training workshop.

47. Embedded socio-cultural attitudes and behaviours perpetuate ideas and practices along patriarchal gender lines which create disadvantages that affect the life chances of women. Within households the majority of management and maintenance continues to be traditionally the full responsibility of females. Cultural roles of men and women and the issues arising from gender roles assigned by society are evident; i.e. subject selection in schools is still done along traditional gender ideologies. Although avenues exist for women to benefit from non-traditional employment opportunities and enhance employability, e.g. through the People's Empowerment Program (PEP)¹³, very few chose to do so, which may also mirror cultural choices. Participants on the PEP programme received a stipend equivalent to minimum wage. In 2017 the PEP programme was revamped as the Skills Training and Empowerment Programme (STEP) and which incorporates an element of certification.

48. Legislation exists to protect parents and children. The ongoing maintenance process is designed to ensure that parents contribute to the upkeep of their children. There is a growing feeling amongst males that they are being discriminated against by the judicial system and by the agencies created to protect women. The St. Kitts National Men's Council was set up in response to gender fatigue. The need to work with men as allies is recognised as being in the best interests of children.

49. Civil service regulations have been upgraded and new fathers have the option of applying for paternity leave. This introduction serves to relieve the burden on women.

50. Disaggregated poverty data¹⁴ shows that single mothers/female-headed households have higher dependency ratios and face a higher risk of poverty. Twenty five per cent of female-headed households have five or more members in contrast to 3% of male-headed households. Table 1 reveals that within poor households, 57% are headed by females, and the largest percentage of females in this cohort are aged 30-39 years at 37.8%. Women are often responsible for the welfare of their families and may be unemployed or under-employed. At the time of the report 15% of all births were to teenagers, who in particular, are vulnerable due to limited financial resources to meet the responsibilities associated with having children.

**Table 1
Percentage of poor and non-poor households by head of household**

AGE GROUPS	POOR		NON-POOR		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
0-21	0.0%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	205
22-29	1.6%	4.4%	8.4%	8.5%	1240
30-39	20.6%	37.8%	21.9%	16.4%	3316
40-49	38.6%	26.5%	22.0%	24.5%	3895
50-59	17.8%	14.7%	22.0%	17.6%	3090
60-64	1.8%	1.1%	3.7%	8.6%	877
65+	19.5%	14.1%	20.2%	22.7%	3317
Total No.	925	1,226	7,077	6,760	15,988
Total %	43.0%	57.0%	51.1%	48.9%	

Source: Gender and Child Analysis of OECS CPAs, November 2012, p. 119.

¹³ Government initiative designed to create empowerment opportunities for unemployed nationals in 2012.

¹⁴ Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, National Social Protection Strategy (2012-2017), p. 39.

51. Men and women have quite different experiences of poverty and its impacts. Lack of employment and poverty places a greater dependence by women upon men for financial support for even the basic necessities to provide for their families. Women reported this placed them at a disadvantage in relationships in terms of power which creates vulnerability. The extracts below from the Country Poverty Assessment¹⁵ illustrate women's perception:

"My boyfriend is the only one working, if he stop, I can't get food."

"Men want to control and put restriction on you, they feel they in charge because they bringing in the money."

"I ain't have it so I have to depend on the man I live with for what I want. I don't like how he does treat me and the children but I have to keep me mouth shut 'cause we got to eat."

"Men feel that they could take advantage of you."

"I ain't working I don't have no man, no man going want me he going see me as a burden. A man want a woman who can fend for she self."

Source: Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08 (Vol 1), p.148

Article 6

Suppression of the Exploitation of Women

52. The Committee urged the prosecution and punishment of traffickers and pimps, enhanced efforts to combat violence against women and girls, and increased provision for victims of violence. A zero tolerance approach to the sexual abuse of girls, prosecution and rehabilitation of offenders, educational programmes targeted at men and boys on the prevention of violence; and reform of traditional negative attitudes towards women were also recommended. Further recommendations included the collection of sex-disaggregated data on the use of drugs and alcohol and its possible correlation with violence against women; and the implementation of preventative measures to alleviate addiction to all types of drugs by young people.

53. Prostitution remains illegal in St. Kitts. Within the non-legal economy women are involved in prostitution and immigrant women use this activity as a survival strategy. A number of women also engaged in transactional sex in order to make ends meet. The National AIDS Programme has developed a working relationship with such vulnerable groups and delivers programmes to educate on human rights, tolerance and choices. Sex workers and females who exchange sex for money receive education about HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and condom use, and also benefit from the distribution of condoms and lubricants. The Sister Programme looks at AIDS and STIs and is geared towards women in a vulnerable position, and who engage in transactional sex. The Programme identifies and works with peers, adopting an 'each one, reach one' approach where 'sisters inform sisters'.

54. Legislation has been introduced to tackle trafficking in persons. The Saint Christopher and Nevis Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act¹⁶, Chapter 4.40 states it is 'AN ACT to prescribe measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons with particular regard to victims who are women and children, and to provide for related or incidental matters'. Under section 3 of this Act trafficking in persons is a criminal offence and persons committing this offence are liable to imprisonment for a period

¹⁵ Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis 2007/08, (Vol 1), p. 148.

¹⁶ All references to the law relate to the 2009 revision unless indicated otherwise.

of 20 years, a fine of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars; or both a fine and imprisonment.

55. There is a high rate of teenage pregnancy. A number of school girls below the age of consent (16 years) become pregnant, and in many cases the father is an older male. However little evidence exists as to whether these males are prosecuted for statutory rape¹⁷; nor is there evidence of intervention programmes specifically addressing this problem. Social stigma is associated with underage pregnancies but provision is made in both St. Kitts and Nevis for school girls to complete their education and access training to enter the work force. The absence of childcare facilities in the evening/night often prevents women from taking advantage of adult education programmes; however, private babysitting services are available. An anomaly exists between the age of consent; and the age of majority¹⁸ (18 years) at which point young people can legally undertake adult activities, for example, vote, purchase alcohol, and marry.

56. Domestic violence is the most common form of gender-based violence which predominantly affects women and girls. In 2016, 20 cases of domestic violence were recorded at the Accident and Emergency Department of the JNF General Hospital in St. Kitts. The figures revealed that 55% of the perpetrators were male, 25% female and 20% siblings. There were 23 cases of domestic violence reported to the Family Services Division in Nevis in the period 2011-2015. The Saint Christopher and Nevis Domestic Violence Act, 2014 provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence (efforts are being made to bring the legislation into force). The Act places a duty on a police officer to inform the victim and applicant of their rights and entitles them to apply for a protection order. Under section 47 of this Act, ‘A person who contravenes any prohibition, condition or obligation or order imposed under this Act and for which a penalty is not stipulated commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years or to both such fine and imprisonment’. In 2017 alone there were 357 reported cases of domestic violence in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis. Data from the Royal Saint Christopher and Nevis Police Force indicate that, during the period 2005-2017, 24 deaths of women (aged 15 years and over) occurred. The statistics comprise death by intimate or former partner, femicide, and female victims of homicide.

57. The Police and other stakeholders are undertaking internal reform measures to develop and implement protocols to be more responsive to gender based violence. Due to an increase in sexual offence cases, a Special Victims Unit (SVU) within the Royal Saint Christopher and Nevis Police Force was created in 2012. The Unit now operates from its own independent premises and is headed by a female officer, and staffed by six officers in total; five of which are female (83%). Working closely with the Department of Social Services, the Unit deals with issues including domestic violence and child abuse. Officers are specially trained to identify and investigate allegations that occur within the family. Since the establishment of the Unit there has been a significant increase in the reporting of cases of rape due to greater awareness. A major achievement was the launch in November 2018, of the national St. Kitts and Nevis Domestic and Sexual Violence Complaints and Response Protocol, developed in conjunction with stakeholders.

58. The Social Survey on Violence against Children and Women (UNICEF, 2014)¹⁹ in St. Kitts and Nevis revealed that 44% of persons interviewed believed domestic violence was a major problem. Domestic violence is under-reported for a variety of

¹⁷ Statutory rape defined as adults engaging in sexual intercourse with minors.

¹⁸ As defined by the Age of Majority Act, 1983.

¹⁹ Social Survey on Violence against Children and Women, pp. 30-32.

reasons which include economic (79%) and emotional (72%) dependence on the abuser; a belief that authorities would not act on reports (61%); and a belief that the investigation would take too long, and prove futile (50%). The fear of retaliation from the abuser and/or the fear of being subjected to further violence also prevents women from coming forward. Some women may also tolerate domestic abuse as a coping mechanism in order to survive. Women are unwilling to file complaints about domestic violence due to the fear of stigma, a preference for keeping the matter private, an unsupportive justice system and inadequate access to social services and social assistance. Reluctance to report incidents can also be perceived as a lack of confidence in the judicial process.

59. There is no official toll-free hotline service for reporting domestic violence incidents, nor is there an established shelter for women fleeing abuse as anonymity and safety cannot be guaranteed on a small island. The Department of Gender Affairs does however manage an on-call cell phone which members of the public can call to receive advice or assistance. The telephone number is published on the department's publicity material and social media platform. Complaints may be made to an officer in the Department of Gender Affairs who is obligated to listen and explain the services and options available. Discussions are ongoing between the government and NGOs towards the provision of a safe house involving private public partnership. In the interim, a temporary safe home may be obtained within private residences, or in exceptional circumstances, in hotels. The Department of Gender Affairs can offer some support to families in terms of assistance with rent, provision of a mattress etc. Protection orders for victims may be obtained under the Domestic Violence Act, 2014. Resources available to victims include the Police (Special Victims Unit), the Counselling Unit (St. Kitts); and the Social Services Department which offer a variety of services for care and protection including counselling for individuals, families and male perpetrators of domestic abuse. The counselling service is offered by the Government but is not available in Nevis. In 2019 access to healthcare in Nevis will be further realised through the establishment of a Counselling Unit at the Ministry of Health.

60. In an effort to tackle and reduce the incidents of domestic violence the Department of Gender Affairs targeted young women in schools for personal development training intended to raise self-esteem and self-worth. A holistic approach has been adopted and strategic partnerships made with civic groups, churches, organisations and the Ministry of Health. The Department of Gender Affairs, in partnership with the National Women's Council and National Men's Council works with men and women inside and outside of prisons, delivering training sessions aimed at changing the mindsets and behaviours of men and women to eradicate gender based violence in society. The Men's Programme at the Department of Gender Affairs includes a relationship skills programme, the components of which include negotiation and effective communication skills. A violence intervention programme, aimed at batterers, covering alternatives to violence, gender stereotypes discussions, the law, and anger management. The Health and Family Life Education curriculum delivered in schools covers domestic/gender-based violence. The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence (25 November to 10 December) is observed with a campaign and public awareness events and activities; for example, the alliance with media to deliver the reality of domestic violence in the homes and minds of the nation using a series of animations to portray various scenarios. During this period the message is also delivered in schools via educational talks and the involvement of secondary school children in public awareness raising activities. Gender sensitisation programmes relating to gender based violence are ongoing in Nevis; facilitated by the Gender Affairs Division in a variety of formats; they include seminars, dramas, interviews etc. Topics presented and discussed include addressing generational

attitudes, understanding economic the impacts on society, gaining power to change; abuse of men, and empowering communities.

61. Public service announcements broadcast on national radio have used scenarios featuring the voices of females to raise awareness and educate the general public to recognise the potential signs of abuse of minors, e.g. grooming of minors by adults; and violence facilitated by technology, e.g. the serious consequences of cyber bullying. In addition the Ministry of Education website provides comprehensive information and advice to parents and children on internet safety.

62. The Domestic and Sexual Violence Complaints and Response Protocol was developed with support from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The Department of Gender Affairs has responsibility for the protocol which functions as a guide for the key agencies involved in service provision. Following updates, with the support of the Legal Department and Magistracy; and approval by Cabinet, it was officially launched in November 2018. Training for key stakeholders, in the use of the Protocol is part of the implementation process planned for 2019. Efforts have been further accelerated in this area with a proposed Gender Based Violence Strategic Plan.

63. The Social Survey on Violence against Children and Women (UNICEF, 2014)²⁰ in St. Kitts and Nevis revealed that 49% of respondents believed child sexual abuse was a major concern. Reasons given for not reporting incidents range from fear of negative consequences of reporting (81%), embarrassment (77%), a belief that reports of child abuse would not be acted upon (58%) and the length of the judicial process (53%). Sexual exploitation and molestation of children exists, as well as transactional sex amongst adolescents; but cases of prosecution are rare. There is also limited data to support the existence of commercial sexual exploitation of children. Legislation which prohibits the commercial exploitation of children includes the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act, 2008; and Electronic Crimes Act, 2009.

64. Reported cases of child abuse have increased steadily. The gender profile of abused children indicate that greater numbers of girls than boys experience abuse. The main reported cases of child abuse are neglect, physical and sexual abuse. Significantly more girls than boys are affected by child sexual abuse. In the period 2012 to 2014, 60 cases of child sexual abuse were recorded where girls represented 48 of those cases (80%). Girls represented 70% of those sexually abused between the years 2012 to 2013 (7 and 14 cases respectively), this figure rose sharply to 90% (27 cases) in 2014. Girls represented 55% and 57% of neglect and physical abuse cases in the same time period.

65. The Probation and Child Welfare Board Act, 1994 makes provision for the care and protection of children, and places a duty on professionals to report all, and suspected cases of abuse. The functions and powers of the Child Welfare Board are defined under the Act and include receiving and investigating reports of abuse and, where relevant, providing to the Attorney General, Police Commissioner and Director of Public Prosecutions copies of those reports and investigations. Services are also provided for juvenile delinquency and residential care. The technical responsibilities bestowed upon the Board to execute child protection services under the Children (Care and Adoption) Act, 2013, is an anomaly compared to other models of practice in the region. Human resource and structural issues hampered the Board in fulfilling this mandate which resulted in delays for children in need of care and protection. The Act permits the Board to seek the assistance of child protection agencies, and in reality Probation and Child Protection Services executes service delivery.

²⁰ Social Survey on Violence against Children and Women, pp. 24-29.

66. With regard to care of child victims of abuse; the St. Christopher's Children's Home has NGO status and receives children, between the ages of 4 to 19 years. Children reside at the home temporarily until alternative care arrangements can be secured through fostering, adoption or with extended family members. Foster care is preferred, and as at 2017, 48 children were placed in 45 foster homes.

67. The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis affirmed its commitment to address issues related to the sexual abuse and incest of children by launching the Blue Bear Campaign in October 2013. As part of a regional initiative, and sponsored by UNICEF, the local campaign officially dubbed 'Break the Silence: Prevent Child Sexual Abuse Blue Bear Campaign,' calls for empowerment through education. Awareness raising activities were conducted in schools, churches and the media; and training delivered to teaching staff equipping them with skills to identify signs of abuse. A National Child Protection Protocol has been drafted, intended a framework to protect children who are, or who are likely to be, victims of abuse and neglect; it provides guidance to agencies and professionals involved in child abuse cases. Counsellors are duty bound to report issues affecting children.

68. Public awareness programs include Child Abuse Prevention Week. Despite mechanisms in place to bring offenders to justice, lack of co-operation from parents sometimes thwarts the process. The custom of some parents, by acceptance of a bribe, results in cases against paedophiles not facing prosecution in court. The Ministry of Gender Affairs has lobbied unsuccessfully for measures to outlaw this practice.

69. Concern exists about the use and production of marijuana particularly amongst young people. Law enforcement has had limited success in fighting the drug trade and drug trafficking. At the time of this report there was no data on the use of drugs and alcohol and the possible correlation with violence against women. 'Mental Health and Substance Abuse' is one of the priority areas in the National Strategic Plan for Health (2017-2021). With the recent training of 35 drug prevention and treatment specialists it is anticipated that in-roads will be made in addressing mental health and substance abuse.

70. The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis supports CARICOM initiatives and works collaboratively with other CARICOM heads of government. The Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Timothy Harris has had direct involvement in bringing priorities concerning women to the attention of CARICOM leaders in his capacity as lead spokesman in the CARICOM Quasi Cabinet with responsibility for Human Resources, Health and HIV/AIDS. In February 2017, further progress was made towards ending domestic violence and promoting women's and children's health. The Every Caribbean Woman Every Caribbean Child (ECWECC) initiative aims to improve the lives of women, adolescents and children with specific focus on violence against women and children (including trafficking in persons); teenage pregnancy, cervical cancer and mother to child transmission of HIV. St. Kitts and Nevis marked a major achievement in 2017 with the eradication of mother to child transmission of HIV and syphilis, validated by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). In order to maintain the Elimination of Mother-To-Child Transmission of HIV and Syphilis (EMTCT) the Ministry of Health facilitates the EMTCT Committee and will undertake the EMTCT global validation exercise, due biennially, to evaluate the country's EMTCT programme. Considerations include the quality and accuracy of data collection mechanisms, human rights and evaluation of women living with HIV and their involvement in decision making processes.

71. In terms of national human rights defenders, the Office of the Ombudsman is the closest human rights institution. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development has also trained persons in Human

rights across the civil service. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has created a national Mechanism for Follow up and Review of Human Rights, a government mandated process for human rights and implementation and “advocacy”. The Committee interacts with various line ministries.

Part II

Article 7

Political and Public Life

72. The Committee expressed concern about the under-representation of women in decision-making posts and in political bodies, particularly in parliament. Recommendations included the introduction of a range of legal, political and administrative options and programmes to improve the access and participation of women, including measures to encourage women to enter diplomatic careers.

73. In 2005 the Department of Gender Affairs launched the first democratic institute to increase the participation of women in the political process; this was replicated in Nevis in 2006; and subsequently two women’s groups were formed. A total of 150 women received training in governance and democracy but further expansion was not possible due to lack of funding.

74. There are still relatively few women represented in Government. Female representation accounts for 20% of the Federal Government of St Kitts and Nevis comprising a single National Assembly with 11 elected representatives of Parliament (one female) and four senators (two female). The Cabinet in St. Kitts is made up of nine ministers; including one female (11%). Of the six Cabinet members in the Nevis Island Administration, one is female (17%). Political positions occupied by women include, party chair, first female Cabinet Secretary (2015), Deputy Speaker of the St. Kitts and Nevis National Assembly (2016); first elected deputy leader of a major political party (2017); and Deputy Governor General for Nevis (2018).

75. The discourse about the participation and involvement of women in political life is ongoing. In November 2016, the Nevis Premier, met with representatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat as part of a Commonwealth initiative to advance women’s political leadership in the Caribbean. The purpose of the visit to Nevis was to consult with the political parties and explore the challenges women face in political life with a view to understanding why so few women are involved in politics. The Commonwealth Secretariat report ‘Women and Political Parties in Five Small States of the Caribbean’, published in 2018 identified challenges and proposed a number of solutions to patronising attitudes towards women parliamentarians, negative campaigning, limited economic resources, gender biased infrastructure, time constraints associated with the multi-faceted role of women. The Conference Report on the Sub-Regional Women’s Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals (March 2017) revealed recognition of the economic, social and political barriers to female political advancement in terms of income independence, campaign finance, party structure and family commitment and/or expectations. The 42nd Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) was hosted by the St. Kitts and Nevis Branch in June 2017 and provided a further platform for examination. ‘Seeking to Increase Women’s Political Participation’ was part two a ‘hot topic’ forum discussion at which Senator Akilah Byron-Nisbett (St. Kitts and Nevis Parliament) was a speaker, and where parliamentarians examined this critical issue.

76. As part of the 2018 International Women’s Day celebration activities a motivational seminar was held on Nevis under the locally selected theme “Press for Progress: Transforming Women’s Lives”. Topics address included “Pride in Yourself”

delivered by the Hon. Akilah Byron-Nisbett (Senator) and “Confidence, Carriage and Courage: Inspiring a new generation of women in political representation and leadership” delivered by the Hon. Marcella Liburd (Member of Parliament, National Assembly). The seminar was attended by 69 females (96%) and 3 males (4%). There are plans in 2019 to roll out a ‘Women in Political Leadership Programme’, facilitated by the Department of Gender Affairs on Nevis.

77. There has been much dialogue about the seeming lack of women’s interest in involvement in politics. Many factors contribute to the difficulties encountered by women entering political life. These include cultural reasons, time-poverty resulting from time expended in unpaid work; lack of finance and resources to sustain political campaigns, and gendered harassment. No temporary special measures are intended to address this issue at this time.

78. More women are ascending to leadership positions. In the public sector more women are occupying senior leadership positions and are particularly dominant at the level of permanent secretary. Women also hold leadership roles in non-government organisations, schools and faith based institutions. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs females represent 50% of ambassador and commissioner positions in embassies overseas. Other examples of female senior leadership within the Federation include, Chief Medical Officer and Press Secretary to the Prime Minister. Approximately 80% of the government’s legal representation is female. In September 2017, the first female Acting Deputy Governor-General was sworn in on Nevis; followed by the appointment of the Deputy Governor-General, Her Honour Mrs. Hyleeta Liburd in August 2018. Great progress is evident but some challenges remain; it is noted that a gender pay gap exists where salaries are not regulated by statute.

79. Police force figures²¹ (September 2013) indicated that 27% of female police officers held ranks. Females outnumbered males only in the rank of special constable at 63%. In 2016 the first female Assistant Commissioner of Police was appointed (she was also the first female to become superintendent in 2013).

Article 8

International Representation and Participation

80. As a UN member state the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis is actively involved in the agenda for the advancement of women. In January 2006, St. Kitts and Nevis signed the Optional Protocol to CEDAW cementing its commitment to women’s issues. No individual complaints have been made under the Protocol.

81. St. Kitts and Nevis is represented at the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the global intergovernmental body exclusively committed to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

82. St. Kitts and Nevis was represented at the Women in Maritime Association, Caribbean (WiMAC) conference held in the Cayman Islands (September 2016). The conference provided a regional forum for maritime women to exchange best practices and to consider emerging development trends in the context of women’s rights and access. One of the activities included a visit to schools to promote careers in the maritime sector to young girls.

83. Women’s Entrepreneurship Day (WED) is an initiative which celebrates and empowers women in 144 countries worldwide through support and entrepreneurial development. Officially held on a day in November worldwide; St. Kitts and Nevis

²¹ Country Gender Assessment, St. Kitts & Nevis (Vol 1), p.29.

was represented by Ms. Telojo “Telly” Valerie Onu for the second year running in 2016.

84. International Women’s Day (8 March) and International Day of Violence Against Women (25 November) are celebrated across the Federation by the public sector, private sector and civil society. The Gender Affairs teams on both islands use the observances as opportunities to raise awareness and highlight women’s rights and responsibilities. For example, during the month of March activities to mark International Women’s Day includes a church service, statement by the Minister, awards ceremonies which recognise and celebrate the achievements and contribution of women, talks pertaining to women’s health, presentations to workplaces; and radio panel discussions.

Article 9

Nationality

85. Children acquire citizenship by birth. Children born to citizen parents residing abroad may be registered by either parent. Chapter VII, section 92 of the Constitution protects the equal rights of men and women in respect of gaining residence and employment status for their spouse in circumstances where the spouse is not a national. The citizenship of an alien is not lost through divorce or death of a spouse through whom nationality was obtained. Chapter II section 14 of the Constitution protects freedom of movement. There is no distinction in the language between male and female.

86. St. Kitts and Nevis is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 8 of the CRC speaks to a child’s right to a name, nationality and family ties.

Part III

Article 10

Education

87. Under the St. Christopher and Nevis Education Act 2005 all persons are entitled to receive an educational programme appropriate to their needs. Discrimination is prohibited under sub-section 28, including on the grounds of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed, sex. Remarkable progress in access to education has been made over the last few decades but the Federation has yet to reach a significant level of access to higher education. Inevitably, access issues are directly linked to equity. No disaggregated data are currently available for groups that are marginalised by social and cultural disadvantage, geographic isolation or other circumstances.

88. Women’s economic enhancement is assisted by the government-run island-wide network of Early Childhood Development Centres. Originally established to assist low income women, they have evolved and now cater to middle income residents and enable women to enter the workforce. Serving children from birth to five years old; the centres operate between the hours of 8am to 5:30pm and provide high quality early childhood care and education and prepare children for school. Within the Federation there are 19 public centres and 95 private centres, with over 100 practitioners licenced to run such facilities. These services assist women to balance work, caregiving responsibilities, and participate in public life. Under the Education Sector Plan 2017-2021 the number of early childhood spaces have been increased. Private provision is regulated and monitored by the Child Welfare Board. Parents and

Guardians of children registered at Government centres are charged a weekly nominal fee of EC\$15.00 per child compared with EC\$25.00 to EC\$45.00 charged per child in private childcare centres. There is a subvention given by Government and Government run facilities are fully utilised. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with health centres, works closely with early childcare centres to provide immunisation and address any health problems. There is no mandatory requirement for children to be enrolled, therefore some children may not be exposed to a stimulating environment or trained childcare staff. To address this issue, basic training in childcare is delivered by an officer to caregivers within the family home under the ‘Reaching the Unreached’ and ‘Pre-School Expansion’ programmes. Government training is available to public and private centres.

89. The St. Kitts and Nevis Education Policy Review (2016) revealed that gender parity has almost been achieved at primary and secondary school levels (2003 to 2012). Data was not available on the number of student drop outs at the secondary level; but approximately 71% of students sit Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations which suggests that nearly 30% of secondary students do not complete secondary school. Greater numbers of females than males continue their education to tertiary level.

90. The table below shows entries for CSEC subjects by sex and subject. The data reveals gender disparities in favour of girls who outnumber boys by almost two thirds (63.7%). Few girls undertook technical subjects, and of the sciences biology was predominantly taken by girls. Subject choice is all inclusive and all students have equal access. The dominance of females in education is also reflected in the National Academic Awards.

**Table 2
St. Kitts and Nevis CSEC entries by sex and subject (2012)**

Subject	Male (No. & %)	Female (No. & %)	Total
Agricultural Science SA as General	40 38.5%	64 61.5%	104
Agricultural Science DA General	22 53.7%	19 46.3%	41
Biology General	28 29.8%	66 70.2%	94
Building Technology (Const) Technical	8 88.9%	1 11.1%	9
Building Technology (Woods) Technical	63 100.0%	0 0.0%	63
Chemistry General	21 28.4%	53 71.6%	74
Clothing and Textiles General	2 6.5%	29 93.5%	31
Economics General	19 51.4%	18 48.6%	37
Electrical & Electronic Technology General	26 92.9%	2 7.1%	28
Electronic Document Preparation and Management General	75 25.9%	215 74.1%	290
English A General	254 37.4%	426 62.6%	680
English B General	20 29.4%	48 70.6%	68
Food & Nutrition General	21 19.3%	88 80.7%	109
French General	18 29.0%	44 71.0%	62
Geography General	79 51.6%	74 48.4%	153
History	112 33.8%	219 66.2%	331
Home Economic Management General	19 17.6%	89 82.4%	108
Human & Social Biology General	74 27.0%	200 73.0%	274
Information Technology General	102 45.1%	124 54.9%	226

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Male (No. & %)</i>	<i>Female (No. & %)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Integrated Science General	83 39.7%	126 60.3%	209
Mathematics General	201 38.6%	320 61.4%	521
Mechanical Engineering Technology Technical	3 100.0%	0 0.0%	3
Music General	14 73.7%	5 26.3%	19
Office Administration General	47 26.0%	134 74.0%	181
Physical Education & Sports General	61 50.4%	60 49.6%	121
Physics General	35 44.9%	43 55.1%	78
Principles of Accounts General	62 30.5%	141 69.5%	203
Principles of Business General	76 28.6%	190 71.4%	266
Social Studies	119 33.0%	242 67.0%	361
Spanish General	25 26.9%	68 73.1%	93
Technical Drawing	58 65.2%	31 34.8%	89
Theatre Arts General	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	1
Visual Arts General	11 34.4%	21 65.6%	32
Total	1,798 36.3%	3,161 63.7%	4,959

Source: Data extracted from Caribbean Development Bank, Country Gender Assessment, St. Kitts & Nevis (Vol II), pp. 22-23

91. The Education Sector Plan (2017–2021) focuses on improved and more equitable access, participation and outcomes at all levels. The plan addresses issues such as retention rates at secondary education level (19% of secondary school age children are not enrolled) and drop-out rates (males represent 30% and females, 17%). Females outnumber males in gross enrolment rates in post-secondary (38% female and 20% male) and tertiary (86% female and 47% male) education respectively. Key performance indicators have been created, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms put in place for periodic reviews (see table below).

Table 3
Ministry of Education Policy Goals and Key Performance Indicators (by sex)

<i>Policy Goals</i>	<i>Key Performance Indicators</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Baseline 2013</i>	<i>Target 2021</i>
Improved and more equitable access and participation at all levels	Gross Enrolment Rate 4 years old	M	101%	95%
		F	92%	95%
	Gross Intake Rate (KG) primary	M	78%	105%
		F	83%	105%
	Transition rate from Grade 6	M	101%	100%
		F	101%	100%
	Dropout rate: Form 4	M	30%	14%
		F	17%	8%
	Gross Enrolment Rate Post-secondary 17-20	M	20%	35%
		F	38%	43%
Improved and more equitable learning outcomes at all levels	Average score on Grade 6 Test of Standards	M	51%	60%
		F	54%	60%
% of secondary school students sitting CSEC exams in Forms 4 and 5	M	TBD	TBD	
		F	TBD	TBD

Policy Goals	Key Performance Indicators	Gender	Baseline 2013	Target 2021
	% of secondary students sitting exams that achieve five or more CSEC passes, including mathematics & English	M	24%	30%
	Number of persons certified at CVQ Levels I, II and III	F	23%	30%
		M	0%	22%
		F	0%	20%

Source: Ministry of Education (Education Sector Plan - 2017-2021)

92. Government social programmes help indigent households to ease the financial burden and improve access to education. In St. Kitts, there is a school feeding programme and Project SELF (Students Education and Learning Fund) provides access to textbooks and pays the cost of examinations. In Nevis, programmes for textbooks and school lunch are means tested and a universal school feeding programme is in place for primary school children. A Uniforms and Shoes programme is available across the Federation.

93. Low levels of education contribute to poverty and vulnerability. The majority of the poorest households are headed by females who have not passed any school examinations.

94. The National Skills Training Programme²² is governed by the Ministry of Education and offers non-formal, flexible, short-term training to both public and private sectors. Enrolment figures depict a gender bias towards traditional occupations, illustrated by the prevalence of female students enrolled on courses offered by NSTP in 2013, specifically in the areas of cosmetology (100%), food and beverage (89%) and secretarial skills (93%).

Table 4
National Skills Training Programme Enrolment (2011)

Subjects	Male (No)	Female (No)		Total
Food preparation and agro-processing	2	11%	17	89%
Basic electricity	12	92%	1	8%
Hospitality	4	22%	14	78%
Daily Living Skills (basic cooking and laundry skills, for physically and mentally challenged persons)	5	36%	9	64%
Air Conditioning	9	100%	0	0%
Auto Mechanics	8	100%	0	0%
Carpentry/Joinery	2	100%	0	0%
Total	42		41	83

Source: National Skills Training Programme (data extracted from TVET Policy Review, 2014)

95. At tertiary level female students continue to display a propensity toward traditional gender-biased subjects. The Division of Technical Vocational Education and Management Studies of the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College offer TVET courses to prepare students for the modern work environment. The table below shows the subjects chosen reflect areas in which students are most likely to gain employment. Female students also appear to drop out at greater rates than their male counterparts

²² Not available in Nevis.

in year 2. The persistent gendered pattern of traditional subjects suggests the prevalence of entrenched social and cultural relationships.

Table 5

Division of Technical Vocational Education and Management Studies Enrolment (Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College) in Subject Areas (2012-13)²³

<i>Subject Areas</i>	<i>Year 1</i>		<i>Year 2</i>		<i>Total</i>
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Office Administration and Management Studies	4 (8%)	47 (92%)	3 (8%)	37 (92%)	109 (of which 18 are part-time)
Air Conditioning and Refrigeration	22 (96%)	1 (4%)	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	31
Architectural Design Technology	10 (63%)	6 (37%)	8 (73%)	3 (27%)	27
Agriculture	13 (81%)	3 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16
Culinary Arts	3 (21%)	11 (79%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	18
Motor Vehicle	14 (93%)	1 (7%)	12 (100%)	0 (0%)	27
Electrical and Electronics	17 (100%)	0 (0%)	12 (100%)	0 (0%)	29
Information Technology	16 (89%)	2 (11%)	11 (85%)	2 (15%)	31
Timber Vocations	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	11 (100%)	0 (0%)	31
Hospitality Studies	2 (9%)	21 (91%)	1 (8%)	12 (92%)	36
Total					355

Source: CFBC Statistics (data extracted from TVET Policy Review, 2014)

96. In terms of continuing and professional education, during the period 2017 to 2018 data indicated a female enrolment rate of 78% in St. Kitts, and 75% in Nevis. Statistics for undergraduate programmes reveal a similar pattern. Females take greater advantage of higher education opportunities, which is also reflected in the majority of student loans.

97. Stakeholders recognise that STEM²⁴ (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects lead to jobs that pay higher salaries. Although not specifically targeted towards female students, the Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry of Education is working towards embracing STEM education within the Federation. In March 2017 delegated primary school teaching staff (78% female) attended regional STEM Teacher Training Workshops²⁵ designed to train teachers in the use of Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE) and Problem Based Learning (PBL) with the goal of encouraging students to pursue careers in science and engineering. Fifteen schools in the Federation are involved in a sponsored project²⁶ which aims to popularise science, with a view to increasing the number of students subscribing to the sciences at secondary level. The project will be monitored over the next 3-5 years to ascertain the increase in student numbers. Although not gender focused, the initiatives will, by extension, benefit females.

²³ TVET Policy Review, St. Kitts and Nevis, p.40.

²⁴ STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. An approach to teaching and learning which integrates the skills of STEM subjects and inquiry based learning to educate and equip students with the skills needed for the modern workforce.

²⁵ The Caribbean Science Foundation and Caribbean Academy of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math hosted one workshop on St. Kitts in March 2017 (<http://caribbeanscience.org/csf-and-cas-host-stem-teacher-training-workshops-in-st-kitts-and-nevis/>) [accessed 15.09.17].

²⁶ Sponsored by the Caribbean Development Bank and Basic Needs Trust Fund.

98. The Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) is a regional poverty alleviation programme jointly funded by the Caribbean Development Bank and the Government of St Kitts and Nevis. Established in 1979, the BNTF aims to reduce the vulnerability of poor communities in a sustainable and gender-sensitive manner. It provided funding for projects which benefit women, including childcare centres, health facilities, schools, employment training and parenting skills programmes. The BNTF programme was in its final stage in 2017. BNTF direct skills training included gerontology training which equipped participants (majority female) with skills to care for elders and provided an employment path. On completion the candidates were registered with the Department of Social and Community Development as home aides. The BNTF tries to achieve a gender balance, but recognises that some areas are female dominated; for example, capacity building for early childhood educators. Under the TVET programme 35 female nursery workers received training and certification and 30 female new pre-school teachers received orientation training. Training in entrepreneurial development and employment skills enhancement was targeted at 100 females and 65 males (including factory workers) with grant funding provided to start up business; this proved very successful, with planned follow up of participants.

Article 11

Employment

99. The Committee was concerned that, although women have a higher level of education than men, this had not been translated into the promotion of women to senior posts and/or increased economic returns for women. Recommendations included the adoption of legislation to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value and measures to deal with unemployed women. Lack of statistical data disaggregated by gender in the economic sector and data on sexual harassment in the workplace were also noted.

100. More women are graduating from schools, colleges and universities; however this is not mirrored in leadership positions. Gradual change is being realised and more women are rising to leadership positions. The year 2014 witnessed an equitable ratio of male to female Permanent Secretaries in St. Kitts, a role traditionally occupied by men; fewer women operate as department heads. In Nevis, 15% of women occupied the position of Permanent Secretary, and 28% held a department head role.

101. Employment and pay inequities were apparent in the sugar industry. Women comprised the majority of workers in elementary roles (unskilled and the lowest paid). When the sugar industry in St. Kitts closed on 30 July 2005 this resulted in job losses for over 1,000 workers. Displaced sugar workers, particularly those in remote rural communities were identified as a vulnerable group due to their limited skills and difficulties experienced in securing alternative employment. Skills training was provided by the Basic Needs Trust Fund and TVET, but gender imbalance was evident because many women had low levels of education and were unwilling or lacked the capacity to participate in re-training. Historically, men had sought alternative forms of employment during the ‘low season’ of the sugar industry and so were better placed to adapt and take advantage of training opportunities.

102. Employment opportunities are segregated traditionally by gender, e.g. males dominate in mechanical and construction fields; whereas women are concentrated in light manufacturing and service industries. In agriculture, males undertake farming activities and females market produce. Men tend to work in higher paid employment, while many women work part-time hours (less than 35 hours per week). Gendered employment patterns show little change in employment sectors between 2010 and 2017 as illustrated in Table 5 below.

Table 6

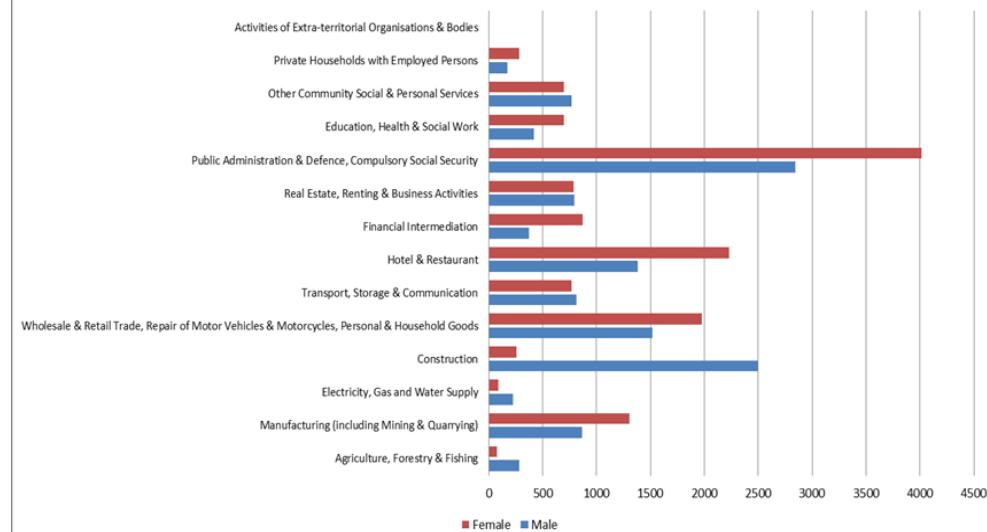
Annual employment by sex and sector - Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis (2010 and 2017)

Industry Sector	Females (2010)		Males (2010)		Females (2017)		Males (2017)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Agriculture, Hunting & Forestry	85	27%	234	73%	89	22%	318	78%
Fishing	0	0%	5	100%	0	0%	7	100%
Mining & Quarrying	1	25%	3	75%	1	50%	1	50%
Manufacturing	1,492	60%	1,013	40%	1,125	60%	750	40%
Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	59	34%	116	66%	121	34%	231	66%
Construction	311	10%	2,878	90%	408	12%	3,080	88%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	1,920	55%	1,594	45%	2,235	55%	1,860	45%
Hotels & Restaurants	2,016	61%	1,310	39%	2,518	60%	1,659	40%
Transport, Storage & Communications	1,022	50%	1,020	50%	843	49%	887	51%
Financial Intermediation	851	70%	371	30%	927	70%	393	30%
Real Estate, Renting & Business Activities	940	53%	847	47%	838	50%	854	50%
Public Administration & Defence	4,804	56%	3,793	44%	5,821	57%	4,410	43%
Education	510	63%	294	37%	507	58%	367	42%
Health & Social Work	185	73%	70	27%	204	70%	86	30%
Other Community, Social & Personal Services	769	44%	998	56%	826	50%	842	50%
Private Household with Employed Persons	289	69%	131	31%	253	69%	112	31%
Extra-Territorial Organization & Bodies	16	55%	13	45%	16	64%	9	36%
TOTAL	15,270		14,690		16,732		15,866	

Source: St. Christopher and Nevis Social Security Board

103. Figure 1 below shows females are employed in greater numbers than males in the manufacturing, hotel and restaurant, and public sectors. In 2012, the manufacturing sector accounted for an 11.28% contribution to the GDP (gross domestic product) of St. Kitts and Nevis²⁷. In Nevis more women than men are employed as civil servants; and greater numbers of men are employed in construction and technical trades.

Figure 1
Employment in St. Kitts and Nevis by sex and Sector (2012)



Source: Country Gender Assessment, 2014

104. Tourism is a growing sector in St. Kitts and Nevis, and one which is dominated by women. Many of the poorest are employed in the hotel and restaurant sectors in the lower paid and least skilled occupations. The sector is vulnerable to volatility due

²⁷ Inter-American Development Bank (2013), Private Sector Assessment of St. Kitts and Nevis, pp.9-10.

to world events and natural disasters, e.g. financial crises, terrorism, hurricanes and their associated impacts.

105. The growing construction industry provides employment primarily for men. Although avenues for training are being provided to females, there is reluctance for females to enter the industry, for example, the inadequate provision of restroom facilities is a deterrent, for example: “Females can’t look for jobs on construction sites; they have *no privacy to ease themselves*”²⁸. Government expansion of the house building programme and the creation of employment opportunities in construction is likely to continue the gender bias.

106. Views among women²⁹ reveal a belief that they are discriminated against in the workforce. Inequalities in the treatment of women range from the inadequacy of wages to provide for their families; the ability of men to access better paying jobs; and less employment security.

107. Employment figures for the years 2010-2014 reflect gender bias and reveal greater increases in female employment in the hotel and restaurant; and public administration and defence sectors respectively. Occupational segregation is evident in caregiving and nurturing professions and women are heavily represented in the fields of teaching, health, and social work. Female staff are disproportionately represented in teaching and school leadership. The majority of staff employed in Early Childhood care are women.

Table 7
Average monthly employment by sex and sector (Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis)

	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Agriculture, Hunting & Forestry	50	150	60	178	60	186	64	182	60	192
Fishing	0	2	0	3	0	3	0	2	0	3
Mining & Quarrying	1	2	2	6	2	2	2	1	2	4
Manufacturing	1,089	685	1,211	751	1,118	658	1,056	617	1,003	578
Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	45	90	63	139	83	200	87	190	87	188
Construction	185	1,347	194	1,322	185	1,191	191	1,363	203	1,472
Wholesale & Retail Trade	1,220	1,011	1,408	1,129	1,419	1,166	1,373	1,159	1,326	1,131
Hotels & Restaurants	1,217	793	1,578	1,035	1,602	1,055	1,619	1,055	1,561	1,020
Transport, Storage & Communications	657	682	638	653	623	660	637	681	612	685
Financial Intermediation	684	290	744	315	756	320	784	331	751	320
Real Estate, Renting & Business Activities	592	481	595	496	551	525	551	517	549	479
Public Administration & Defence	3,423	2,665	3,636	2,674	3,791	2,658	4,826	3,809	5,411	4,372
Education	361	220	415	267	426	273	419	295	389	311
Health & Social Work	126	47	137	54	145	57	132	54	122	50
Other Community, Social & Personal Services	566	632	593	649	559	601	568	617	540	587
Private Household with Employed Persons	211	87	225	96	230	116	231	118	199	91
Extra-Territorial Organization & Bodies	11	7	17	7	18	8	16	10	16	9
FED TOTAL	10,438	9,189	11,513	9,775	11,567	9,680	12,555	11,000	12,828	11,491

Source: Sustainable Development

108. Regarding the abuse of power in the workplace, the findings of the Country Poverty Assessment³⁰ indicate that women accept advances from bosses in the workplace in order to progress or to retain employment as rejection may prejudice their work prospects. There is no legislation specific to sexual harassment but complaints may fall under the Protection of Employment Act, 1986. Work is ongoing with the government to draft sexual harassment legislation. Within the Public Sector, standing order number 19 of 2012 clearly defines sexual harassment in the workplace and provides for reporting, resolution and punishment of such actions.

109. Figures from the Department of Statistics reveal that during the period 2013 to 2017 live births to mothers under the age of 20 years represented 12.69% of all live

²⁸ Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08, (Vol 1), p.82.

²⁹ Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08, (Vol 1), p.84.

³⁰ Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08, (Vol 1), p.150.

births. Teenage mothers in particular face multiple forms of discrimination. They are negatively impacted by social and economic risks, e.g. lack of sexual education, early exposure to sexual activity and lack of life skills. Early pregnancy often disrupts education and entry to the labour market, and minimal skills limit earning potential. Data suggests that early pregnancy is often the start of a cycle of poverty. Pregnant teenagers are a cohort who have been identified as an at risk group requiring support.

110. Vulnerable workers were granted protection following a minimum wage update in November 2008; where wages rose from \$6.25 to \$8 an hour or \$320 per week. A further revision in November 2014 increased wages to \$9 an hour or \$360 per week; an 11% increase.

111. Generally, equal salaries are paid to men and women doing comparable work. The Equal Pay Act, 2012 makes provision for the removal and prevention of discrimination based on the sex of the employee in paid employment. Employers who commit an offence are liable to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars. Employers convicted of such offence may be ordered to pay arrears of remuneration to the employee discriminated against.

112. Positive steps are being taken to move beyond cultural barriers. In March 2016, the Gender Affairs Division in Nevis launched the Non-traditional Occupations for Women (NOW) Programme. Women represent less than 25% employed in the area of non-traditional occupations. The programme's goal is to improve opportunities for women in non-traditional occupations, and to create an environment for women to feel more comfortable with breaking cultural barriers in the job market. It is envisaged that as the female labour force participation rate increases, the gross domestic product of the country will also be positively impacted. Women with the prerequisite skills will be able to work beyond retirement should they choose to do so. Training is delivered on the job or through training seminars. Areas open for training include, truck driving, construction work and engine maintenance. In April 2016, 13 women participated in tiling classes conducted by a tiling expert from the USA who had volunteered his time and expertise, and who was assisted by a local contractor. The training culminated in a tiling project at a local school. During the annual International Women's Day celebrations in Nevis, women are recognized and presented with awards for their contribution to the community, their strength and courage in doing and promoting non-traditional jobs.

113. In Nevis, the Gender Affairs Division of the Social Services Department undertook measures to promote gender equality, for example, "Women at Work" (2011) and the "Gender Issues in the Workplace Programme". Launched in 2014, and repeated in 2018, the Gender Issues in the Workplace programme addresses men and women's knowledge of their rights and benefits in the workplace, and addresses concerns of discrimination, gender inequity and sexual harassment in the workplace. Targeted at private and public sector workers aged 18 to 60 years, data indicates that the majority of attendees were female. The program is an ongoing initiative, to be held bi-annually.

114. Entrepreneurs are given help with start-up, growth and development. The National Entrepreneurial Development Division (NEDD) falls under the Ministry of International Trade, Industry, Commerce and Consumer Affairs of St. Kitts and Nevis. NEDD serves the needs of micro, small, and medium-size businesses with access to training, funding and loans through the Fresh Start Programme. Businesses that benefited under the scheme include food and beverage, light manufacturing and agricultural related activities³¹. In 2017 NEDD conducted a series of community

³¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmOK41k8b8c>.

based business meetings (open to the general public) to support and engage with potential and existing entrepreneurs.

115. The Women in Small Enterprise program (WISE)³² seeks to facilitate employment opportunities to empower prospective and existing women in small enterprises through the provision of funding for enterprise development and training.

Article 12

Equality in Access to Health Care

116. The Committee expressed concern about the high rate of teenage pregnancy and urged the State party to intensify awareness and sexual education to promote responsible sexual behaviour in order to prevent pregnancies. They also recommended that men be involved in the design and implementation of all family planning strategies, policies and programmes.

117. The national health system is organised on two levels. Primary health care is delivered through community based health services and a Mental Health Day Treatment Centre (St. Kitts). Secondary health care is delivered by institutional based facilities; two main hospitals (one on each island) and two smaller health care facilities in St. Kitts. Nevis has 6 district health centres and provides a wide range of primary health care services. St. Kitts has 11 primary health centres which operate on a daily basis. Clinic services include pre-natal and ante-natal care, women's health, family planning, immunisation, child health surveillance, chronic disease management, voluntary counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. Within the public sector, health centre services are delivered free to women, children and those over 62 years. Any medications required are charged at a one-time payment of EC \$10. Institution based health services are chargeable to patients including hospital maternity services (exceptions are those aged under 18 and over 62). Private sector health care options are also available with a number of private practitioners (many public physicians operate private practice), diagnostic centres and pharmacies. Private specialists offer care in general surgery, cardiology, obstetrics and gynaecology, internal medicine, and radiology. Very few nurses work in the private sector. There are no private hospitals nor clinics in the Federation.

118. Public health care services and clinics are available at community level. Some groups of the population are exempted from public health care fees e.g. children, pregnant women and the elderly (62 years and over). However there are reports of lack of supplies in local dispensaries; in such cases where daily medication is necessary persons may be forced to purchase medication at pharmacies in the private sector.

119. Current legislation does not permit girls under the age of 18 years to access to sexual and reproductive health services without parental consent.

120. Total life expectancy at birth is 75.2 years, with 73.3 years for males and 78.2 for females. There is a high incidence of lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and hypertension in both the male and female population. Women are affected in greater numbers than men from such non-communicable diseases (NCD) and obesity. Ministry of Health data shows that in 2015 women represented 74% of the persons living with diabetes and 71.4% of the persons living with hypertension. Obesity in St. Kitts and Nevis has been estimated at 40% in the general population, with higher levels (49.2%) among women in 2008. Of the reported cancer cases the leading cases are breast, cervix and endometrium, all of which are predominantly female related

³² Falls under the People's Empowerment Programme (PEP).

cancers. Only 20-25% of women have regular pap smear screening resulting in more women being diagnosed with cervical cancer later. Health promotion via local media and public health campaigns³³ utilise opportunities to raise awareness and sensitise the population on health risk factors and preventative measures. Cervical cancer awareness programmes exist on both islands. On March 10, 2017 the NCD Program launched the Women's Health Improvement Plan (WHIP), a program geared to empower and educate women on how to effectively manage their health and well-being. NGOs also provide public health interventions, campaigns and events on women's health matters; for example, Lake Health and Wellbeing, and Business and Professional Women's Club progammes have conducted outreaches covering cancer awareness, menopause, fibroids, and cervical cancer.

121. The National Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS (NACHA) was established in 2005. Screening for HIV/AIDS is provided on an optional basis at ante-natal clinics. Individuals with HIV/AIDS have access to care and provision of anti-retrovirals is free, but due to stigma there is some reluctance to take advantage of these services. The National AIDS Programme on St. Kitts, and the HIV/AIDS Coordinating Unit on Nevis observes global, regional and national health promotion activities, e.g. HIV Regional Testing Day where persons may receive free, confidential rapid testing and counselling at identified sites throughout the Federation. The initiative is supported by local businesses who donate vouchers and merchandise as giveaway prizes as an incentive to encourage public participation. Figures from the National AIDS Programme Progress Report (2014) reveal that in 2013 greater numbers of women, particularly in the age brackets 15-19 (89%), 20-24 (89%) and 25-29 (81%) access the voluntary testing and counselling service. In 2016, 582 persons were tested for their HIV status, with 1,000 persons targeted in 2017. Other agencies which promote awareness and provide services include the Red Cross and Pathfinders.

122. Amongst adolescents equitable numbers of males and females had a comprehensive knowledge of HIV in the period 2010-2014. In Nevis there is a HIV/AIDS Co-ordinating Unit whose purpose is to develop and implement strategies to prevent the disease and high risk behaviour. Testing facilities are available and outreach programmes are undertaken annually. There was a feeling amongst stakeholders that testing should be increased on an ongoing basis, and not just around festival times.

123. Abortion is illegal, with the exception of rape, or the need to save the mother's life. The Offences Against the Person's Act deems unlawful attempts to procure abortion; those convicted of such offence are liable to a term of imprisonment. Although patients may present to the hospital with a suspected abortion and are treated, if the patient does not report what occurred, data cannot be accurately compiled.

124. Health centres provide pre-natal and ante-natal services to women on both islands. Antenatal services are accessed routinely by pregnant women in St. Kitts and Nevis. These services include prevention of vertical transmission of HIV and Syphilis. Pregnant women should have at least two HIV and syphilis tests, usually in the first and third trimesters.

125. The Country Poverty Assessment of 2007/8 revealed that although easily accessible, the poorest may not avail themselves of the services offered. The Assessment also revealed that the highest percent of pregnant teenagers were also represented in the poorest quintile (Tables 7 and 8).

³³ Caribbean Wellness Day and Week.

**Table 8
Females 15-49 years currently pregnant by quintiles (percent)**

Currently Pregnant	Per Capita Consumption Quintiles					
	Poorest	II	III	IV	V	Total
	% 					
Yes	3.9	3.5	0.6	2.3	1.6	2.4
No	93.1	95.0	97.3	96.2	95.9	95.5
Not Stated	3.0	1.4	2.1	1.6	2.4	2.1
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (N)	2,688	3,064	2,677	3,013	2,645	14,088

Source: Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08, (Vol 1), p. 112

**Table 9
Pregnant women attending public health clinics**

Attending Public Health Clinic	Per Capita Consumption Quintiles					
	Poorest	II	III	IV	V	Total
	% 					
Yes	74.6	75.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	84.5
No	25.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7
Not Stated	0.0	24.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (N)	104	108	16	69	43	340

Source: Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08, (Vol 1), p. 112

126. In the period 2006 to 2008 the percentage of all births to teenage mothers declined from 20.4% to 15.1% in 2008, followed by a sharp rise to 19.1% and 19% in the years 2009 to 2010 respectively. 2011 saw a sharp fall in the total birth rate to 14.5%. High levels of teenage pregnancy would suggest this group of women face greater challenges when entering the labour market.³⁴ The birth rate in St. Kitts and Nevis continues to fall; and as at 2014 the crude birth rate was 13.8%³⁵.

127. The period 2004-2015 saw fluctuating levels of teenage births within St. Kitts and Nevis. The years 2006 and 2009 saw peak birth rates of 135 and 143 respectively followed by a sharp fall to 116 births in 2010. The tables below (with the exception of the year 2016) show that during the period 2014-2018 the number of teenage births on the islands continues to decline. The majority of teenage mothers are aged 18 to 19 years.

**Table 10
Births to Teenage Mothers by age and year - St. Kitts and Nevis**

Year	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years	19 years	Total No of mothers
2014	0	1	0	4	7	22	21	39	94
2015	1	0	2	1	7	12	19	37	79
2016	0	0	1	5	7	14	31	37	95

³⁴ Country Poverty Assessment, St Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08, (Vol 1), p. xxv.

³⁵ Caricom Regional Statistics (http://www.caricomstats.org/Pop_VS_LF.html).

Year	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years	19 years	Total No of mothers
2017	0	0	1	0	2	13	19	32	67
2018	0	0	1	2	2	7	17	25	54
Total	1*	1	5	12	25	68	107	170	388

Source: Ministry of Health

* One 12 year old gave birth

Table 11
Live Births by Age of Mother (St. Kitts and Nevis 2013-2017)

Age of Mother	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total No	%
10 - 14	0	1	3	1	1	6	0.19%
15 - 19	76	83	75	93	66	393	12.50%
20 - 24	135	161	157	167	155	775	24.60%
25 - 29	158	165	180	156	164	823	26.10%
30 - 34	114	140	123	154	152	683	21.70%
35 - 39	48	69	76	75	86	354	11.20%
40 - 44	14	22	18	25	27	106	3.36%
45+	2	0	0	6	0	8	0.25%
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Total	547	641	632	677	651	3148	99.90%

Source: Statistics Department

128. The maternal mortality ratio is the number of deaths of women from pregnancy-related causes per 100,000 live births. Reported figures available³⁶ indicate that in the period 2010-2015, 310 deaths occurred. Skilled and specialized care is available to all women during pregnancy and childbirth and pregnant women are encouraged to give birth at the general hospital. High risk cases are closely monitored. The majority of births have a skilled attendant, trained in midwifery, at delivery; the exception (less than 1%) occurred where pregnant women did not present to the hospital in time.

129. The under-5 mortality rate³⁷ for the islands fell from 19 to 15 in the years 2000 to 2015. The annual rate of reduction in the under-5 mortality rate was 3.8% in the period 2000 to 2015. However, abnormally high infant and neonatal mortality rates prompted a comprehensive neonatal assessment by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with PAHO in 2017. Work is ongoing to determine the interventions required to reduce these health indicators and strengthen the child and maternal health programme. The Strategic Plan for Health 2017 to 2022 aims to reduce the infant mortality rate from 25.3 to 12 per 1,000 live births.

130. The Federation marked a major achievement in 2017 with the elimination of mother to child transmission of HIV and syphilis (confirmed by PAHO/WHO³⁸). Maternity care continues to improve, and in 2017 the Ministry of Health developed a protocol for Zika virus management in pregnancy and neonatal care. Strengthening of the National Vector Control Programme is ongoing.

³⁶ UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2016, A Fair Chance for Every Child, pp. 148-149.

³⁷ UNICEF, 'The State of the World's Children 2016', A fair chance for every child, p. 156.

³⁸ PAHO/WHO – Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organisation.

131. In July 2018 the Ministry of Health embarked on the implementation of the USAID ASSIST³⁹ Project designed to improve and strengthen health services to all pregnant women. The one-year programme includes those affected by the Zika virus, newborns and young children an addition to the Early Childhood Development Programme. St. Kitts and Nevis is included in the current extension period (2017-2019) to Zika affected Caribbean countries.

132. As at 2014 immunisation coverage had a high uptake, with figures ranging from 93-99%. In 2018 work began to implement an Electronic Immunization Registry; which is a PAHO commitment. It is intended to add two further vaccines to the Federation. In May 2018 Cabinet approved the policy to introduce the Influenza Vaccine (IV); and the Ministry of Health completed a Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Policy which is before Cabinet for approval. The HPV vaccine is intended to be administered to 11-12 year olds; and the Influenza vaccine aimed at vulnerable groups, for example, pregnant women, healthcare workers and older adults with multiple long term conditions.

133. In St. Kitts and Nevis a high proportion of babies (86%) are not exclusively breastfed for the recommended six month period. In its quest for healthier babies and communities in the Federation, the Ministry of Health continues to progress the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative⁴⁰ to protect, promote and support breastfeeding over the use of breastmilk substitutes. Work commenced in 2018 with a Baby Friendly Hospital Training of Trainers Workshop. A National Breastfeeding Committee will be commissioned in 2019, and whose responsibilities will include advising, drafting guidelines and recommendations, and providing support to initiatives to overcome obstacles and halt the declining rate of exclusive breastfeeding.

134. Ministry of Health figures reveal that in the period 2011-2015 the majority of births were to unmarried parents and accounted for 78-81% of all registered births. Following the registration of births there were a number of amendments to include the father's name in the post-registration period. In the period 2011-2015 the amendment rate fell from 35.5% in 2011 to 28.3% in 2015, with a slight increase to 38.5% in the year 2012.

135. Demographic indicators⁴¹ for St Kitts and Nevis in 2015 show a population size of 56,000, of which 17,000 are aged under 18 years (30.4%) and 5,000 below the age of 5 years (8.9%). The population annual growth rate for the period 1990-2015 was 1.2% and projected figures indicate a decline in the annual growth rate to 0.8% for the period 2015 to 2030.

136. The health and family life curriculum taught in primary and secondary schools incorporates self and interpersonal relationships, sexuality and sexual health, eating and fitness and managing the environment. Participants on the teen mother programmes are exposed to education on sexual health and reproduction, in order to equip them with the knowledge to make informed decisions to reduce and prevent pregnancies among teenage girls.

137. The Government's Green paper on Universal Health Care for the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, published in 2018, highlights renewed policy attention and focuses on the need for more accessible, sustainable and efficient health care services. Participation in the planning and implementation process was fostered through public consultations which were recently concluded.

³⁹ USAID ASSIST (Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems).

⁴⁰ The Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) was launched by WHO and UNICEF in 1991, following the Innocenti Declaration of 1990. The initiative is a global effort to implement practices that protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

⁴¹ UNICEF, 'The State of the World's Children 2016', A fair chance for every child, p. 140.

Article 13

Social and Economic Benefits

138. Welfare assistance alleviates vulnerability for economically disadvantaged families. The Ministry of Education works in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Development to facilitate social protection systems to poorer households. A school feeding programme is available to all primary and needy secondary school children. As at 2007/08 a school feeding programme was available to 66% of students.⁴²

139. The St. Kitts Nevis Social Security Board for St. Kitts and Nevis offers income protection including the provision of maternity benefits, survivor benefits and minimum pension. Maternity benefits are payable to women who have been employed and made contributions to Social Security for 39 weeks. The Government has introduced paternity leave. Fathers employed by the Civil Service have the option of applying for paternity leave which will ease the burden of care for mothers. Paternity allowance is not available to fathers, however where the mother of a child does not qualify for a maternity benefit, the maternity grant can be claimed if the father qualifies based on his contribution record. At the time of this report maternity benefits comprise a lump sum Maternity Grant and a weekly Maternity Allowance for a maximum of 13 weeks. The Maternity Grant lump sum payment has increased from EC\$300 to EC\$450 for each child born at one confinement. Minimum pension is EC\$400 per month. The survivor pension and survivor grant may be claimed by eligible widows. The table below shows that maternity grants and maternity allowance represent less than 10% of the total of short term benefits claimed.

Table 12
St. Kitts and Nevis – Board of Social Security Short Term Benefits Expenditure

<i>Type of Benefit</i>	<i>2013</i>		<i>2014</i>		<i>2015</i>	
	<i>No of Claims</i>	<i>Amount (XCD) \$</i>	<i>No of Claims</i>	<i>Amount (XCD) \$</i>	<i>No of Claims</i>	<i>Amount (XCD) \$</i>
Sickness	9,170	6,070,513	12,111	7,648,030	11,246	8,213,303
Funeral	238	568,591	269	641,206	300	723,906
Maternity Allowance	383	1,652,182	469	1,936,418	537	2,342,172
Maternity Grant	402	183,150	482	220,050	541	244,800
Total	10,193	8,474,436	13,331	10,445,704	12,624	11,524,181

Source: St. Christopher and Nevis Social Security Board

140. The Ministry of Community Development, Social Services and Gender Affairs have programmes in place for single women in need of support which include assistance with children, food packages and finance. The Government places a great deal of importance upon the work of the Ministry and in the 2017 Budget Address revealed a proposed 10.9% budget increase from the previous year to develop and strengthen their projects.

141. The social protection sector was strengthened by the introduction of a single National Household Registry under the Ministry of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Social Services. The Registry aims to provide a common targeting mechanism to identify the poor and vulnerable, including means testing formulae to categorise households; reduce inclusion and exclusion errors, promote fairness;

⁴² Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08, (Vol 1), p.xxxix.

increase coverage and improve effectiveness and efficiencies in system administration.

142. The Government's Poverty Alleviation Programme, launched on 24 December 2018, seeks to provide financial support to households with a total gross income below EC\$3,000.00 (three thousand dollars). Disadvantaged households who qualify are assisted to meet some of the essential living expenses and receive a EC\$500.00⁴³ (five hundred dollar) monthly stipend. The Government Information Service reported that as at 11 January 2019, 2,687 checks were distributed under the programme to eligible families in the Federation, totalling EC\$1.34 million dollars.

143. The St. Christopher and Nevis Social Protection Bill, 2018 seeks to secure social protection for persons in St. Kitts and Nevis and aims to alleviate poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. Based on eligibility, targeting mechanisms will seek to achieve equity for persons who suffer from structural discrimination, including women and other vulnerable groups. The Bill had its first reading in Parliament in 2018 and passage of the legislation is expected in 2019.

144. Charitable organisations also provide assistance to families and persons in need; these include the Nyabinghi Order, Pathfinders, Mickey's Hope, Pediatric Assistance League (PALS), Rotary Club and Salvation Army.

145. The St. Kitts Nevis Association of Persons with Disabilities (SNAPD) was founded in 1982. SNAPD's mission is to improve the lives of persons with disabilities through advocacy, education, peer support and service. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Social Services provides support to SNAPD through financial assistance and free accommodation at the McKnight Community Centre in St. Kitts. In 2013 SNAPD launched the first ever Women with Disabilities (WWD) network to build partnerships and provide support. A number of social events were held for members. The Women's Network held membership of the Disabled People International-North America and the Caribbean (DPI-NAC) Regional Women's Network. Currently, the network is in the process of being revived following the recruitment of new members and resignation of the president. Although not specifically targeted at women, the Dial-A-Ride bus service was made possible to persons living with disabilities and caretakers of persons with disabilities through funding from the Sugar Industry Diversification Foundation (SIDF). A Toyota Coaster bus capable of carrying up to four wheelchairs simultaneously is available to transport those in need of assistance which may include trips for medical appointments, or business errands. Persons can access the bus service through the St. Kitts Nevis Association of Disabled Persons.

146. The United Nation (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was approved by Cabinet for ratification in 2016. Training on the Convention was also conducted for employees of government ministries in 2018. Also in 2018, officers within the Ministry of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Social Services received training in American Sign Language, designed to assist persons with disabilities to access services available.

147. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Social Services has a dedicated officer with responsibility to work with persons with disabilities and older persons. In addition, older residents are served at community level by home care officers who deliver care in the home to senior citizens as an alternative to care home provision. A number of activities are organised throughout the year providing seniors with opportunities to facilitate healthy ageing, for example, health education,

⁴³ Subject to receipt of other social benefits.

socialisation and physical activity. The Ministry's Ageing Policy is expected to be completed in 2019.

148. The Federation has a migrant Spanish community. Members of the community benefit from English language classes taught on a voluntary basis. It is important to equip migrant communities with the language skills necessary to help them assimilate into the society. The majority of class attendees are women.

149. Data from the National Housing Corporation (NHC) indicate that a majority of persons who receive government housing are female. The NHC receives government lands for housing and is able to build homes at lower costs. As at 2017, figures indicated that of the 2,247 applications for houses made, 60% of the homes were allocated to women; 28% to men and the remaining 12% to couples. The Board of the NHC selects those to be provided with housing and in some circumstances preference may be given to vulnerable females suffering from abuse. The NHC continues to play an important role in assisting the economically challenged with their housing needs. The Hurricane Repair Housing Assistance Programme, introduced in April 2018, is a substantial component of NHC's mandate, particularly given the Government's pledge to build sustainable and resilient infrastructure. The Government Information Service reported that following the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, 1,114 homes reported damage to roofs; and as at June 2018, 400 households in the Federation benefited from the roof repair programme.

150. Data from the Nevis Housing & Land Development Corporation show that for the year 2016 a total of 78 applications for land were made (40 females and 38 males). A total of 43 applicants completed the process (20 female and 23 male). Figures for house applications for the year 2016 show that more females than males applied for housing. Of the 122 applications for housing, 82 (67%) were from females and 40 (33%) from males. A total of 17 persons completed the application process (10 females and 7 males).

151. Empowerment through education is key to better access to information and economic opportunities. In 2018 the Gender Affairs Division on Nevis sponsored two educational programmes designed to equip participants with knowledge of the financial and other aspects of home ownership and retirement planning respectively. Women attend such opportunities in greater numbers; and records show female attendance rates of 68%-78%.

152. Public and private geriatric care facilities are available. As at 2013, women (51%)⁴⁴ populated care homes in greater numbers than males.

153. The Human Rights Report of 2015 for St. Kitts and Nevis states that "women did not experience discrimination in areas such as obtaining credit or owning or managing businesses". However, it should be recognised that much lending is collateral based, therefore alternative gender-sensitive forms of lending need to be available to economically disadvantaged households who own few assets in order to provide equitable access to entrepreneurship opportunities.

154. There are a number of organisations from which credit may be obtained. The St Kitts Co-operative Credit Union offers consumer loans, mortgages and credit for small business activities. There is a gender balance in the applications.⁴⁵ The St. Kitts Investment Promotion Agency (SKIPA) is a government agency which supports the expansion of local investment and provides assistance with starting projects. As at January 2017, data indicated that 201 males (65.25%) and 107 females (34.74%)

⁴⁴ Caribbean Development Bank (2014), 'Country Gender Assessment' St. Kitts & Nevis, Vol I, p.11.

⁴⁵ Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08, (Vol 2), P. 114.

applied for, and received loans under the Small Enterprises Assistant Fund programme (SEAF). The Foundation for National Development (FND) is an independent, community based, non-profit institution which provides credit to the small scale sector. Recent data suggests that approximately 30% of loans have been made to women who have a better repayment history than men⁴⁶. The loans that women apply for tend to be for hairdressing and retail operations. The Development Bank of St. Kitts and Nevis takes a socially conscious position and reported that they do not allow collateral to be an impediment to the granting of loans. The vast majority of their student loans are to females, as are mortgages; whereas males tend to apply for business loans.

155. In terms of ecclesiastical representation, women represent 80% of church attendees, and who as a consequence support the management of church organisations. The majority (approximately 85%) of church leadership is male; and resistance to women, may, in part, mirror traditional biblical beliefs of the female being secondary to the male in the religious environment. However, over the last decade or so attitudes have softened and there has been a significant increase in the acceptance of women's role as more meaningful in society and the promotion women's rights to ministry and to minister. Female leadership in the context of church is evident in women's ministries including denominational local and regional conferences. The women's auxiliaries supplement the work of the church, serves its members, and reaches out to the wider community. Poverty alleviation and social intervention include feeding, childcare, counselling, health and parenting, the beneficiaries of which are often self-referred. The church is strategically positioned become more involved and act as a conduit to feed information and deliver programmes, e.g. stakeholder involvement on policy development. Local pastors utilised training to recognise child abuse; subsequently local systems have been introduced to vet persons who work with children. As at 2017 work was underway to create database of available resources so that communities are better served.

156. In relation to sports, at school level in St. Kitts there is no discrimination against females participating in the sporting activities available, namely, football, netball, cricket, track and field, volleyball, lawn tennis and basketball. The annual Department of Sports Excellence Awards honours outstanding performances by student athletes with categories for males and female. The St. Kitts and Nevis Football Association⁴⁷ has an active women's league and youth league. The West Indies Cricket Board created history in 2011 with the appointment of Mrs. Jennifer Nero as the first female to the Board of Directors.

157. In recreational and cultural life, the year 2017 saw the Federation's first female⁴⁸ winner of the Senior Calypso Monarch competition since the advent of the National Carnival in 1971.

Article 14

Rural Women

158. Following the closure of the sugar industry in 2005, the Government, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture implemented a strategic plan for the development of agriculture for the period 2004-2009⁴⁹. A Transition Management Office was created to minimise the impact of rural people and educational and social

⁴⁶ Country Poverty Assessment, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2007/08, (Vol 2), P. 116.

⁴⁷ St. Kitts-Nevis Football Association (<http://sknfa.com/>).

⁴⁸ Karissa Willett.

⁴⁹ The Contribution of IICA to the Development of Agriculture and Rural Communities, 2005 Annual Report, p.7.

programmes were aimed at former sugar workers. Rural communities were strengthened through a number of workshops and special attention was paid to women and youths who benefited from training in agro-processing, entrepreneurship and agri-business management which equipped participants with skills and knowledge which translated into monetary improvements.

159. Data from the Ministry of Agriculture indicates that 800 farmers are registered, of this figure 30% are women. The farming sector is predominantly male dominated but within the sector women dominate in the areas of retail, marketing and agro processing. One such group, the Fahie Agricultural Women Co-operative Society (FAWCS) is a voluntary co-operative capitalised by shares. Established to improve the livelihoods of its members, it comprises 15 women who have day employment commitments but meet regularly to engage in farming and agro-processing activities using local products. Funding support has been obtained from overseas organisations such as the GEF Small Grants Programme⁵⁰. Women's collective action and leadership was evidenced by their corporate partnership with a rural primary school, which resulted in the first green energy school in the Federation, allowing both parties to benefit from renewable energy technologies. Another group, St. Kitts Agro Processors comprises 16 women (84%) and 3 men (16%) and is involved in transforming primary products into secondary products e.g. jams, jellies, chips, juice etc.

160. Female farmers operate small scale farms, the average farm size is one acre and there are many backyard gardens. Most female farmers have limited assets are not able to readily access loan financing and therefore rely on their own financing from income generated from their farm; which is also utilised for household requirements. Although not targeted at women, female farmers benefit by extension, from the Ministry of Agriculture's incentive programme which offers percentage discounted inputs such as fertilisers and farm tools to all registered farmers.

161. Capacity for food and nutrition security, and income generating activities is strengthened through linkages to agricultural resources and services, in addition to international funding opportunities from agencies such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation in Agriculture (IICA). The impact of natural disasters is mitigated by expeditious recovery through government-assisted hurricane relief funding.

162. Employment data for the Ministry of Agriculture reveal that 100% of farm extension officers are male. Supporting services such as the Quarantine Unit is a sub-program at the Department of Agriculture that focuses mainly on agricultural health and food safety matters, in this area females represent 75% of staff.

Part IV

Article 15

Equality Before the Law and in Civil Matters

163. Under the law women enjoy the same legal status and rights as men; this includes amongst other things the areas of inheritance, family, property and labour laws.

⁵⁰ The GEF Small Grants Programme was established in 1992 and provides 'financial and technical support to projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods.'

Article 16

Equality in Marriage and Family Law

164. The Committee recognised the lack of legal aid for women and the lengthy process which makes it difficult for women to take men to court in order to obtain child support. Legislation has changed to prevent men from opting to serve a prison sentence rather than paying maintenance. Sub-section 9(b) of the Maintenance of Children Act, 2012 states where a person is committed to prison for default the committal shall not operate to discharge the liability.

165. Mothers of children with fathers who are unable or unwilling to support their children have been identified as a group at risk and in need of support. Women use the court system to secure child maintenance from fathers and rely on the legal system to procure financial support for their children. There is evidence to suggest women who have children from different fathers use this system as a means of economic security to provide for their families.

166. There is a perception that inequities exist between unmarried and married mothers with respect to economic status facilitating access to the courts for child maintenance rights. Unmarried mothers tend to be limited to the Magistrates Court, whereas married mothers are able to petition at the High Court where the awards are higher. The difference is largely income, as unmarried mothers can go to the High Court if they have the financial resources to do so.

167. The Legal Aid Advice Centre in St. Kitts was operational from 2005. In 2016, a thrust towards Legal Aid Clinics in rural areas was revised and services were made more accessible to persons living in those areas. Organised clinics covered a range of legal areas and served persons unable to afford an attorney at the private bar. 36 Legal Clinics were conducted by the Legal Aid and Advice Centre in 2016. There is no legal aid provision in Nevis.

168. The law prohibits rape but it does not specifically address spousal rape. There is anecdotal evidence of this problem which is often under-reported. The subject is a controversial and cultural argument; and there is not broad public support for legislation so public education and awareness is necessary.

169. The St. Kitts and Nevis Human Rights Report of 2016 stated “Couples and individuals have the right to decide the number, spacing, and timing of their children; manage their reproductive health; and have access to the information and means to do so, free from discrimination, coercion, or violence.”

Conclusion

170. The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis has made considerable strides towards eliminating discrimination against women. The Government’s high level of commitment is evident in its leadership role and progress made over the last 15 years under both administrations. In addition, the contribution of women’s groups, international agencies and non-governmental organisations have been instrumental in many of the advances of the women’s agenda. It should be recognised that the Department of Gender Affairs has a pivotal role and works alongside relevant groups, and agencies regionally and internationally. Much work has been done since to strengthen and increase the measures in place to assist the cause of women.

171. The Government recognises the need to introduce and implement improvements. Legislative measures are in place, new laws have been passed, including the revision and amendment of existing legislation to facilitate the development of women, and to work towards reducing inequalities. Significant

achievements include the launch of the Domestic Violence Protocol and St. Kitts and Nevis National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan. Further developments are ongoing for social protection and universal healthcare which will directly impact the quality of life for persons who face structural discrimination.

172. Maternal health has improved, the teenage birth rate is declining, and minimum wage protection has been legislated. A Special Victims Unit has been introduced with personnel trained to deal with domestic violence issues. Data also reveals an increase in the rate of reported cases of abuse. Educational opportunities have opened to encourage women to enter professions traditionally viewed as male occupations. Legal aid clinics have been introduced to assist persons unable to afford an attorney. Programmes have not been limited to women only, but extend to include the needs of children; our future generations. In addition, outreach projects recognise and embrace the valuable contribution of males to society. The celebration of international Women's Day, International Men's Day and Human Rights Day continue to serve as platforms for increasing awareness about the rights and responsibilities of women, men, boys and girls. Progress has been slow in some areas such as increasing the numbers of women in senior roles in political and public life; this area is receiving attention through public dialogue and the positive steps to date are welcomed.

173. Challenges still exist but these must not detract from the tremendous achievements made. The outstanding difficulties are recognised and the various government ministries and private sector address and bring solutions to eliminate discrimination wherever possible. The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis remains committed to overcoming obstacles and addressing the equality and empowerment of women.

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