



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

Distr.: General
31 March 2020

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Information received from Barbados on follow-up to the
concluding observations on its combined fifth to eighth
periodic reports***

[Date received: 13 February 2020]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Introduction

1. Barbados, like all other countries in the region, was negatively impacted by the global recession which resulted in relatively high levels of unemployment/underemployment and a negative effect on livelihoods. Barbados, like all other countries in the region, was negatively impacted by the global recession which resulted in relatively high levels of unemployment/underemployment and a negative effect on livelihoods.
2. A new government was elected in May 2018 and successfully approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance. Barbados entered the Economic Recovery Transformation (BERT) Programme in September 2018 which is on-going until 2022. This Programme consisted of austerity measures which further impacted on job losses. The Government of Barbados therefore concentrated on stabilising its economy, managing its foreign reserves and protecting the most vulnerable in the society.
3. With reference to Barbados' response to the concluding observations, Barbados had begun to address the recommendations outlined in the concluding observations.

II. Follow-up information

A. Follow-up information relating to paragraphs 12 (c), 14 (a) and (b) of the concluding observations

4. In April 2019, the Barbados judiciary took further steps to establish a dedicated Family Court with the appointment of a Consultant, Master Christie-Ann Morris-Alleyne to oversee the process. It was expected that the court would come on stream in November of that year to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Barbados is a signatory.
5. The Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project together with the Judiciary of Barbados conducted a two-day training course from July 26–27, 2019. The timing of that training was ideal, as the Judiciary of Barbados had recently appointed additional judges to the bench and the training supported the continued improvement of the capacity of judicial officers to be more gender-sensitive in their adjudication. Part II of the Gender Sensitive Adjudication Training took place from December 6–7, 2019.
6. One of the expected outcomes of the JURIST Project is the improvement of the capacity of courts to deliver gender-responsive services to court users. The Project has sought to do this in three (3) ways: development of Gender Equality Protocols, Gender Sensitisation Training and development and implementation of a Gender Equality Accountability Tool.
7. The Government of Barbados sought to amend existing legislation and enacted new legislation as follows: The Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) (Amendment) Act, 2016; The Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act, 2017; The Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act, 2016 and the Sexual Offences Act, 2016.
8. The amendment to the domestic violence legislation permits police officers to issue an Emergency Protection Order where there is reasonable cause to believe that the issue of such an order is necessary to ensure the safety of a person at risk. An Emergency Protection Order has a duration of seven (7) days and is intended to provide the victim with a period of relative safety until the court hearing. A subordinate police officer does not need the consent of the person at risk to issue such

an order and must take the following into account in determining whether to issue an Emergency Protection Order: – whether the person at risk has immediate access to the court – the likelihood that the perpetrator will continue to commit acts of domestic violence – the welfare of any children residing with the perpetrator or the person at risk – any hardship that may be caused if the order is issued – any other matter that the member of the Police Force considers relevant. When an Emergency Protection Order is issued, the perpetrator has to vacate the shared premises and desist from engaging in violent behaviour or behaviour that constitutes harassment against the victim. Police officers also have the power to arrest the perpetrator if the order is breached or its provisions are disobeyed. They also have the power to arrest if there is an arrest clause attached to a court issued protection order.

9. In addition, Barbados amended its Sexual Offences Act Cap 154 in 2016 to provide for the circumstances under which a man can be prosecuted for raping his wife. The Act now states that, “*A husband commits the offence of rape where he has sexual intercourse with his wife without her consent by force or fear, where he knows that she does not consent to the intercourse or is reckless as to whether she consents to the intercourse*”. Prior to this there had to be a court-issued divorce decree, separation order, or non-molestation order. The enforcement and implementation of the amended legislation on intimate partner violence/domestic violence continue to be enabled by ongoing training of police officers, including recruits at the training school, conducted by the Family Conflict Intervention Unit (FCIU) of the Royal Barbados Police Force. The training is progressive, commencing with updating officers and then sensitisation in terms of their mind-set and is primarily geared towards first responders in the police force. Victims and perpetrators are also targeted as well as the public. The amended legislation requires police officers to respond to all reports of domestic violence.

10. The Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA) established an internal Working Committee to assist in developing a national framework to address Gender-based Violence (GBV) issues within a human rights framework, based on the recognition that women’s social, economic, civil and political rights are causally connected and mutually reinforcing.

11. It has been developed in response to the need to identify multi-sectoral approaches that might be suitable for ending violence against women. The Working Committee will review already established National Plans of Action (NAP) to draw on diverse experiences to suggest new approaches that might be appropriately adapted to the needs of Barbados.

12. The Working Committee was formalised in 2019 and will be responsible for developing strategies specifically geared towards reducing gender-based violence, implementing a Public Education Programme, increasing state actor competencies, and strengthening accountability.

Objectives

13. To support cross-sectional analysis specific situations of Violence against Women so as to increase understanding of other dimensions of violence and to identify emerging contextual issues.

14. To support the development of strategies pursued by the state and by civil society in different kinds of intervention and, the progress made and difficulties encountered in addressing this issue from the governmental level, in terms of laws, policies and programmes.

15. To support the development and implementation of a Public Education Programme on Gender-based Violence in Barbados.

16. To support the building of State Actors Competencies and accountability related to addressed Gender-based Violence.

17. Support the monitoring of the National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence and ensure the effective coordination.

Scope of work

National Plan

18. The specific tasks of the Working Committee include:

(a) Development of a work plan related to the above-mentioned Objectives;

(b) Support Stakeholders Consultations related to the development of the Strategic National Action Plan;

(c) Support the Consultant to access/gather the data and information necessary for the development of assessment related to the Strategic National Action Plan;

(d) Development of draft Strategic National Action Plan on Ending Gender-based Violence;

(e) Review, comment and provide feedback on the draft Strategic National Action Plan;

(f) Supporting the adoption of the final action plan by Cabinet ensuring cross sectional adoption of the Strategic National Action Plan;

(g) Support implementation and monitoring of the Strategic National Action Plan across all sectors including-civil-society.

Public Education

19. Develop a Public Education Strategy related to Gender-based Violence.

20. Support the implementation of the Public Education Strategy.

Capacity Development and Accountability

21. Support identification of skills, resources and capabilities that can contribute to programming related to Gender-based Violence.

22. To contribute to the transparent sharing of information and services relating to Gender-based Violence intervention in Barbados.

23. In addition to the BGA, the Child Care Board is mandated to address the issues of violence against children and the National Assistance Board (NAB) addresses the issues of elder abuse and does the social assessments. In cases of theft, where appropriate, or necessary, they involve the police. Where there is financial abuse, involving the misuse of pensions, the National Insurance Office becomes involved. If there is neglect or abandonment, the individual can be removed from the environment, particularly in cases where the persons cannot function on their own and lack social support. Elder Abuse is also addressed by the department through Public Education for caregivers which can be formal or informal. In terms of respite, some persons are offered day-care which reduces the elderly vulnerability and susceptibility to elder abuse in the community. The Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs has a Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme which is designed to rehabilitate men who engage in violent behaviours.

B. Follow-up information relating to paragraph 34 (c) of the concluding observations

24. The Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act, 2017 came into force in December 2017 to make provision for the protection of employees from sexual harassment in the workplace in both the public and private sectors.

25. The Labour Department of Barbados' Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations, collaborated in 2018 with the Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean (IMPACT Justice) project to produce and launch two (2) brochures on sexual harassment: "Model Workplace Policy *Statement Against Sexual Harassment*" and "*Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: What You Should Know*".
