

CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM

“EN-GENDER-ING LOCAL GOVERNMENT”

Rex St. Lucian Hotel, Castries, St Lucia

30 June - 3 July 1997

REPORT

Co-Sponsoring Agencies:

Gender and Youth Affairs Division (GYAD), Commonwealth Secretariat

Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities (CALGA)

Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)

Ministries Responsible for Local Government and Women’s Affairs, St. Lucia

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FOREWORD

The Gender and Youth Affairs Division (GYAD) has a central role in the Commonwealth Secretariat in all matters related to gender equality. GYAD has played a co-ordinating role in developing the 1995 Plan of Action on Gender and Development which was presented at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995. GYAD is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the Plan of Action among Commonwealth governments and in the Secretariat.

One of the key areas in which the Commonwealth Secretariat seeks to promote gender equality is in the area of political decision-making. The Fifth Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs (Trinidad & Tobago, November 1995), recommended that "member countries should be encouraged to achieve a target of no less than 30 per cent of women in decision-making in the political, public and private sectors by the year 2005... Those countries which are already close to achieving this target are encouraged to take the next step of striving to achieve gender balance in political decision-making by 2005".

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum, CLGF, was formally established in 1995 as an organisation representing local government throughout the Commonwealth. In the same year, CLGF was "welcomed as an important Commonwealth institution for strengthening action among Commonwealth member states on local government structures" by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Auckland.

The Caribbean Regional Symposium on "En-gender-ing Local Government" is the third in a series of regional symposia on the issue held by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat. The first two were held in Asia (Mumbai, India, March 1996) and Southern Africa (Johannesburg, South Africa, May 1996). The reports and recommendations of the three symposia will be presented at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh in October 1997.

The Caribbean Symposium was held in Castries, St Lucia, on 30 June - 3 July 1997. Co-sponsoring agencies included the Ministries responsible for local Government and Women's Affairs, St Lucia, and the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).

The Symposium was attended by Commonwealth Caribbean local government councillors, representatives of non-governmental organisations, inter-governmental organisations and the University of the West Indies. Countries represented included Antigua and Barbuda, the

Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Surinam, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Representatives from Canada, India, South Africa and the UK were also present.

This report summarises the papers and reports presented and the discussions held, and presents the recommendations agreed at the Symposium. We should like to acknowledge the contribution made by Ms Linnette Vassell, resource person, in compiling the report.

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Gender and Youth Affairs Division (GYAD)
Commonwealth Secretariat

Carl Wright
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Caribbean Regional Symposium, “En-gender-ing Local Government”, convened over four days in St. Lucia, is the culmination of a round of Commonwealth discussions which began with meetings in Asia and in Southern Africa in early 1996. Debate focused on issues of democratisation and gender, with specific reference to building the participation of women in politics and decision-making at the local level.

These discussions have their roots in the wide concern generated within the international arena over the last two decades in particular, to explore the issues of the marginalisation of women from the political process and to find ways to effect changes so that the processes of development can be enriched by, and benefit equally from, the contribution of both men and women.

Within the Commonwealth itself, the 1990s have seen many initiatives to focus attention on issues of gender and democratisation. The Gender and Youth Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat (GYAD) facilitated the preparation of the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its promotion within the context of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) was founded in 1995 as an institution for “strengthening action on local government structures”, and has consequently regarded the issue of gender imbalance in local government as central to its remit. The subsequent partnership forged by GYAD and the CLGF laid the basis for the wider collaboration among international and regional agencies, governmental and non-governmental organisations and academic institutions, achieved in the symposia.

The strong presence and voice of local government councillors and leaders of non-governmental organisations in the Caribbean symposium demonstrates that the impulse towards reform of the local government as an instrument for the effective participation in governance of citizens, and of women and young people in particular, is growing on the ground. Further, consensus is being forged among persons active within the formal system of government and by civil society, broadly speaking, of the many inter-related structural economic, socio-cultural and political barriers which are in the way of women’s participation in decision-making.

The Caribbean symposium confirmed that the local government system is the arena in which women throughout the Commonwealth have had the most involvement in political decision-making at the highest levels. The potential of the system to provide a strategic space for women to tackle and overcome systemic obstacles and to address within their communities the issues of health, education, employment and sustainable livelihoods, is gradually coming to light. This is happening at the same time that community participation in governance is being promoted as a critical aspect of efforts to tackle the perplexing problems of poverty and underdevelopment that occupy the agenda of governments, particularly within the Commonwealth.

The recommendations of the Caribbean symposium reflect the concerns with the many inter-

related issues of governance and development - issues of political reform, education and training, economic and cultural changes.

The symposium provided space where some of the issues were addressed not only through analysis and recommendations, but practically, by introducing leadership skills and the training of participants. This is revealed in the report of the Skills Building workshop . The session “Changing Belief Systems” also has to be seen in this light, as an attempt to confront some of the internalised factors which inhibit women from realising their leadership potential, supporting each other and entering and succeeding in politics.

The incorporation of these elements into the agenda of the Caribbean symposium was a response to issues and proposals raised by women in the two former symposia held in Asia and in Southern Africa. In addition, through the sponsors and participants, it reflected the growing partnership among various interest groups to address in a sustained way the political empowerment of women and the sustainable development of our societies.

PART I

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Vision Statement

Women's empowerment does *not mean disempowerment of men but the enrichment and inclusion of each and every member of the human family.*

THE GOAL: BUILDING A WOMAN-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

METHOD:

1. REFORMING SYSTEMS/STRUCTURES AND THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

The following institutions are seen as having a critical role in supporting the achievement of this goal.

0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AND PERSONNEL

- It is important to ensure that women participate equally in local government decision-making structures to ensure that the services provided by local government meet the needs of both women and men. This should include:
 - ⇒ Ensuring gender balance in committees and community meetings;
 - ⇒ Supporting women specifically responsible for promoting gender interests within the council;
 - ⇒ Undertaking gender audits of local government structures and programmes.
- In the light of the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes, and in order to promote and achieve the goal of sustainable development, local government should ensure that their budgets are gender sensitive.

- Local government authorities should provide remuneration for councillors and adequate amenities such as day care centres for employees and other women, to enable women to participate more fully.
- Local government authorities should develop internship/mentoring programmes for women wishing to enter local government.

B. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL PARTIES

- Constitutional reform should be undertaken to secure the entrenchment of local government in the Constitution as an institution for the democratic participation of all citizens and the empowerment of women and young people.
- Local government should be reformed to promote autonomy and consultation.
- Local government representatives should be elected, not nominated. Where nominations do take place, governments should ensure gender balance and involve women at the grassroots and from NGOs, etc.
- Governments should take affirmative action to promote the participation of women in political decision-making, for example, a quota system where appropriate. Women should aim at 50 % of seats in local government.
- Legislation should be put in place to allow public servants to contest elections and to ensure that persons wishing to serve in politics are able to maintain their years of service for retirement benefits.
- Political parties should support and encourage the development of political caucuses to monitor the advancement of women, and encourage their participation in local and national politics.

C. NON-GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATIONS

- NGOs should continue to play a critical role in engendering local government, and should form a caucus of women at all levels in their respective territories to follow-up the recommendations of the symposium.
- Women's organisations should act as a pressure group to encourage women representatives to create cross-party caucuses to increase the number of women in politics.

D. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND REGIONAL BODIES

- The Women's Desk of the CARICOM SECRETARIAT should press for the establishment of a CARICOM Women's Affairs Ministers' Commission on Women and Politics (or an appropriate framework), with special reference to Women and Local Government.
- The CARICOM Secretariat should establish a forum in the nature of a standing committee for ministers responsible for local government in the region.
- The Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities (CALGA) should play a leadership role in engineering local government and in organising mentoring programmes for women.
- CALGA should provide opportunities for networking with national, regional and international organisations.
- CALGA should become a more dynamic force in articulating the resolutions of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) 33rd World Conference, which opposed "all forms of intolerance and unfair discrimination and moved to combat racism and xenophobia", and attend the next IULA world conference to represent a regional local government perspective, in the cause of which the needs of Caribbean women should be advanced.

E. ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

- The Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, should develop a comprehensive research project to analyse the situation of women in local government, and develop a data base in support of a programme for change.
- The Caribbean academic community should move to include Civics as a subject on the school curriculum.
- The financial value of the essential services that women provide without pay should be quantified. This will raise the status of women and give recognition to their contribution to national development.

2. METHOD: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- The issue of gender parity in politics should be put forward in a way that shows that women's empowerment does not mean the disempowerment of men, but the enrichment and inclusion of each and every member of the human family.
- Education and training, including training of trainers, are an essential component in promoting and encouraging greater participation of women in local government. Attention should be given to the important role that the use of the media can play in this process.
- Training for local government councillors should include orientation, induction and lobbying skills.
- Local government authorities should institute mentoring programmes for women.
- Women in local authorities should be provided with training and support to enable them to take management roles so that they are in a position to facilitate change within the system.
- Education and training programmes to encourage women and girls into greater political participation should be promoted:
 - ⇒ in primary schools upwards, through civic education with a gender perspective;
 - ⇒ in political parties, local and national government and NGOs.
- These education and training programmes should focus on issues such as:
 - ⇒ the power of government to transform;
 - ⇒ the importance and relevance of local government reform;
 - ⇒ the differential impact of the electoral process on men and women;
 - ⇒ the structures and mechanisms of government, including legislation, regulations;
 - ⇒ the experiences of other countries in engendering local government (what works);
 - ⇒ providing positive models and positive outlook.

- Appropriate training tools and methods should be employed to build the knowledge, skills and attitudes of women to enter and compete in the political process, with a focus on leadership, confidence building and use of media.
- Educational programmes should be made available through a variety of media, e.g., slogans, videos, pamphlets, model parliaments, etc.
- Education and training programmes should address the ideology and obstacles that limit the political participation of women from indigenous communities and other minority ethnic/culture groups.
- The process by which women have internalised oppression should be addressed individually and collectively.
- Gender aware men should sensitise their male colleagues about women in politics and how they could encourage women's greater participation.

3. BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

- The mistreatment, exclusion and stereotyping of young people should be addressed from a gender perspective.
- The obstacles and limitations to young women's and men's participation in the democratisation process should be examined and addressed.
- Cross-cultural exchanges between young people should be promoted, to enable young women and men to share knowledge and experiences, and disabuse each other of myths about young people's participation in political decision-making.
- Local and national government systems should be opened up to enable young people to participate equally with the support of adult allies.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the struggle for equality of women has assumed a universal approach;

And WHEREAS women in the Caribbean are recognised for their struggle for equality;

And WHEREAS women continue to be marginalised and discriminated against in most countries, as is evident in the political, economic, social and administrative sectors;

And WHEREAS the percentage of women representatives in the Parliaments and Local Governments in the Caribbean is unsatisfactory in this regard;

BE IT RESOLVED that the regional Symposium on ‘En-gender-ing Local Government’ calls upon: (i) the Commonwealth Secretariat; (ii) the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF); and (iii) the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Meeting in Mauritius (14-25 September, 1997), to make representation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh in October 1997, for positive and affirmative action to result in gender parity of representatives in local government.

**PERSONAL COMMITMENTS FOR
FOLLOW-UP MADE BY PARTICIPANTS**

COUNTRY/NAME	ACTION
Antigua/Crump	⇒ Get more women involved doing house-to-house visits during which the functioning of the Local Government is explained
Bahamas /Thompson	⇒ Issue a press statement ⇒ Meet with Ministers of Local Government and Women's Affairs
Barbuda/Beazer	⇒ Organize a convention for women in various political parties to examine the issues
Belize/Caetano	⇒ Hold a press conference ⇒ Brief the central party ⇒ Meet with the Women's Affairs Director
Belize/Ferguson	⇒ Issue a press release jointly with the rest of the Belizian delegation ⇒ Hold a workshop in August 1997 for representatives from Local Government, to share the outcomes of the Symposium
Belize/Hyde	⇒ Present report to Permanent Secretary and Minister responsible for Local Government on issues raised at the symposium ⇒ Prepare a draft proposal to present to Cabinet to review the Local Government system in Belize with a view to engendering Local Government
Dominica/Grove	⇒ Hold a press conference
Grenada/McQueen	⇒ Share information with the Inter-Agency Group Development Organisation ⇒ Meet with the ministers of Women Affairs and Local Government re. recommendations of the Symposium
Guyana/Sahoye-Shury	⇒ Discuss with relevant ministers re setting up and implementing programmes in collaboration with NGOs

and CBO's

- Jamaica/Browne
- ⇒ Report to the Association of Women Of Jamaica and Jamaica Women Political Caucus
 - ⇒ Immediate planning for video on women in politics
 - ⇒ Hold a pre-election forum for women in politics
 - ⇒ Issue a press release to be issued.
- Jamaica/Clarke
- ⇒ Meet with women's groups
- Jamaica/Holmes
- ⇒ Make a Conference report to the Women's Movement
 - ⇒ Issue a press release
- St. Lucia/Sidione
- ⇒ Sensitize people in the community
 - ⇒ Get more women involved in Local Government
- Surinam/Raveles
- ⇒ Hold a press conference
 - ⇒ Hold a radio interview
 - ⇒ Hold workshops to train women in Local Government.
- Trinidad & Tobago/Singh
- ⇒ Renew contact with NGO/IGO and academic representatives to strengthen the link established here
 - ⇒ Develop an inventory of women in Local Government in order to facilitate their developmental needs

LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF MONTSERRAT

TO : The Government and People of Montserrat

FROM : Caribbean Regional Symposium on En-Gender-ing Local
Government Meeting in St. Lucia

DATE : 3 July, 1997

We, sisters and brothers of the Commonwealth Caribbean and other regions of the Commonwealth (Asia, Southern Africa, Canada, Britain), gathered at the Caribbean Regional Symposium on “En-Gender-ing Local Government”, express our deepest solidarity and love to the people of Montserrat, wherever they are now dispersed, in and out of the Caribbean, in this time of their great distress.

We call on the entire Caribbean family to make sure that not one Montserrat person is left homeless. Our prayers are with you all.

We call on our Heads of Government to consider urgently a CARICOM approach to the safe housing of the people of Montserrat.

cc. CARICOM Heads of Government

PART II

DEFINING EXPECTATIONS

Participants, in groups, discussed the skills, ideas, problems and general experiences which they wished to share over the four days and the outcomes they expected from the symposium. The following issues were identified:

1. How To Build a Woman-Friendly Climate:

- to encourage women, especially young women to consider running for electoral office;
- to support women who want to run for office;
- to support women who have been elected to office.

Support structures were identified in relation to:

- family care responsibilities;
- political parties;
- the media;
- the community of men and women.

2. How to Propel and Manage Change:

- to ensure fair representation of women in local government in transition from an appointed/nominated system to an electoral system;
- to transform the electoral system and the political culture into something in which women can be comfortable;
- to build recognition for women's work;
- to profile women positively.

3. How to Get and Use Tools of Persuasion:

- to develop personal communication skills, e.g., public speaking, giving effective interviews, advocacy for dealing with the media;
- to organise lobby groups and public awareness campaigns:
 - for a more woman-friendly climate;
 - for encouraging women to come forward;
 - for encouraging women and men to support women;
- to direct attention towards issues and away from women's personal/private lives.

4. How to Persuade Political Parties to do the Right Thing by Women:
 - to examine the electoral system critically;
 - to institute affirmative action/quotas to increase the number of women candidates.

5. How to Educate, Train and Empower Women and Girls for Greater Political Participation:
 - in schools from primary up - civic education with a gender orientation;
 - in political parties, non-governmental organizations, local and other governmental organisations;
 - through training which includes:
 - methodologies & strategies to advance women's political involvement;
 - issues of political empowerment;
 - mechanisms and structures of government;
 - the power of governments to transform;
 - the experience of other countries, on what works;
 - how the electoral process effects/impacts differently on women and men.

6. How to Build and Engender Local Government Systems and Structures:
 - where none exist;
 - where the existing system was abolished;
 - where the existing system is an appointed system;
 - where the existing system needs transforming.

7. How NGOs, CBOs and Local Governments can work in partnership to coordinate efforts and projects, and share experiences between local governments/national governments/NGOs/donors and other agencies, to facilitate the effective development of local government.

8. How to translate the recommendations of the Symposium into action at home, including arrangements for measuring and monitoring outcomes.

Proposals and comments arising from the plenary discussion of these issues stressed the importance of:

- a) building a woman-friendly environment in organisations and society as a whole;
- b) training and educating women for political participation;
- c) reforming the local government system from a gender perspective.
- d) sharing experiences of the system;
- e) encouraging supportive action by CARICOM.

OPENING CEREMONY

The session was chaired by Mrs. Adeline Auguste, Chairperson of the Castries City Council. Presentations were made by the Honorable Mr. Damian Greaves, Minister responsible for Local Government in St. Lucia and by representatives of the sponsoring organisations of the symposium.

St. Lucian Government

The Honorable Mr. Damian Greaves, Minister responsible for Local Government in St. Lucia.

The Honorable Damian Greaves said that the Symposium, “En-gender-ing Local Government”, aimed at enhancing women’s participation in the democratic process through the electoral process was most timely and relevant for St. Lucia. The recent general elections he said had seen the election of a record number of four female candidates. The women, as political partners, had done very well and had been overwhelmingly accepted by the electorate. There was need for attention to the lack of leadership of females at the highest levels of policy. Women’s leadership at this level he said was important for addressing issues critical to the entire society.

In St. Lucia, he said, the system of local government was through appointment by Cabinet. This system was to be changed within eighteen months and local government by election re-introduced. The Minister congratulated the Commonwealth Secretariat and the other collaborating agencies for bringing the focus on women and local government into the region.

Commonwealth Secretariat

Dr. Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Chief Project Officer, Gender and Youth Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat.

Dr. Baksh-Soodeen expressed appreciation to the St. Lucian government, and particularly to the Ministries responsible for Local Government and Women’s Affairs for their goodwill in hosting the conference. She noted the high degree of organisational effectiveness which had been evident in the arrangements for the symposium.

The Gender and Youth Affairs Division she said, had played a leading role in the development of the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Development which had been presented at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing.

The area of decision-making was one of the critical areas of the Platform of Action. The Commonwealth meeting of Ministers responsible for Women’s Affairs held in Trinidad and Tobago in November 1996, had recommended that member countries be encouraged to achieve a target of no less than 30% of women in decision-making in the political, public and

private sectors by the year 2005.

The Symposium, Dr. Baksh-Soodeen said, was to be seen in this broad context of the agenda for advancing women's position in decision-making. It is based on three basic premises:

- a) that Local Government is an important arena of political decision-making, and that it is now necessary to critically examine its structures and functioning in order to identify the obstacles and limitations to women's ability to enter and succeed in local government. And having done our analysis, to work to change the situation;
- b) that men and women must engage in a dialogue on how attitudes and discriminatory practices that militate against women's participation in politics can be challenged;
- c) that various agencies and interests can and should continue to collaborate to "change the system of ownership of political participation".

She said that in looking at obstacles to women's equal participation in local government, the Symposium would examine the structure of behaviours and belief systems which play a strong limiting role in Caribbean societies, including race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, and gender, among others.

The symposium was also seeking to move beyond analysis to include sessions on the media and on leadership skills development.

Commonwealth Local Government Forum

Ms. Lucy Slack, Project Co-ordinator, Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

Ms. Slack said that the CGLF which has some 100 members in 30 countries, was established in 1994 / 95 in response to the Commonwealth-wide revival in Local Government. The three main objectives are:

- a) encouraging local democracy;
- b) facilitating information exchange; and
- c) assisting capacity-building.

The CGLF and COMSEC work closely together and have been involved in two other related Symposia - one held in March 1996 in India dealing with several Asian nations, and the other in South Africa in May 1996 for the Southern African region. The Caribbean region is therefore part of a process of investigation towards action.

The recommendations of these Symposia, Ms. Slack said, would be taken to the October 1997 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting which is to be held in Edinburgh. The CGLF was also proposing to hold a Commonwealth Local Government conference which would discuss the key issues arising from the three Symposia and look towards strengthening technical exchanges and partnership among local government practitioners.

Ms. Slack spoke of the capacity-building project currently being implemented through CALGA, aimed at strengthening interaction between the Local Government Authorities, community groups and NGOs.

CALGA AND CAFRA

Brief words of greetings were offered by Ms. Sandra Singh, Co-ordinator of the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities (CALGA), and Ms. Nadia Raveles, Regional Committee/Board Member of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).

COMMONWEALTH EXPERIENCES OF EN-GENDER-ING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

THE ASIAN EXPERIENCE

Professor Sneha Palnitkar, All India Institute of Local Self Government, Mumbai/Bombay.

Prof. Palnitkar gave a summary of the issues which emerged from the Asian Symposium on Women in Local Government, Mumbai, India, March 1996 and the practical steps which have been implemented as a direct outcome of that event. She highlighted obstacles common to representatives from all the Asian delegates, including the hostile male dominated atmosphere, fear for personal safety, lack of resources, lack of political support, the need for education and training, religious and cultural factors and lack of confidence.

India

Prof. Palnitkar stated that local government was integral to the system of government in India, being one of the three tiers in the system. She referred in particular to the 73rd/74th constitutional amendments passed in 1992 which include a quota system ensuring that 30% of all local government seats are reserved for women. This was a great improvement as over the years, women's participation in local authorities had been marginal due to socio-economic constraints and other obstacles, including those cited above.

The autonomy afforded to local government in India was bringing some changes however, and it was explained that the women who had come in through the quota system were now beginning to influence the decision making process. With the reservation of the seats for women, the legal

and physical base for participation was set.

Prof. Palnitkar observed that women who had a studious and analytical approach have overcome these constraints in a short span of time. Women have been elected and now the focus is on how best women members in local bodies can make their contribution through the participative process.

She stated that that was just the beginning and that at the same time it is very premature to analyse the exact impact of women at the local level management. She concluded that there was the recognition that there was still much to be done and capacity building programmes were needed, particularly for the new entrants.

Bangladesh

Prof. Palnitkar stated that the 1972 constitution of independent Bangladesh guaranteed equal rights in all spheres of the state and public life for men and women. The voting rights of women were firmly established. The constitution also guaranteed reserved seats for women enforceable for up to ten years in parliament and in various urban and local bodies. The 1990 amended constitution ensured that the political gains were not lost as under the new provisions women not only enjoy an equal right to cast votes and to contest national and local elections, but were guaranteed 20 % of the seats in municipal corporations and 30% in rural local government..

She observed that until 1956 women were not allowed to cast votes in the election of local bodies, or to stand for election. Now there were no legal obstacles to the participation of women in the political process. In fact, women's involvement and representation were considered essential from a political point of view – women constitute half of the population.

Prof. Palnitkar indicated that although women have made great strides politically in the last half century, there was still much more to do as women's representation as compared to men was still grossly inadequate. Women continued to experience discrimination in the area of appointment to positions such as Ward Commissioners; men were more likely to be nominated to the highest positions. Again the obstacles which women face were identified and the need to mainstream women in national and local level public life was stressed.

Malaysia

The report on Malaysia highlighted a recurring problem for Asia; the under representation of women in political life. The incidence of women's participation is small in the political decision making and administrative bodies.

In addition to the obstacles cited as common to all Asian countries, Prof Palnitkar explained that women, if they managed to get nominated, found themselves ignorant of the roles they were

expected to play in their new position. A few however are success stories, carrying out their responsibilities very effectively.

Maldives

In the Maldives, women's representation, it was reported at the Asian workshop, is low. It seems that women do not wish to participate in decision making at this level, although the number of women in the local civil service has been increasing. At the time of the Symposium, there was no support mechanism especially targeted towards integrating women into the local government system, and though there are training courses available to both men and women, women do not come forward for training.

It was observed that the need to integrate women into the mainstream development process is evident, and since 1979 a number of initiatives have been taken which developed into the establishment of a ministry by 1993, with a female Cabinet Minister whose portfolio included youth, sports and women. A number of women's committees have been introduced to work at the grassroots level to help in development projects for women and the community. At first nominated, councillors were elected as of 1995.

Pakistan

Prof. Palnitkar stated that women have equal status and opportunity with men under the Constitution and women have as a result taken active part in almost all areas of life. They not only vote, contest elections and seek appointment to public office, they have a say in public affairs and are called upon to give their views on all question which arise.

There is a Women's Development Ministry, and a Women's Development Bank. Women can be found in the judiciary, and there is a women's police force. Yet, it was observed, there were still barriers to entrance into local government, for while they have made strides, women still have to struggle against social and cultural norms and values of society and they are still hampered by economic dependence, lack of education, domestic responsibilities, among other obstacles.

Sri Lanka

Prof Palnitkar reported that in Sri Lanka women were attracted to political participation as a result of trade unionism, social work and the women's liberation movement. Their rights however were undermined by caste, religion and other considerations. (Although voting is seen as an important act of participation.)

Greater participation is prevented because political parties are reluctant to give prominence to female candidates and as elsewhere, financial restraints loom large as a barrier. However, although there are obvious barriers, women have advanced to the highest levels as Heads of

State and had seen some successes as leaders in local government.

Prof. Palnitikar concluded her report on Asia by indicating the need for networking to strengthen the influence of women on development policy, and for training to develop specific capacity building programmes for women in local government.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

Ms. Makhosi Khoza, Deputy Mayor, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

Deputy Mayor Makhosi Khoza began by thanking the people of the Caribbean for their support for the successful struggle against apartheid in her country. She explained how the local government system in South Africa is now structured, with three equal spheres of government, and indicated that the new South African Local Government Association (SALGA), which was not in place during the SADC Regional Symposium on Women in Local Government, Johannesburg, South Africa, in May 1996 has managed to translate some of the resolutions of that Symposium into reality.

Gender working groups in SALGA have been an important part of this process of considering women's equality when looking at policy development. Workshops and skills training for women have also been undertaken as a direct response to the Johannesburg symposium. She indicated that although women were generally well represented in the local government sphere, few of those women were in positions of authority or power and this was especially the case in rural areas. Another key factor she highlighted was the important part that political parties play in the system in terms of ensuring that women are put forward to stand for positions of authority and leadership.

SALGA's action has resulted in the temporary use of a quota system. This means that voters from the proportional representation lists elect 40% of councillors. Ms Khoza suggested that women's entry into local government might be best achieved through proportional representation as the attitude of the electorate, rooted in a long-standing patriarchal system, had not changed much so they do not fully accept women as politicians. In the ward system which produced some 60 % of the councillors, few women were elected. Culture and traditional stereotypes about women's ineligibility and inappropriateness as politicians was an underlying factor in the attitude to female politicians. In fact, women themselves had internalised sexism .

Ms. Khoza stated that although South Africa was addressing the gender imbalance and the under-representation of women in all spheres of government, the number of women in the decision-making arena of government was still low. She noted that in the central government 4 out of 28 Cabinet ministers were women, although they do hold important portfolios, not those conventionally thought of as dealing with 'women's issues'. In urban local government just over 30 % of women hold leadership positions. They were either mayors or deputy mayors or

chairpersons of standing committees. She called on colleagues to remember that it is not just a question of how many women there are in the system, but how much responsibility they have within the system.

For Ms. Khoza the solution rests in networking to exchange ideas, funding for training, affirmative action to address the gender imbalance, and for women to attend their party political caucuses to share in the decision making process. The challenge to women was to continue the struggle.

THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE

Councillor The Honourable Joan Taylor, Nottinghamshire County Council.

Councillor Taylor stressed that although more women are taking part in the political decision making process in Britain, there is still a long way to go before they have equal representation and she stated that she viewed this Symposium as an excellent learning opportunity.

She presented statistics to reinforce her claim that women were under-represented in the political life of Britain. She stated that women make up 52% of the population yet only 18% were Members of Parliament (MPs). Currently 119 out of 659 Members of Parliament are women, and under the new Labour government, only 19 government ministers are women out of 82 appointments, with only 5 of 22 cabinet members being women. She emphasised the richness that women can bring to the process, and suggested that they should not be seen as mere voting fodder, but should hold key positions of responsibility if they are to achieve their full potential.

She expressed her disappointment that her party, the Labour Party, had chosen to give the Ministerial responsibility for women to a woman who already had a major portfolio, although a dedicated women's unit is in place within her party structure. In local government, although there is an undeniable increase in the proportion of women standing for elected local government office, in 1996, 26% of local councillors were women.

Councillor Taylor advocated the need for further training and confidence-building by parties for more women to be encouraged to come forward. She explained that at the central government level, when the Labour Party tried it, the all-women short-list in winnable seats was declared illegal. Yet this had been a very effective instrument in raising women's visibility. Issues such as child-care and women's safety are being addressed by the authorities now. She suggested that although the removal of practical barriers is essential to encourage the involvement of more women, it is important to achieve a proper balance and culture to suit both genders as men and women need to work together to be most effective. She gave a personal account of some of the issues which she had faced and offered some advice for women entering the local political process: be determined, undertake as much training as you can, and remember that you will

need to make sacrifices, particularly in relation to the family.

She concluded with the view that women still needed to have extra special qualities and be twice as good as any man to succeed in politics.

THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

Her Worship, The Mayor Ann MacLean, Mayor of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

Mayor MacLean indicated that women in Canada have been involved in municipalities for a long time with some states giving the vote to women before the middle of this century. Yet, the percentage of women as councillors was apparently not influenced by the length of time that women in the provinces have had the vote. The numbers are quite small.

She explained the non-partisan nature of local government in Canada and reported that 20% of all municipal councillors are women. She stressed that although it might be more difficult for women to get elected, it is never impossible. She indicated that in her opinion politicians make better policies by consulting people, so women need to be within that process. Local government affects so much of our lives, much of which is close to women. Human justice demands that they be represented.

She suggested that women need to have a reason to run for office, have information about what local government does, work in local groups to gain visibility, take part in committees and working groups. Women need a network of supporters willing to elect them. She explained that in a non-partisan system such as Canada's, contacts are very important for fund raising, etc.

She stated that the mentoring system had been very successful in some provinces in Canada. While networking was seen as important both locally and internationally, women did not seem to want any special privileges in getting access to participation. The proposed implementation of a type of quota system had caused a backlash against women. Indeed some of its fiercest critics were women already in power. They even rejected special training as this, and the quota system, were seen as too risky.

She went on to explain that there were barriers that women were more likely to face than men. She suggested that women were judged differently, they still had responsibility for children and were less likely to get relief from this as, unlike their male colleagues, they cannot depend on their partners to keep things going at home.

She explained that her municipality was part of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) International Programme, and that one objective of the Federation is to look at strategies for engendering local government. In the Canadian experience, the feminist organisations and civil society have helped considerably to achieve an improvement in the status of women in the past 40 years. Yet conditions for enhanced participation in local government

are still difficult. In fact, even with the training provided by the FCM there has not been any significant change in the level of participation by women.

THE DISCUSSION

The plenary discussion which concluded the session by highlighting the Commonwealth Experience raised a number of issues: the need to ensure that the political process is engendered in both the rural and urban areas, and the need for reforms to take account of indigenous people and their culture. Women it was felt should not be seen as an homogeneous group and it was suggested that skills training at the local level is imperative to ensuring that they are as successful as possible.

The concept of women being 'ghettoised' in local government was raised and the general consensus was that in reality the involvement of women only serves to enrich the process and in many cases brings a more consensual approach to governance. However, women will be judged on their performance, so the way in which they act is important and they should utilise their own personal strengths, wherever they lie. The importance of women in power themselves continuing to support other women was stressed by all the panellists.

COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCES OF ENGENDERING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The presenters were :

Dr. Eudine Barriteau, Director of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, Cavehill, Barbados;

Ms. Sandra Singh, Co-ordinator, Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities (CALGA);

Ms. Nadia Raveles, Regional Committee/Board Member, Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).

Caribbean Regional Overview Paper

Dr. Barriteau stated that there was inadequate documentation in secondary sources on women

in politics in the Caribbean Commonwealth. She called for a comprehensive study on this issue. In addition, she cited the need for research and dialogue with the indigenous women of the Caribbean so that their concerns can reshape the political agenda.

She said that although small, the Commonwealth Caribbean is very diverse and complex in culture and ethnicity. She raised the question of whether culture and ethnicity complicate the participation of women in politics in the Commonwealth Caribbean, citing the experiences of Indo-Caribbean women of Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago as examples for analysis.

She stated that when we talk about government, we talk about participation, but this also involves power, and those who hold power do not give it up easily. Engendering Local Government means changing the balance of power at the local level. She stated that although we need greater numbers of women in political power, they must be women who have the consciousness of the experiences of Caribbean women and are committed to exposing and doing something about the things that are wrong for women.

Dr. Barriteau then gave a historical review of the participation of women in politics in the Commonwealth Caribbean. She noted that with universal adult suffrage the door to a level of participation had been opened by the 1950s. However, this did not guarantee inclusion and representation of women at all levels of Caribbean politics. As such, the engendering of local government was to be directed at closing the gap between women's legal rights and their *de facto* experience of exclusion, she suggested.

She suggested that given the Caribbean's demographic pattern which sees a disproportionately high incidence of women as heads of households, women should influence public policy more directly. Women as citizens represent more than themselves when they negotiate within the political system for they represent a constituency of children and older dependents. Similarly when they are excluded, others also are. Thus, women had every right to have a political voice as citizens. For Barriteau, engendering local government strives to give women a collective voice, and the process must include both gender sensitive men and women.

Dr. Barriteau warned that resistance should be expected as engendering local government would mean altering power relations to ensure greater political participation by women, to change the gender balance of political power at the community level to be more inclusive of women and gender issues and to correct the earlier processes of citizenship that viewed women as politically irrelevant. The process directed at empowering women would put pressure on the value systems, which in the Caribbean have traditionally been patriarchal and exclusionary of women's interest in the public domain.

She explored the view that women bring both a different style of leadership to governance and different concerns. She felt that though there is some evidence of a difference in approach and attitude, there is also evidence that female politicians in some island refuse to identify with women's interests. They tend to articulate the party's position. She warned of the danger of

merely putting women forward as candidates to mouth the same rhetoric as the men. So while a critical mass of women in politics is vital in the engendering process, there was the need to go beyond that to field women who are gender conscious and look beyond the party's position.

She recognised the difficulty attendant on not being committed to the party. She noted that parties play an important role in women's election and that independents have not fared well historically. Many women have had to enter party politics to be heard. Many of the early female political activists came from the middle class and many had social work backgrounds. They used the cover of social work to articulate middle class women's concerns for political reform and changes in the conditions of working class women.

She stated there was a comparatively low involvement of women in the governing bodies of parliament in the Caribbean. This was so although institutions and groups in civil society play a critical role in advancing women's political participation. Historically no independent country has had a higher percent of women as Members of Parliament and Senators than 15%, except the Bahamas between 1980 - 1992. She observed that even though Caribbean women have been able to stand for election and vote for over fifty years in all countries (except the Bahamas), the region still lacked a critical mass of female politicians. And where they are found, even as Cabinet Ministers, they have traditionally been given housekeeping positions having to do with women's reproductive roles.

A comprehensive study of women in local government - who they are, what they have done, what compromises they have been forced to make and how they have influenced local government structures to reflect women's agenda - was recommended. At the present time it would appear that NGOs, women organisations and political caucuses must play a critical role in engendering local government, Dr. Barribeau said.

A Caribbean Regional Local Government Perspective

Ms. Sandra Singh stated that CALGA had been established in 1992 as an umbrella organisation representing local government interests in the thirteen English-speaking members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The Secretariat, based in Trinidad, has developed a repository for information on local government in member states.

Ten of the thirteen countries have formal provisions for local government, and three are at various stages of development (St. Kitts/Nevis, Montserrat and Barbados).

She explained that the functions of local authorities in Commonwealth states are mainly geared towards the provision and maintenance of physical infrastructure and environmental health. Additionally, there is limited involvement in social welfare in Dominica and Jamaica, and in Guyana local government has a decentralised role in the management and control of primary health care and daycare centres.

She said that since local government provides services that significantly affect women's lives, women must enter decision-making at that level if local government is to be effective. Planning for such services should be informed by the women's perspective. She suggested that those women already in local government should put in place a system of nurture and internship for other women hoping to enter local government. CALGA was willing, she said, to assist this process and to organise these internships. She proposed that if members of CALGA wished, the organisation can provide the opportunity for women to network with national, regional and international development agencies.

She indicated that some bilateral activity and interaction is already occurring. In Trinidad there are moves towards a women's local government caucus and that group has started to exchange experiences with female representatives from community development and local government in St. Lucia and St. Kitts/Nevis. She stressed however that the impetus for such activity relies on the enthusiasm and determination of the women present at the symposium.

A Caribbean Regional Perspective

Ms. Nadia Raveles of CAFRA who presented a regional NGO perspective of engendering local government, suggested that the feminist political consciousness facilitated through CAFRA encourages regional solidarity, communication, networking, research projects and action in national, regional and international campaigns. CAFRA's strategic plan over the next three years includes the goal of increasing the political power of women. However structures are not yet in place for this programme.

CAFRA has conducted workshops on women's empowerment and ways to influence the image of women in politics and has provided financial support for women's leadership training programmes.

Her suggestion was that governments should be lobbied to:

- Set up advisory committees to bridge the links between NGOs with the formal governmental structures;
- Ensure gender balance in appointments;
- Place women and gender-sensitive men in places of power.
- Take action to share parental responsibility (day-care centres, etc.);

Women's organisations she said had specific responsibilities:

- To raise consciousness of women's contributions to all aspects of life;
- To expand the number of pressure groups;
- To encourage women representatives to create caucuses across party lines to increase the numbers of women in politics.

The Women's Parliamentary Forum of Suriname (VPF), supported by CAFRA, trained women to deal with their issues of concern in the parliamentary process. As a result of the VPF, women comprised 1 in 5 candidates in the 1996 elections an increase from being 1 in 17 in the 1991 elections . There was also an increase in awareness around the issues of women and political decision-making. For example, of persons polled, 53% felt there should be a separate ministry for women's affairs, and 21% could name 30 women who could hold high positions in government.

The Plenary Discussion

The plenary discussion on this session brought several suggestions to the fore:

- It is necessary to address the ideological issues attached to women in politics and to emphasise that women's empowerment does not mean the dis-empowerment of men.
- The cultural, ethnic and other factors that limit women's political participation must be addressed.
- The value of the essential unpaid services provided by women should be assessed and quantified. This is one way to recognise women's contribution to society and to increase their status.
- The issue of independent candidates needs to be assessed. At present, a woman must work through political parties to get voted in.
- The present local government structure in addition to providing services that affect women must also be changed to ensure that those services are defined by women as well as by NGOs.

COUNTRY REPORTS

This session was chaired by Chief Councillor Theresa Cartwright, Long Island District, The Bahamas

Antigua and Barbuda

In Antigua and Barbuda there is no legislative provision for local government. In Antigua there are nominated District Councils under the supervision of a Local Government Officer. There are 43 women and 62 men in the Councils.

In Barbuda there are elections to fill the seats on the local council which exercises authority over many matters. There are no women on the Barbuda Council.

The Bahamas

The Bahamas has had free parliamentary elections since 1729. However, it was not until 1962 that true representation was obtained for all persons with the implementation of Universal Adult Suffrage when women were given the right to vote. Since then, the women of the Bahamas have struggled for equal representation not only through voting but also as participants in the decision-making process.

Local Government was introduced in the Bahamas when the Free National Movement, the present government enacted a law that approved this system first in the Grand Bahamas and Family Islands.

In 1996 local government elections were held for the first time with the following results:

	Number	Percentage
Total number of persons offering as candidates	764	100.0
Men elected	589	77.1
Women elected	175	22.9

Recommended approaches to engendering local government:

- networking;
- education;
- legislative reform.

Belize

The local government system was formally introduced in 1964 in Belize City. Between 1964 and 1969 other District Town Boards were introduced, and in 1984, there was the achievement of town status by San Pedro Town.

Belize presently consists of 8 local authorities. Belmopan has a Corporation, not a local council. The Belize City Council has 9 elected members, and the Town Boards comprise 7 members each. During this decade, out of 174 Councillors, 22 or 12.6% are female, aged 22 to 50 years old.

Factors affecting women's political participation:

- affiliation to political parties;
- recognition - the prestige associated with having government positions;
- power - the autonomy that politicians have.

Problems:

- no induction/training to assist men or women in local government;
- difficulty that women in local government have in taking on leadership roles and responsibilities on the Board, especially if they are first timers;
- no Councillor of any local authority has progressed from the local to national government because of the difficulty of getting party support;
- the low financial status of Councillors restricts women from putting themselves forward for positions as local councillors;
- the fact that the Mayor is elected annually does not provide enough time for the candidate to make an impact.

Commonwealth of Dominica

The local government system of the Commonwealth of Dominica consists of 38 Councils, of which 34 are Village Councils. Others include a city council, an urban and a Carib Council. The Carib Council has a distinct cultural difference from the others.

Carib Women and Local Government:

The Carib population is 500. Land is held in common. The people participate in the local and national government and the three political parties.

Due to the culture of the Carib territory where the male chief is head, gender equality is an obvious problem. The Carib Chief and Council have local autonomy in the area and it was not until 1984 that the first woman councillor was elected to the Carib Council. Subsequently, in

1989 a woman contested for the office of Chief but lost because of a split in her votes and in 1994, of the four women who contested the election of councillor, only one won.

Problems:

- political culture;
- time management due to the dual roles of housework and breadwinner;
- pressure from men;
- socio-economic status;
- lack of self confidence.

Solutions:

- access to better educational facilities;
- education in communication:
 - how to plan strategies for survival;
 - how to budget limited funds;
 - how to be effective homemakers;
- support networks for women in communities.

Guyana

The local government system in Guyana was established in 1892 in certain towns in the country. Presently, the system has been extended to include numerous towns across the country as well as many levels of operation. There is a Ministry of Local Government, 10 Regional Democratic Councils, 65 Neighbourhood Democratic Councils, 6 Municipal Councils, and 150 Amerindian villages with Village councils, 74 of which are formally recognised and governed under the Amerindian Act.

Women's overall representation in Local Representative Bodies

Year	Percentage
1980	22.1%
1985	25.3%
1993	22.2%

Year	Mayor		Year	Deputy Mayor	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
1980	3	2	1980	3	2
1985	4	1	1987	4	1
1993	5	1	1993	5	1

Year	Regional Chairpersons		Vice Chairpersons	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1980	?	?	9	1
1985	9	1	9	1
1992	9	1	?	0

As shown in the tables above, there has been a general decline in female representation in some of the main organs of governance.

In the Regional Democratic Councils, the proportion of women increased by 4.4% in 1986 but this was followed by a decline in representation of 10.2% in 1993. Also, at the level of village councils, women were a notable minority, although they made their presence felt - the male-female ratios on village councils were 7:1, 6:1 and 11:3.

Problems:

- women are presented to the electorate on the initiative of the party leaders;
- Amerindian men are uncomfortable with women leaving the home and assuming leadership roles outside of the traditional role of primary caregiver;
- low salaries are paid in predominantly female sectors;
- the heavy workload due to underdeveloped infrastructure and correspondingly low wages discourage participation, for example, the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils have between 15 to 18 members, the Chairpersons of which are the only paid members and they receive a stipend of \$2000 per month (G\$140 = \$US1);
- loss of administrative skills among the leadership because of the lack of local government elections for 30 years. Hence, for that period there was no link between the local and national governments;
- most Councillors are elected without knowledge about the system and how it works such as its laws, functions and objectives.

Jamaica

Jamaica's local government system was initiated at the start of the of the British colonial period. There are 187 local government seats in all 14 parishes, 24 or 12% are held by women. The two delegates to the symposium are Deputy-Mayors. Twelve parishes have local parish councils and there is a Corporation Council for the Kingston and St. Andrew metropolitan area.

Although no local government elections have been held since 1990, the government since 1993 has initiated a local government reform process. Under this programme, Councillors are receiving salaries comparable with teachers, laws are being revised and Parish Councils are

gaining greater autonomy. However, these plans do not explicitly include increasing the participation of women in local government.

This objective is however being promoted by the Coalition for Community Participation in local government (The COALITION). A non-governmental organisation formed in 1995, The COALITION also aims to strengthen the legal place of the local councils by lobbying for the deep entrenchment of local government within the constitution. It presently collaborates with the government's Local Government Reform Unit and with other NGOs to increase women's participation in local government.

The Jamaica Women's Political Caucus formed in 1992 aims at increasing the number of women in politics in three areas by:

- sensitising and training leaders on gender issues, electoral procedures and reform, etc.;
- providing financing for female candidates;
- networking among local, regional, and international organisations.
-

The COALITION and the Caucus jointly sponsored a workshop in April 1997, "Local Government Leadership: Women and Political Empowerment".

St Kitts & Nevis

After gaining Associated Statehood with St. Kitts in 1967, the local government system was formed in Nevis. St Kitts does not have a system of local government. The Nevis Island Assembly comprises of 7 councillors, which includes one woman.

Achievements:

- In 1983, the Nevis Island Assembly was formed under the New Constitution and 4 years later, one woman was nominated as a Senator in the 7 member legislature;
- In 1997, a woman was elected as the President of the Nevis Island Assembly and another became the first elected female representative to the Nevis Island Assembly;
- Over the past ten years the political parties have attempted to include women candidates as part of their team.

Problems:

- no institutionalised training for women even though the administration has a Women's Desk;
- even when women are accepted as the Head of Department in a Ministry, men often refuse to take directions from them;
- the insensitivity and unsupportiveness of men to issues of gender equality;

- some women enter local government as the pawns of male politicians who use them to further their own political ambitions, while other women enter local government in order to make a positive contribution to the political process as a whole.

Solutions:

- opening lines of communication between men and women with respect to women's issues in general (i.e. not only in politics);
- a women's group should be established in all political parties to advance the cause of women;
- seminars/workshops should be organised for on-going training of women and men.

St. Lucia

With the establishment of the local government system in 1850 Councillors were elected to manage the affairs of their communities in St. Lucia. For a hundred years, only 4 women in Castries, two of whom were elected and two appointed, were ever part of this process. This is not very surprising considering that it was not until 1958, after the 1946 Local Authorities Ordinance, which dealt with the management of towns and villages (that excluded the participation of women in the local government process), that women were regarded as 'persons'.

Achievements:

Time Period	Number of women in local government
1950s	2
1960s	7
1970s	7
1980s	23
1990s	16 (so far)

It is obvious that there has been a steady increase in the number of women participating in local government. Although the figure for the 1990s is not yet complete it is assumed that this trend will continue.

At present local Councillors are nominated, not elected (the elected system was abolished in 1979) and NGOs are playing an active role at the local level. There has been a commitment by the new government to the re-introduction of elected councils in 1997-1998.

Motivation to enter local government:

- to serve the community;
- to have an opportunity to voice concerns and effect change in the surroundings;
- to help to chart the course of action for the development of communities;
- to help beautify and make communities safe;
- to help to ease the pressure placed on the central government.

Problems:

- the mental and psychological stress associated with politics, party affiliation, etc.;
- family commitments and work commitments;
- no formal induction nor training for either men or women;
- stereotypical notions faced by women based on sex, age and physical appearance;
- the projects identified are often not implemented because of a lack of finance;
- no remuneration is attached to the post of councillor;
- the majority of Councils are non-existent because elections were never held and the Town Clerk and Assistant have taken over the role of the Council.

Trinidad and Tobago

The local government system in Trinidad and Tobago was set up in 1840. It presently comprises of 14 corporations (two cities, three boroughs, and nine regions). There are 138 elected Councillors and 17 appointed Aldermen forming the political directorate of the local government system, of which only 17% are women. A statistical comparison between the past and the current terms shows a decline from 22% to 17% of female representatives.

By contrast Tobago enjoys a higher level of women's participation in local government through its separate House of Assembly. There are 11 elected Assembly persons and 4 appointed Councillors, 31% of whom are women.

Problems:

- the population perceives the central government as the sole provider of all amenities resulting in poor voter turn-out at local elections;
- women in the central government have their responsibilities limited to social services;
- difficulty in balancing the roles of home-maker, breadwinner, wife, mother, and community worker/politician;
- lack of support systems within the political parties;
- difficulty of encouraging/mobilising women in society to be more visible within the community and the political structures;
- encouraging women to accept leadership roles is a big challenge;
- the political culture is not accommodating to women;

- lack of training to develop skills in leadership, management, public speaking and media communications;
- inadequate remuneration to attract the professional woman;
- fear of facing media propaganda and character assassination.

Achievements:

- The first meeting of the Women's Caucus of the Trinidad and Tobago's Association of Local Government Authorities was held in November 1996. The primary aim of the meeting was to share the experiences of women local government representatives in Trinidad and Tobago and the representative of the Local Government Management Board LGMB (UK).
- Efforts are being put in place to enable the achievement of a 30% target of women's representation at all levels of political decision making by the year 2005.
- Presently, there has been some local government reform and sensitisation of its roles and functions with an emphasis on community participation. There also has been evidence of a new trend in voting patterns that reflects the strengthening of civil society.

Recommendations:

- CALGA should help to provide more opportunities for networking and exchanges of practical experiences;
- CALGA should become a more dynamic force, articulating the resolutions of IULA at the 33rd World Conference;
- All political parties should become sensitive in selecting female representatives thus increasing their participation in politics;
- Strategies should be developed to encourage men to be more supportive of women in politics;
- There should be lobbying for improvement in remuneration for local government representatives;
- Promotion of a positive political image of women;
- Ongoing gender-sensitization and training .

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES
(Faced by women in Local Government
in the Commonwealth Caribbean)

Factors identified by the symposium as Inhibiting Women's Political Participation

Cultural Factors:

- The violent 'rum – bar' culture of politics does not appeal to women;
- Race, colour and cultural barriers. For example, barriers against Amerindian and Indo-Caribbean women who are generally not expected to participate in political activities; traditions which provide channels for political leadership in Local Governments often prevent full participation at the leadership level, for example, in Maroon culture;
- Male chauvinism – women often need to get permission from men for certain levels of involvement;
- Women's family responsibilities

Socio-Economic Factors:

- Women have less access to money and other resources needed for participation in politics;
- Local government does not have an attractive image, for example, there is a low level of remuneration for those in local government, no pension benefits, no health benefits, etc.;
- Family and work responsibilities;
- Low levels of education;
- Lack of information on the local government system and the political system in general;
- The fact that women have a low status in society, which is reinforced by un-waged work.

Political & Institutional Factors:

- Women tend to see politics as corrupt; the perception is that politics is a man's domain. Women state, "Who me? I couldn't possibly";
- Political parties' reluctance to include women – shows a lack of democracy in party politics;
- Public servants need to resign to become involved in politics.

STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Support Systemic Changes, including:

- constitutional reform;
- need for measures beginning within political parties;
- increased remuneration for local government councillors;

- change in Civil Service Regulations re. resignation as a prerequisite for entering politics
 - special measures to encourage indigenous women and women from ethnic/cultural groups currently under-represented in political decision making
- Public Information and Projection of Women:
 - 'selling' the value of women in politics, for example, promoting the view that women are honest and can 'clean-up' politics;
 - promoting new ideologies of politics and leadership, to include gender equality and promoting opportunities for 'grassroots' people;
 - challenging negative images of women in music.
 - Education, Training, Mentoring:
 - education on women's rights;
 - gender training of local government leadership;
 - confidence building and leadership training among women;
 - curriculum reform to project women in leadership;
 - mentoring of women in politics by role models, networking across party lines.

Changing Belief Systems

Presenter of the session, Dr. Gillian Goddard, asked for a moment of silence by participants in solidarity with the people of Montserrat. Participants were asked by Dr. Goddard to think of their connection with the people of Montserrat.

Dr. Goddard graduated from Stanford University with a medical degree. She attempted to do research on cervical cancer in Trinidad and Tobago but had difficulties in achieving her goals. Eventually, she turned to psychiatry and began to work in the California prison system. While there, she came to the conclusion that the health system's response to psychiatric illness was deficient and there was inadequate focus on allowing the sick person to emotionally discharge the hurts/distresses which had caused the illness, through techniques like peer counselling.

Context of the Paper

In her presentation she set the socio-economic and political context of her own life and applied it to a general framework for exploring aspects of Caribbean society. Hence the paper presented a framework from which solutions to learned and internalised behaviour could be developed.

Her aim, Dr. Goddard said, was to challenge centuries of misinformation. She posited that unless underlying beliefs were examined before action was taken, or simultaneously with action,

external modifications will not survive. She emphasized the need to change beliefs and ideas in order to change what we see in the world around us.

She discussed at length how these ideas relate to Caribbean peoples and to the participants in particular. She shared her discovery of the ways in which Caribbean peoples have internalised oppression based on their history (race/ethnicity, class, gender, etc.), and the need for Caribbean peoples to change their underlying belief systems to be able to bring about lasting change. She said that it is important to understand that oppression, described as “the one-way mistreatment of a group of people based on their membership in that group and supported by the institutions of society”, was maintained by both the non-target as well as the target groups. Hence racism, classism and sexism are internalised. How we must begin to rid ourselves of internalised oppression is a fundamental aspect of a process of moving forward as Caribbean men and women, and of pursuing the goal of increasing women’s political participation.

She pointed to the ways in which a reversion to neocolonialism had been facilitated because Caribbean people have retained the concept of themselves as the ‘colonised’ even after independence. She cited examples of dress forms as a way in which colonialism has been internalised and hence has persisted. She stated that while independence, a desired goal was achieved, changes were difficult to effect because of the extent of internalization that had taken place.

In looking at sexism, racism and classism, she examined how Caribbean people had produced stereotypes, expectations and responses to others and to ourselves. Of significance is the understanding conveyed in Dr. Goddard presentation that women, as the target group of sexism believe the stereotypes applied to them and that men, the non-target group also believe and perpetuate their own stereotypes about women (as well as of themselves). This experience of internalised oppression is also relevant to considerations of issues of race and class, and other experiences of oppression. Past/socialization has impacted on the present, locking Caribbean people in a type of bondage that is passed on from generation to generation and which is deepened with each successive generation. She added that the other dimension in this process is to reflect on how vulnerable people are to traumatic experiences which affect their responses and how these experiences could be ‘discharged’.

Although it addressed abstract concepts, the presentation was undertaken in an interactive and conversational style which facilitated participants understanding of the practical implications. Dr Goddard said, the abstract ideas were reflective of personal experiences that created severe trauma in many lives and have been responsible for many of the divisiveness and conflict in our societies. The essential objective was to apply the concepts in simple but important exercises in a process of Re-evaluation Counselling.

Exploring Re-Evaluation Counselling

Dr Goddard's presentation had immediate practical application, employing a method which enabled participants to apply the knowledge presented to their particular experience. The methods, Re-evaluation Counselling, encouraged participants to revisit their past as a means of addressing internalised beliefs which informed their present and future conduct and relationships.

The practical activities were interwoven in the presentation, and were designed to get participants to focus on how their lives were affected by internalised oppression of one form or another. Participants were first asked to move from the geographical perimeter of the official symposium space into the middle of the room to focus on what was in his/her head in two paired activities:

- i) Each pair thought of and shared one thing that was going well personally and in connection with Caribbean women and men. Each person in the pair was to take a turn for three minutes and recall a time, the earliest incidence, when s/he was forced to limit herself/himself because of gender.
- ii) Each participant was asked to think of a time, the earliest time s/he could recall, that s/he made a linkage with someone despite issues of race, and talk about whether s/he felt that she was going against racial rules.

In both instances the participants were asked to observe the guidelines of respectful listening and confidentiality.

Special Sessions

Special sessions were held outside of the official symposium agenda: for male participants to look inward in a confidential and safe environment; and an early morning session with a mixed group to deepen the process of understanding mechanisms of client counselling of how the processes of 'recording' and 'patterning' occur in and affect human responses, emotions and belief systems and how to 'discharge' for more efficient and rational and human functioning.

Skills Building Workshop

This component of the programme was designed to provide some on-the-spot training for participants.

Training was conducted in three areas:

- how to build campaigns;
- how to build a presence in the media;
- how to prepare for and present a speech.

The presenter Lesley Abdela, founder in Britain of the All-Party Group for 300 Women in Politics/Public Life set the stage for the session by reviewing two of the critical factors that affected the participation of women in politics-the party selection process and the financial costs.

In face of these constraints, Ms. Abdela stated that the reasons why people would vote for women should be carefully examined and isolated and particular strategies undertaken to advance the agenda for getting women elected to office.

Building Campaigns

The experience of the Group for 300 Women in Politics/Public Life which helped to advance the claim for parity for women in British politics (also illustrated by use of a film), served to clarify the group's ideas on how to conduct campaigns effectively:

- Decide on what you want to achieve;
- Decide on the audience(s) you want to influence. Who influences that target group?
- Define a simple, straightforward message.

A variety of inter-related strategies were used in the 300 Group, for example:

- behind-the scenes lobbying of Members of Parliament;
- village level meetings with women and men endorsing the campaign;
- creative use of the media.

The main message? "A woman's place is in the House....of Commons", or a variant of the main issue.

She stressed the need to use creative approaches in a Campaign, for example:

- ensure that people who attend meetings or otherwise express interest or support are encouraged to themselves become involved. "Give the people simple tasks." This might range from signing a petition, to sending a letter to the Member of Parliament, to distributing information;
- seek out and use men as role models, especially to hold effective men to men discussions.
- do on-going training of supporters and other front line workers so that skills building is broadened and deepened.

Building a Presence in the Media

Ms. Abdela pointed out that building a media presence could be achieved in a number of ways:

Maintaining a dialogue

- She proposed that those spearheading the campaign to advance women's political participation should ask the media how links could be more effectively forged. The approach should be as practical as possible - for example, provide the media with names of women as contact spokes persons, names and biographical data on women interested in politics;
- Identifying resource persons to work with the media on specific issues;
- The campaigner should build up a list of journalists and editors whom s/he will get to know and trust;
- Express courtesy to the media at all times, for example, call, write the reporter or the media itself expressing appreciation for work done well.

Make the story interesting and newsworthy:

- Building political participation is about using the media effectively and this means building and maintaining interest by the media. Use human interest stories, link the campaign to ceremonies, link local to international issues;
- Giving the media a good complete copy, instead of expecting media houses to rewrite material;
- Using visuals, creating opportunities for use of the camera to capture an event or scene are preferred options over the written word.

Mounting special events, e.g., press conferences:

The session which was very interactive was used to prepare participants for a dialogue with media personnel from St. Lucian/Caribbean media houses. In this context, discussions were held on the following:

- Who should be invited ?
- When is the best day of the week or time of day for journalists? When must copy be submitted to meet particular deadlines?
- How should journalists be contacted?
- What are some of the issues that the Campaign wants to communicate?
- What are some of the issues which will interest the media? What are some of the contentious issues?

Preparing for and Making a Speech:

Ms. Abdela said that among the critical issues to be considered in making a speech were the following:

- Preparation of the content - thinking about the kind of audience etc.;
- Deciding on the aim of the presentation - what action or response is the speaker working towards?
- Being interesting and topical - use recent news as a point of entry, for example;
- Being friendly, open to the audience - do not antagonise the audience, be respectful;
- Communicating effectively - with attention to body language, tone of voice and the words used;
- Set some task(s) for members of the audience. This is an important aspect of building bridges with the audience and extending the campaign itself.

Participants were given the opportunity to practice new skills within the group.

PUBLIC FORUM

Day 3 ended with a Public Forum held in the Public Library, Castries, dealing with women and politics in Commonwealth perspective. The session was chaired by Ms. Lorraine Williams, former Attorney General and Minister of Women's Affairs of St. Lucia, and President of the Inter-American Commission on Women, CIM.

Speakers were:

- Hon. Sarah Flood, recently appointed Minister of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Women, St. Lucia. She spoke of the importance of the political party being receptive to the entry and leadership of women in the political process. She also shared personal experiences in contesting a seat in the then recently held national elections.
- Prof. Sneha Palnitkar, India. She emphasised the need for training of women due to their low level of knowledge and skills in the public political arena on matters like laws, regulations, the budget, etc.
- Deputy Mayor Makhosi Khoza, South Africa. She spoke of the experiences in many countries where women had been silenced in the name of culture and stressed the

importance of building strong grassroots women's organisations to ensure that the majority of women express their views themselves.

- Hon. Joan Taylor, Britain. She emphasised the need for attention to measures that addressed issues of child care, nurturance and the related responsibilities of women. In this regard she pointed out that her Council had opened a crèche for children and was designing a policy on play.
- Mayor Ann MacLean, Canada. There was need she said for the justification of women's leadership in politics to be popularised. This was based both on the need for effective decisions to be based on the varying interests of women and men as well on the principles of human justice and equity.
- Mayor Udean Grove, Commonwealth of Dominica. Speaking on behalf of the Caribbean, Mayor Grove spoke to the need for local government reform in many of the CARICOM territories and for partnership between women's organisations and other NGOs in advancing the agenda for women's political empowerment through the local government system.
- Ms. Margot Thomas, Archivist, gave a gender perspective on the development of local government in St. Lucia.

The following were the main comments made from the floor:

- women candidates must not allow party affiliation to interfere with their judgment of what is right or wrong;
- local government must be projected as a place of equal importance with central government within the political system - they must be seen as different spheres of governance;
- there is great need for education on what local government does, or is supposed to do;
- there is need for greater recognition of women and for focus on young people;
- women must be educated on the importance of politics to their everyday life.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CLOSING

These sessions were co-facilitated by Councillor Phyllis Cayetano of Belize, and Ms. Linnette Vassell, Resource Person, Jamaica.

In the session dealing with recommendations, participants in groups reviewed the expectations that had been expressed to see to what extent they had been addressed and what specific recommendations, if any, had been made.

The various recommendations that had been made throughout the symposium were also pulled together and discussed in plenary. A working group was composed to present the final recommendations for adoption.

Closing:

The closing exercise saw statements from the main sponsoring bodies as well as from a number of participants:

Dr. Baksh-Soodeen of the Commonwealth Secretariat, commended the organisational arrangements for the symposium, in particular the work of the Local Organising Committee, headed by Mr. Egbert Lionel, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government, strongly supported by Ms. Marcia Lesmond, Director of Women's Affairs, the Mayor of Castries and Ms. Adelina Auguste and resources persons.

She apologised to the representatives of CARICOM, UNICEF, UNIFEM, and the Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies, for the fact that signs for their official identification in the symposium had not been prepared. Dr. Baksh-Soodeen expressed appreciation for their active participation and the wish for collaboration in the follow-up, which she said was very important.

She thanked participants for the breadth and depth of their presentations and discussions, and expressed the hope that the Symposium deliberations and recommendations will inform the Caribbean local government agenda in the period ahead.

Ms. Raveles of CAFRA thanked all participants, especially the men in the symposium whom she said had shown great understanding and support. She said that Suriname has had a long interest in convening a conference on women and politics in the Caribbean, and this symposium would give impetus to the process. She said that while women are prominent in community organisations, such activities are not regarded as political. Yet, their experience at the community level can motivate women to enter electoral politics.

Ms. Singh of CALGA said the symposium was a pioneering venture and asked for participants' support to make CALGA an effective force for continuing contact.

Among the many other noteworthy comments were those of the men:

“I am grateful to be a part of this symposium. I will go home with renewed energy and vigour.”

“I didn't know that in the Caribbean we have so many problems among our women. I hope to encourage some women's organisations to take up some of these issues.”

“ I hope that we as men will look at the problems of women with a different eye.”

Appreciation and thanks were expressed by participants to the government and people of St. Lucia, and Ms. Lesmond thanked all participants on behalf of the Local Organising Committee for their support and hoped that their stay in the country had been pleasant.

EVALUATION REPORT

Participants were asked to evaluate the different sessions of the symposium. The following table gives a summary of the responses:

Session	% rating of 0-5	% rating of 6-10	Absences & No responses
1. Opening Ceremony	3	71	26
2. Commonwealth Experiences	0	80	20
3. Defining Expectations	0	86	14
4. Caribbean engendering experiences	0	86	14
5. Overcoming obstacles	0	80	20
6. Changing our belief systems	0	97	3
7. Trip to Soufriere Volcano*	6	73	15
8. Developing our tools of persuasion	3	94	3
9. Caribbean Local Government experiences	3	86	11
10. Recommendations	0	89	11
Forum at Castries Library	11	75	14

*Session 7 had a response of Not Applicable for one person (3%) and one incorrect response (3%).

Participants were asked to rate how helpful the information presented would be when they return home. The results were as follows:

Rating Given	Percentage
Very Much	31
Much	43
Some	26
A Little	0
None	0
Total	100

Persons were asked to say what he or she thought was the best liked feature of the meeting. The following were among the comments made:

- Networking with people from the NGOs, local government and administrative sectors in the Caribbean;
- Information availability;
- The professional approach of the Secretariat of the symposium;
- Vibrant participation by the women and the open way in which people expressed their concerns;
- Capturing common ground by listening and experiencing and being part of the entire process;
- Learning more about Caribbean politics, the experience of collaborative work and effort, skills building and the media, the practical approaches to engendering local government and the supportive environment;
- The positive spirit in which matters were discussed and the welcome and chance to actively participate given to men;
- The process allowed full participation and everyone who wanted to contribute was given a chance to do so;
- The ideas given to motivate women in a course of action;
- All the sessions;
- Information on gender.

Participants were asked to comment upon one thing that they would have done differently if they had organised the meeting:

- Extend the time; more session time; increasing the number of days to five; shorter working days; more time to gather information; better time keeping;
- Feedback from the local community on the issues raised at the conference; exclude the public forum and visit some women in the wider population;
- Have more government ministers involved;
- Involve more men; ensuring gender balance and gender balanced presentations;
- Detailed presentation about activities done by women in the local government and the implementation of development projects;
- Organise comfortable flights for those travelling long distances;
- Keep the library function in order;
- See local groups in action;
- More discussions on the countries' local councils;
- Use the information about the participants' background to prepare them for the diverse inputs made; ask each person to introduce themselves to the group as an ice-breaker; have introductions of everyone on the first day;

- Get a copy of how each country's local government works, identify their initiatives and differences so that other countries with similar problems can learn from others;
- More social activities;
- Ensure that no one was allowed to be absent or leave pre-maturely;
- Ensure youth involvement;
- Sponsor more local women;
- More men should be involved as facilitators;
- Give Caribbean perspective more visibility and audibility during the sessions;
- Ensure that sessions do not overlap in content, for example the Public Forum repeated what had been presented;

Respondents were asked to indicate one thing heard, felt or seen during the meeting which they would remember for a long time:

- Unlearning past hurts; the oppression we face in our youth that affect many of us for the rest of our lives; the carrying of historical baggage throughout our lifetime;
- Meeting fellow South Africans and Caribbean people;
- The session by Dr. Eudine Barriteau, the statements made by the delegate from South Africa; the session held and conducted by Dr. Gillian Goddard; the session on communications;
- A feeling of guilt that we have invaded the space of indigeneous peoples and the expectation we have of them to conform to have us is values and customs;
- Gender audit and planning;
- Visiting the volcano;
- Tips re. public speaking and dealing with the media;
- That civic education in schools must begin promptly;
- The experience at the sulphur springs;
- The togetherness; the friendliness; the unity of the people from the various islands;
- The awakening of women's consciousness of gender issues;
- The need for more women to enter local government;
- The women from Britain who admitted being survivors of domestic violence, homelessness, etc., and yet succeeded;
- The beauty of the different Caribbean people;
- The Symposium was informative, people friendly and persons worked as a team;
- Our rights as a 'huwoman' being.
- That men are in support of engendering local government;
- Trying to understand how men feel and encourage dialogue with my brothers;
- I spoke out when I had an important idea;
- Clinging to other men and sometimes remaining quiet with burning issues;
- Men should treat women with respect.

Participants were asked about the personal and organisational changes that would be made in respondent's life either this month, this year and/or this century and the next.

1. Empowerment:

- pursue an empowerment strategy;
- include more women in programmes and community organisations and encourage their participation in local government;
- ensure that my organisation continues to support the issue of increasing women's participation in politics;
- gender sensitize my thoughts for action;
- make sure my committees are gender balanced;
- strengthen myself to be able to change the belief systems of people who have learnt to be oppressors.

2. Information, Training And Education:

- use various media sources to share information learnt (use the media to sensitize the society about the importance of the re-introduction of local government and explain the importance of women's participation);
- organise mock council meetings for young people and an association of chairpersons of councils on my island;
- organise capacity building for women in Asia;
- have sessions with young women;
- get more training for women in my community for local government;
- have a talk at one of our women's and Parish Council meetings;
- sensitize people to the benefits of organising local government;
- educate the Council;
- circulate information on women in local government;
- contextualize women's experiences in LGCs and use it in training and teaching;
- help plan for gender analysis planning training for local government officials;
- organise training for women in the rural area;
- speak to other teachers of Re-evaluation Counselling;
- make more people aware of the council nominations as well as the process of local government elections.

3. Networking:

- facilitate ongoing sub-regional exchanges and networking;
- renew contact with multilateral organisations represented at the symposium;
- disseminate the situational analysis in Asia through our publication;
- network with new friends made;

- share this experience with my women's group in my municipality;
- share information on obstacles and strategies in local government training;
- build a strong Caribbean-wide organisation to ensure full inclusion.

4. Lobbying:

- lobby for child care services as a benefit for women in local government;
- ensure that my organization continues to support the issue of increasing women's participation in politics;
- discuss with the party leader the issue of having gender balanced programmes;
- ensure that the Women's Desk in my country is reactivated;
- sensitize national leaders of the need or importance of educating the women in local government;
- ensure that women are 'adequately' represented in the nominations to the Council.

5. Mobilization And Political Participation:

- continue community building projects;
- consider whether to stand for elections;
- encourage the formation of a Women's Caucus in local government;
- issue a press release and organise a network of organisations and funders to:
 - do a video on women in politics (incl. LGCs);
 - hold forum for women in politics (incl. LGCs);
 - extend organisations to rural areas;
- get more women involved in local government;
- articulate for engendering local government;
- mentor more women, especially youths to move into local and national government.

6. Development of a Database

- develop an inventory of women in local government;
- try to establish a database on women in local government;
- look at the issue of domestic violence.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LIST OF SYMPOSIUM DOCUMENTS

- “Message” by Minister With Responsibility for Local Government, St Lucia, The Hon. Damian Greaves
- “Opening Ceremony Presentation”, Dr Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Commonwealth Secretariat
- “Introduction”, Lucy Slack, Commonwealth Local Government Forum
- “En-gender-ing Local Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean, a Regional Local Government Perspective”, Dr. Sandra Singh, Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities
- “Engendering Local Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean”, Dr. Violet Eudine Barriteau, University of the West Indies
- “Progress Report on Resolutions taken at the Southern African Symposium on Women in Local Government”, Cllr. Makhosi Khoza, South African Local Government Association
- “Gender and Municipal Development, Guidelines for Promoting Women’s Participation in Partnership Program Activities”, Mayor Ann MacLean, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- “Women in Politics”, The Hon. Cllr. Joan Taylor, Local Government Association, Britain
- “The Role of Women in a Changing Society and Leadership Training”, Jean Crump, Local Government Officer, Antigua and Barbuda
- “Gender Integration in Local Government in Belize”, Cllr. Phyllis Cayetano
- “En-gender-ing Local Government”, Trinidad and Tobago Association of Local Government Authorities
- “Women and Local Government in St Lucia”, Margot Thomas

- “Carib Women and Local Government in Dominica”, Veronica Durand, Carib Woman and Local Support in Dominica
- “Gender Integration into Local Government in the Caribbean, A Regional NGO Perspective”, Nadia Raveles, CAFRA
- “Women’s Parliament Forum Project, Final Report”, The Network of Non-Governmental Organisations of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women
- “Changing Belief Systems as a Prerequisite for Engendering Local Government”, Dr Gillian Goddard, Caribbean Institute for Human Research
- “How to Campaign Effectively”, Lesley Abdela, Eyecatcher Associates/Project Parity
- “How to Prepare and Give a Talk/Speech”, Lesley Abdela, Eyecatcher Associates/Project Parity
- “Preparation for Press and Media Interviews”, Lesley Abdela, Eyecatcher Associates/Project Parity
- “Summary of the Key discussion Points arising from the Workshop on Local Government Leadership, Women and Community Empowerment”, Charmaine Arbovin, 10 April, 1997, Jamaica Conference Centre
- “Case Study of Participation of Women in Politics and Decision-making Processes: The Women’s Parliament Forum (VPF) in Suriname”.
- “Women’s Participation in Local Government : The Jamaican Experience. Joan Browne, The Jamaica Women’s Political Caucus”.
- “Women in Local Government: The Dominican Experience”.
- “Women and Local Government in Dominica”.
- “Bahamas Report”.
- “Women’s Participation in Local Government in Nevis”.
- “Guyana: Women in Local Government”.

APPENDIX II:

Symposium Agenda and Timetable

29 June 1997 ARRIVAL

REGISTRATION

30 June 1997 – Day One

SESSION I OPENING CEREMONY – ST. LUCIA, COMSEC, CLGF, CALGA
CAFRA

SESSION II COMMONWEALTH EXPERIENCES OF EN - GENDER-ING LOCAL
GOVERNMENT - Asian, Southern African regions, Britain & Canada

SESSION III DEFINING EXPECTATIONS

SESSION IV COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCES OF
EN-GENDER-ING LOCAL GOVERNMENT – Centre for Gender and
Development Studies, CALGA, CAFRA

COMSEC/CGLF RECEPTION, Folk Research Centre, Castries

1 July 1997 – Day Two

SESSION V OVERCOMING OBSTACLES FACED BY WOMEN IN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

Participants divide into two working groups, and list

- obstacles faced by women wishing to enter or succeed in local government in their countries, and
- strategies for overcoming these obstacles

SESSION VI CHANGING OUR PERSONAL BELIEF SYSTEMS AS AN
ENABLING CONDITION FOR ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY
IN POLITICS IN OUR SOCIETIES: BREAKING UP THE OLD,
CREATING THE NEW

Presentation and participatory activity led by Dr. Gillian Goddard

SESSION VII FIELD TRIP: Soufriere Volcano and Sulphur Springs

2 July 1997 – Day Three

SESSION VIII SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOP ON CHAIRING MEETINGS,
PUBLIC SPEAKING, LOBBYING AND NEGOTIATION

Presentations

SESSION IX SKILLS BUILDING WORKSHOP CONTD.
Presentation and Panel on getting to Know and Understand the
Media
Practice Session & Plenary Discussion

SESSION X LOCAL GOVERNMENT, CURRENT EXPERIENCES
COUNTRY REPORTS:

Antigua/Barbuda
Bahamas Jamaica
Belize St Kitts/Nevis
Dominica St. Lucia
Guyana Trinidad & Tobago

3 July 1997 – Day Four

SESSION XI WORKING GROUPS TO DRAW UP RECOMMENDATIONS

SESSION XII RECOMMENDATIONS AND CLOSING

Presentations of Recommendations for En-gender-ing Local
Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean

Closing Remarks

APPENDIX III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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