

Fifty/ Fifty



Rapporteurs' Report

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**IR4 Civil Society Influences Public Policy
Increasing Women's Political Participation
National Survey on Public Perception of Women in Politics**

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DAY 1: BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

Presentation: Summary of Survey Findings on Women's Perception of Women in Politics in Guyana - Ms. Roxanne Myers, Assistant Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Guyana

Background

The survey was completed in February 2003. 446 questionnaires were prepared and distributed in Guyana's ten administrative regions and twenty-four focus-group discussions and informal interviews were conducted. Respondents were selected by a process of random selection.

The breakdown on the sample population by race was as follows: Afro-Guyanese (34percent), Indo-Guyanese (32percent), Mixed (24percent), Amerindian (8percent), Chinese (1percent), and Portuguese (1percent).

Two-thirds of the sample population were community activists involved in projects to improve conditions in their villages. These women viewed themselves as being capable of effecting change at the community level. The trades union sector was least represented. Of the 296 respondents, only three held executive positions.

FINDINGS

Women's Socio-Political Participation

Factors that discourage Community Activity

- Respondents who indicated that they were not involved in community activities often cited family responsibilities and the demands of the workplace as the primary reason for their lack of involvement.
- Race/ethnicity is commonly thought of as a factor affecting women's participation at the community level. However, respondents did not identify race/ethnicity as a barrier.
- Respondents also indicated that they did not participate in political life because they could not see any connection between involvement in community work and improvement of their personal circumstances.

Election Campaigns

- Many of the respondents had never been asked to contribute time or resources to a campaign. In most cases, women who contributed to a campaign have donated time and facilities rather than money. A significant percentage never contributed to an election campaign.
- Respondents view politics in Guyana as confrontational. They indicated that they would not participate unless the rules of the game changes. In the present situation, women did not feel they would be able to make an impact politically.
- Respondents cited financial considerations as an impediment to their participation in politics. They felt that elected office would take them away from paid work and that elected positions offered inadequate financial compensation.

- The survey also sought to ascertain why women, who voted in the last election, voted the way they did. The majority perceived that the party they voted for had proposed development plans. The more ethnically polarized regions perceived a platform while the less polarized regions voted along traditional family lines.

Women and Advocacy

- The majority of respondents perceived advocacy as confrontation and protest activities and indicated that they did not want to be part of an advocacy campaign for fear of being perceived as partisan.
- Those who had been involved in advocacy campaigns most frequently cited local community issues as the basis of the campaigns. Other gender specific issues such as domestic violence and women's rights were also cited. A few groups cited HIV/AIDS, and water and power supply.
- Survey results suggested that either there was little collaboration among groups conducting advocacy campaigns or that few women's groups are actually involved in advocacy.

Women and the Media

- The survey attempted to capture women's views on the way the media handled items about/relating to women. 30 percent of the respondents felt that the media was never positive in reporting stories regarding women, 49 percent said they would sometimes seek female experts when they talk about issues and 12 percent said they always consulted female experts.
- Just over half of the respondents felt that the portrayal of the roles and images of women in the media was sometimes positive. However, 28 percent indicated that reports and stories that were derogatory or demeaning were given more airtime or positioned as front-page or center-page reports.

On the other hand, those reports that celebrated women's achievements were given less space and prominence.

- Women have not used the media extensively. More organized groups that were interviewed said they used press conferences, press releases and paid advertisements to air their issues. Smaller community groups tended to use posters, flyers and word-of-mouth to advertise activities or air issues.

Women's Political Participation

- Women's participation in public meetings and consultations was low. Respondents indicated that they did not attend because they were not aware that the meetings were taking place.
- Respondents had a fair idea of the constitutional provisions in Guyana that would allow them to participate equally but they felt that women parliamentarians did not make women's issues a priority.
- Participants suggested the following:
 - i. A need to increase the number of women in Parliament who are sensitive to women's issues.

- ii. An increase in numbers of female parliamentarians would help bring a critical mass to influence policy.
 - iii. More women would likely result in cross-party cooperation in Parliament on issues that affect women.
 - iv. The need for journalists and editors to be sensitive to issues of importance to women such as unemployment, poverty, criminal violence and rape.
- The main impediments to women's involvement identified by respondents were lack of opportunities. Other impediments to women's involvement included lack of education and lack of confidence. Training to assist women in preparing themselves for participation in political life was identified as essential to overcoming the latter barriers.
 - The research found that for women to be actively engaged in politics in Guyana, they needed to be engaged at the community level. Community level engagement demonstrates that there is the capacity to become engaged in decision-making and in positions of authority.

Q & A /Comments of Survey Presentation

Comment

- Would there be the possibility of sharing the questionnaire to collect comparative data in the Caribbean regarding obstacles to women's involvement as well as the systems that work and those that do not?
- At the end of the conference, there should be action for this kind of process to begin.

Question

- To what extent were women in academia, private sector, etc consulted concerning their views on women's political participation? By and large women in these sectors take a hands-off approach and don't like to 'dirty their hands' with politics even though they are well positioned to influence women's participation financially and in other ways.

Answer

- Respondents were primarily local activists. Efforts were made to target a cross section of women but due to circumstances, the majority of the sample was at the grassroots level. Focus groups and "elite interviews" captured some other women such as national politicians and academics.

Question

- There is concern about whether additional women in Parliament will necessarily mean that women's interests will be considered.

Answer

- Respondents to the survey were disenchanted by the scant attention women parliamentarians paid to issues that were important to them. However, there are two sides to this. When you do not have the critical mass in Parliament, it becomes even more difficult to get women's issues on the table and to keep them on the front burner. Having more women in Parliament would perhaps help those who are already there to have the courage to stand up and speak out.

Question

- Women need to understand what politics means. We might be making an assumption that because we have been involved in this exercise at the grassroots level for a number of years that all women understand what politics is and this may be an error. In

addition, the general view is that politics is confrontational and women's discomfort with this is based on upbringing. Other factors as to why women resist confrontation that should be examined, for example the impact of religion on women's roles in the region. In addition, women need to understand that politics affects their daily lives. It does not make sense to ask women to leave their comfort zones, go out, and have a battle with men. Politics should therefore be redefined in a way that women are comfortable with and see as critical to their lives.

Answer

- The work that NDI has done in empowering women for local government has been effective. They have gone to communities, seen where the women are, seen what their needs are and encouraged them to become involved. They are encouraged to see the links between poor sanitation, and poor drainage and improving the quality of life their family enjoys. By becoming actively involved the women can influence the policies. For too long men have been making the decisions on how and what women should get. The Guyana Association of Women Lawyers (GAWL) program also took this position. There is work in Guyana that looks at where women are and tries to bring the nexus between where they are and their participation at the national and local levels.

Comments

- Women fall prey to the notion that Ms. Myers espoused a while ago that putting the critical mass in parliament will make a difference. If the Party or group does not have a mandate for women's issues then when they get to Parliament they will in essence fulfill the mandate of the Party and not that of women's issues. Therefore, women should not be selected just because they are women but based on their mandate and the possible impact it could have in the parliament. In addition, the notion that women are afraid of conflict is not often reflected when one looks at the vast majority of women who are participating at the grassroots level (which is where the confrontations take place in Jamaica). The problem comes when women have to move into the higher levels of politicking. Women are not afraid, what they need to do is to become more involved in networking and being part of a movement that would put women's issues in the forefront and not forget them when elected to office. Nevertheless, this has to happen when they are elected on a mandate that puts women's issue on the front burner.
- We need to value the politics that takes place in the community in the same way that we value the politics that takes place in Parliament. The work done on the ground is political and should be valued as a major contribution because it influences policies. Quite often the issues that are dealt with at the grassroots come from women's homes and their communities. Contrary to what was said earlier, the fact that women are able to organise demonstrations and protests in their communities suggests some amount of networking and advocacy is taking place.
- The seminar presents an excellent opportunity to look at similarities and differences as it relates to the region. It also offers an opportunity for us to share some of the best practices in the region. This forum could be an annual event so that it creates a platform for women in politics to meet and to share with each other. This forum should be held at the national level so that the situation can be assessed within the individual territories to take the process forward.
- In Guyana, women often work at the community level for political parties but are not represented at the policy-making level in Parliament. Why it is that women in the parties are not forcing women's issues onto the table? In addition, why are female activists not pushing the issues? What needs to be addressed is why women's issues are not getting on the parties agendas.

Panel Discussion: Global, National and Regional Perspectives on Increasing Women's Political Participation – Ms. June Zeitlan, Executive Director, Women's Environment and Development Association (WEDO); Ms. Vanda Radzik, Coordinator Guyana Caribbean Gender Equality Programme; Ms. Sheila Roseau, Executive Director, Directorate of Gender Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda.

Global Perspectives on Increasing Women's Political Participation.

Facilitator: June Zeitlan

- A picture taken in 2000 at the Millennium Summit that was convened by United Nations Secretary General, Kofi A. Annan to set the agenda for the next decade of work at the United Nations shows only one pair of legs. Ten women were present at the Summit. Delegates were Heads of Government of member states.
- The 50/50 campaign has been trying to facilitate groups around the world. In the Caribbean, the campaign has been involved in launching campaigns in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname.
- Women make up 14.7 percent of the representatives in Parliaments worldwide, almost 5 percent more than in 1995 when the First World Conference on Women was convened at Beijing. At that time, governments around the world were urged to implement 30 percent representation by women in all decision-making bodies. In 1995, women comprised 10 percent of all decision-making bodies. In 2003, that number is barely 15 percent. At this rate, it will take at least a century before women achieve the goals established at Beijing. Despite discouraging statistics, there are also inspiring successes in many parts of the world.
- Until the late 1990's, only some Northern European and Scandinavian countries had achieved critical mass. Sweden has 45 percent women in government and more than half of Swedish cabinet ministers are women. Public policy has been affected by the presence of women in government in Sweden, Norway, The Netherlands and other European countries where women have been a critical mass for some time.
- In other parts of the world, individual countries have moved very rapidly to achieve a critical mass of 30 percent. South Africa launched a campaign to increase women's political participation and increased women's representation in parliament from 2 percent to 30 percent.
- South Africa, Mozambique, Costa Rica, and Argentina have all achieved 30 percent representation by women.
- Every country that has achieved 30percent representation by women has successfully lobbied for a quota or managed to have it mandated by law. Since the 50/50 campaign was launched in the year 2000, 16 countries have initiated their own campaigns. These include Namibia, Nigeria, The Philippines, Bulgaria, India, Indonesia and Japan. Each is pursuing strategies appropriate to their circumstances.
- In Argentina, women achieved a 30 percent quota in the House. They then successfully lobbied for a 30 percent quota in the Senate. In the last election there, women went from 2 to 30 percent of elected positions.

- Raising awareness is critical to increasing women's political participation. Many people are either not aware that women are underrepresented or they do not think increasing women's participation can make a difference.
- Training women to perform when they are elected is also an important component of a program designed to increase women's political participation.
- Policy change is a critical issue in the 50/50 campaign. It is not possible to have true democracy when 50 percent of the population is not included. Research shows that having a critical mass of women over 30 percent affects social policy.
- In Namibia when the 50/50 campaign was launched, women's groups came together and set an issue-oriented manifesto, which focused on HIV/AIDS, and other key issues and ran on this platform. They were able to effect change around issues as well as increase women's representation. In fact, Namibia has one of the highest proportions of women's representation at the local level, almost 40 percent.
- In India, there is a 30 percent quota for women in local government. Indian women say they have seen a difference in the effectiveness of the councils as a result of having more women representation.

Meeting Challenges

- Ensuring that women realize their potential once they are elected is critical and there are a number of tools that women can use to prepare themselves. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has a very comprehensive international treaty for women with an agenda that women can implement once elected.
- Women need the support of male counterparts to effect changes in policy. To this end, women need to sensitise and build alliances with male Parliamentarians.
- Women have indicated that they find politics hostile and dirty. In order to encourage women to run for office and stay in office once elected, the political arena must be transformed. Networks of women politicians and other women's groups can be a source of support and resources for female politicians.
- Campaigns designed to increase women's political participation should be directed at the local, national, regional, and international levels. Policies designed at all levels to affect women.

WEDO provides resource materials that detail the experiences of countries that have conducted campaigns to increase women's political participation. Materials are also available on the WEDO website: www.wedo.org.

Increasing Women's Political Participation – A National Perspective **Facilitator: Vanda Radzik**

- 2001 was a landmark year in Guyana because women approached the all-male political parliamentary reform commission with a recommendation for a general principle to encourage women's participation in decision-making to be enshrined in the constitution. The recommendation was accepted and the result was that 33 percent of candidates on party lists in the 2001 elections were women. However, the parties did not appoint 33

percent women to parliament. The letter of the communiqué and the legislation was ignored.

- Women in Guyana have been working toward the creation of a women's parliamentary caucus to look at priority issues such as economic issues, health and education, violence against women and other forms of gender based violence, environmental issues, corruption, accountability and transparency and building networks of women in politics nationally.
- Women came together on the eve of the 2001 elections and produced an accord for peace and non-violence during and after elections. This was a powerful action and similar initiatives should continue.

Regional Strategies for Increasing Women's Political Participation
Facilitator: Sheila Roseau

- Women comprise more than half of the population but representation in parliaments worldwide is about 15 percent. In the history of Antigua and Barbuda a woman has never been elected. The Speaker of the House and the Attorney General are women and there are 17 woman senators. These are all appointed positions.
- In Antigua and Barbuda, women have equal access to education and it is also true that women are more successful academically than men. However, despite the fact that there are no legal barriers, academic success has not translated to an increase in the number of women in decision-making bodies. Women's participation would allow for more effective representation of gender issues. It would also mean a more constructive and less adversarial approach to governance.
- A new project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), aims to encourage women's participation in politics. It has only been in operation for one year, but results have already been detected: more women are coming forward to be selected as candidates.

Panel Discussion – Political Socialization/Models of Political Involvement - Ms. Evelyn Smart, Founding Coordinator, Jamaican Women's Political Caucus; Ms. Annie Campbell, Founding Member, Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC); Ms. Philomena Sahoye-Shury, Parliamentary Secretary, Guyana, Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

The Jamaican Model
Evelyn Smart

Facilitator:

- The Jamaica Women's Political Caucus was established in 1992, 29 years after Jamaica's Independence. It was set up to encourage and facilitate the participation of women in active politics at the highest level. The establishment of the caucus was fuelled by strategies recommended by the UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya 1985, the CEDAW document printed to support these strategies and the International Federation on Business and Professional Women, whose theme was "Women in Politics."

- In 1989, the St. Andrews Business and Professional Women's Club convened a session to discuss 'Women in Politics.' The panel included women representatives from the two major parties. The gathering challenged women politicians to establish a women's political caucus to assist women in politics in Jamaica. Out of this caucus, one woman became the first female senator and another, senior party chairperson.
- The group spent three years developing the terms of reference for the caucus, which is comprised of representatives from all major political parties, the Jamaica Council of Churches, the Association of Women's Organizations in Jamaica, and a public representative.

Effectiveness of the Model- the Jamaica model has been effective for the following reasons:

- ❖ It has seven well-researched strategies for the development and promotion of women in electoral politics. The strategies govern the actions of the model as well.
- ❖ It is a watchdog for women in politics
- ❖ The Institute for Public Leadership, which is the caucus's training arm, uses experienced political trainers to implement regular training sessions and workshops for women. The curriculum is modeled on a programme created by the YWCA in Buffalo, USA.
- ❖ There is a candidate fund that pays nomination fees for all female candidates. In 1997, the fund paid nomination fees for 32 women. In 2002, the number of fees paid tripled.
- ❖ Women role models are honoured
- ❖ The caucus develops leadership skills among staff.
- ❖ The caucus builds alliances with individuals and organizations. It has ties with the Electoral Office of Jamaica and past and present women politicians who help to train potential candidates.
- ❖ Participation in public debates

Results:

- ❖ Reduced aggression between parties.
 - ❖ Women have become more confident.
 - ❖ People see the need for political education.
 - ❖ The selection process in parties has improved.
 - ❖ Increase in the number of women running for office both locally and nationally. From 1992-1997, there were 25 women councilors at the local level. In 1998, 118 ran for election and 56 were elected.
- The Caucus has been recommended as a model for other Caribbean countries.

The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition Experience
Annie Campbell

Facilitator:

- The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) was launched in 1996. Women came together because no women were to be at the table for the country's historic peace talks. With the future of the country at stake, women came together under the name The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition to get women elected to participate in the peace dialogue.

- A constitution for the Coalition was established that encompassed the following principles: Inclusivity; women uniting for a collective good; women needed to make women's needs a priority - putting them at the top of the political agenda; equality; targets must be in writing; the organisation should seek to have a balance in the responsibilities of men and women; it should be open to criticisms; and a broad platform should be outlined.
- The coalition measured progress on three principles: Human Rights; Equality and Inclusiveness. Policies do not infringe on the rights of any group. All activities organized are women and children friendly.

They should also:

- ❖ Be sensitive to the fact that women generally have primary responsibility for family financial commitments.
- ❖ Recognise that women's involvement in politics can have both positive and negative effects.
- ❖ Value and develop women's skills.
- ❖ Develop support networks.
- ❖ Recognise that women can influence global issues such as health, reproductive rights and globalization.
- ❖ Accept that mistakes are inevitable and use them as lessons for future actions.

Philomena Sahoye-Shury

- Over the last 50 years, the women's movement has struggled to increase women's political participation. Groups such as NDI, the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers and other NGOs lobbied for the cause. The government has passed supportive legislation allowing for an increase in the number of women in public life.
- Important initiatives include:
 - ❖ Changes to Guyana's Constitution in 2001 requiring that 33 percent of all candidates on party lists be women.
 - ❖ The Women's Commission and the Commission on the Rights of the Child were recognized as separate entities.
 - ❖ NDI training programmes designed to increase women's political participation were implemented in all ten of Guyana's administrative regions and included Indigenous Women.

Models of Political Involvement

The three most important areas of Political involvement for women are:

1. **Trade Union Movement-** according to a 1996 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Report, investment in human capital, the expansion of labor power, expenditures on health and nutrition, investments in education, training and research are critical to economic growth. It is vital that the link between human development and high levels of social disintegration be examined. Models that combine growth and equity should be developed. There must be a macro-economic policy vis-à-vis women and distinct processes whereby there is an understanding of:
 - ❖ Discrimination in the labor and credit markets.
 - ❖ Gender politics
 - ❖ Asymmetric rights and obligations in the home

- ❖ The crossroads between production and reproduction and the need for these to be integrated.

In the labour market the trade union movement must have a coordinated mechanism whereby the market economy does not erode the rights of female workers. Adjustments in public finance can play a very important role in raising the productivity of women's non-marketed work.

2. **Local Government-** For local government in Guyana there are two sets of laws that give local government bodies their authority. These laws should be revised so that the system is easier to manage, understand, and gender-friendly.
3. **National Government-** Although the revised constitution stipulates that each party list should comprise 33 percent women, this has not been fulfilled in parliament.

In Guyana many women lack the confidence to run for office even though they have the skills to be effective elected officials. The following measures need to be in place to facilitate women's participation:

- ❖ Gender neutral systems
- ❖ Institutional strengthening
- ❖ Creating engagements on the interdependence between production and reproduction
- ❖ Training teachers on gender issues
- ❖ Single parenting and national day care policy
- ❖ Women's participation in economic ventures
- ❖ Create a level playing field so that competition is equitable

Discussion/Comments

- No country knows real freedom unless its women are free.
- Women's rights are human rights.
- There is a need for women to be trained and prepared. Women need to be taught that it is not enough to say, "I want to run". The need for women to be winners was also stressed. Jamaica invited trainers from the YWCA in Buffalo, New York to train trainers in Jamaica. These trainers now work with potential candidates and women in politics through The Institute for Public Leadership.
- The 50/50 campaign is a global initiative. Stronger regional and international alliances and caucuses should be developed to support women candidates in their campaigns. World Trade Organization (WTO) policies will have a negative impact on women. Therefore, it is critical that women assume positions that will allow influence of policies.
- How was funding for the Jamaica Caucus acquired?
Response: The organization launched a million dollar campaign targeting banks and individual women.
- It is important that women develop economic literacy.
- Religion and culture are an important aspect of women's political socialization and should be explored.

Panel Discussion – Impediments to Women’s Involvement in Politics – Mr. Donald Ramoutar, General Secretary, PPP/C, Guyana; Ms. Anande Trotman, Senior Legal Counsel, Ministry of Legal Affairs, Grenada; Ms. Hazel Brown, Coordinator, Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women.

Facilitator: Donald Ramotar

- Although the struggle for women’s liberation has come a long way, the literature is contradictory about the results achieved by the women’s movement. The international feminist movement still seems to be having trouble identifying priority issues.
- There have been achievements. More women are occupying positions in the state apparatus and large corporations. However, it cannot be said women’s equality has been achieved.
- Women’s struggle for equality cannot be separated from issues concerning other groups that are fighting for their share of the economic pie. Women’s issues are part of the wider struggle for equality.
- Guyana has come a long way in terms of increasing women’s political participation. The major political parties believe that women should be better represented politically and have been supportive of initiatives designed to achieve this goal.
- One of the first breakthroughs for women politicians in Guyana was linked to the fight for universal adult suffrage. In 1953, Janet Jagan, Jesse Burnham and Jane Phillips Gay entered parliament paving the way for other women politicians.
- One of the problems in Guyana is that women often carry the burden of bringing up children on their own. Over the last decade, a number of nursery schools have been built so that women can participate more fully.
- Economic issues sometimes impede women’s participation.
- Traditions, culture and attitudes can also be impediments. There are some men who don’t feel that their wives should go out and get elected.
- A woman may feel intimidated in a male dominated environment. We need to create a less intimidating environment if we are to encourage women’s participation.
- In Guyana, we look at local government as an arena in which we prepare people for higher office. Both men and women lack experience in local government and need programmes to prepare them for higher office.
- We also have to decide whether women should occupy positions purely because they are women. Many women who succeed in politics or other fields earn their positions through hard work. While recognizing that its intention is to create conditions for women’s development, the 50/50 campaign can be construed as being condescending to women.

Anande Trotman

- Women must support each other in politics across party lines.
- Lobbying is an important a tool for women’s work in politics.
- Women’s socialization does not encourage participation in politics
- As advocates, women lawyers had many trailblazers including Guyana’s Chancellor – the first female Chancellor in the Caribbean.
- Lack of education is an impediment.
- Family responsibilities discourage women from participating in politics. Increasingly women are raising children on their own. Quality, affordable childcare is critical if women are to be encouraged to participate.
- Caribbean culture attaches a stigma to women who are politically active. Women in public life are slandered about their sexuality. Husbands are taunted about not being able to control their wives. The pressure often affects relationships and the family.
- Women with more experience need to work with other women to support them and encourage their participation. Mentorship programmes and other role modeling activities are essential to encouraging women’s participation.
- Legislation that supports programmes to encourage women’s participation is crucial.

Hazel Brown

In order to solve the problem of impediments to women’s participation, we need to define what we mean by impediments. There are 14 impediments to women’s involvement.

1. Political parties lack of openness
2. Lack of support-networking
3. Lack of skills such as media skills, literacy, negotiation skills, networking skills, oral and written communication skills, message development, advocacy and lobbying skills and information gathering skills.
4. Lack of visibility
5. Family responsibilities
6. Finance – it is impossible to win an election without access to funding
7. The system is not gender sensitive. For example, women parliamentarians are not covered with maternity benefits.
8. Aversion to power over people – Women need to learn that it is possible to exercise power with people rather than over them.
9. Culture/religion- best way to deal with obstacles concerning religion is innovative interpretations.
10. Lack of mentoring
11. Lack of numbers
12. Security issues-personal safety
13. Adverse media exposure
14. Lack of passion.

Questions/Comments

- Delegates expressed concern with the process by which candidates are selected for party lists. Hand picking candidates for the lists results in them becoming responsible to the party rather than the people.
- The way the system is structured makes it difficult for councilors to make decisions independent of the party.
- The issue of sexual harassment was mentioned.
- Job security was mentioned. A delegate explained that many women were unable to get time off to attend workshops, conferences, council meetings, and therefore had to use their annual leave in order to be able to attend conferences such as these.

DAY 2: STRATEGY SESSIONS

Session 1: Controlling the Image – Ms. Grace Talma, Managing Director, Grace Talma Associates and Company Limited; Ms. Hazel Brown, Coordinator, Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women

Facilitator: Grace Talma

(Discussion with interventions from the floor)

Overview:

Women must have a clear vision of the image that they want to create. In defining that image, it is important to be clear whom your campaign is targeting and what you wish to communicate to that audience.

Important Characteristics:

- ❖ Understanding your personal power. This can be achieved through self-exploration and discovery. It is not only important to recognize your strengths but to project those strengths so that others recognize them.
 - ❖ Passion for issues or causes will inspire others.
 - ❖ It is important to be honest and empathetic. At the same time, women must have the authority to inspire confidence.
 - ❖ Women must know how to celebrate achievements and to acknowledge the accomplishments of others.
 - ❖ Women must view leadership in terms of cooperation/collaboration and not as a male sphere of influence.
- **Definition of image** – Image is the impression someone leaves on one or more public. It is the perception that others have of us.
 - **The media and image**
The media is one of the most powerful sources of information. Historically, media coverage of women and women's issues has been inadequate. Images of women are often negative and derogatory. On the other hand, the media has been pivotal in highlighting changes on women's issues.
 - **Strategies to control the image**
 - ❖ Women are often less visible because we are less familiar with how to access the media and less comfortable promoting ourselves. Women need to take every opportunity to be on television – constant exposure helps to get the

message across. It is possible to create opportunities to be in the media by hosting press conferences, media breakfasts etc.

- ❖ Develop a working knowledge of the media and people in the media. Get to know and develop relationships with people in positions of influence in the media. It is also important to know which reporters have an interest in or are sympathetic to your issues. A close, mutually beneficial relationship with the media is critical. Maintain close contact and build trust with editors and journalists. Form alliances with editors and journalists.
- ❖ Briefing journalists thoroughly and working closely with them is helpful in keeping control of your own image

- **The Messenger**

- ❖ Be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses. Learn how to project strengths and downplay weaknesses.
- ❖ Be aware of body language and the messages you may be sending.
- ❖ It is important to know who you are and be yourself.

- **The Message**

- The actual message**

- ❖ Presentations should have visual impact. It is therefore very effective to use graphics, color, color-coding, numbers and percentages, which are based on research. Use them to create images and pictures in the minds of your audience. Try to appeal to the eye, the ear and the heart.
- ❖ The message must be timely and it must have a purpose.
- ❖ Repetition is important – it has been suggested that key aspects of the message should be repeated 16 times – referred to as the 16 times principle.
- ❖ The KISS principle: keep it simple, sweet and short.

- The message and the audience**

- ❖ Be flexible - know the audience and be able adapt the message to suit the listener. Be aware of the audience's needs, interests and level of sophistication and direct your message accordingly.
- ❖ Create messages, which can be accepted and easily understood.

- The message and the media**

- ❖ Find innovative ways to get your message into the media, e.g. suggest new story ideas to the media, produce your own programmes etc.
- ❖ Always think of the relationship with the media as a partnership. Each partner needs the other to accomplish his or her objectives.
- ❖ Always be honest with the media.
- ❖ Provide resources e.g. floppies, leaflets, pamphlets, snacks.
- ❖ Acknowledge the media at different fora.
- ❖ Align yourselves with women in the media.
- ❖ Be professional in your dealings with the media.
- ❖ It is important to remember the difference between public relations, news and the media. Do not depend on the media to be your Public Relations Officer.

- The message – tools to improve its effectiveness**

- ❖ Plan a strategy for your press releases including when and how you want the story to be revealed.
- ❖ Ensure that you stay current about local, national, regional and international events
- ❖ It is useful to store materials in different forms- CDs, videos, etc.

The message – tips for media appearances

- ❖ Pay attention to appearance especially for television broadcasts. Pay attention to colour and style of clothing and to make-up. Seek advice on dress and make-up for television appearances.
- ❖ Remember that especially for television – your message must be clear and clean.

Other Issues

- ❖ If you invite politicians or other officials to speak, ensure that you are able to manage what they present so that it is consistent with the issues you want to present.
- ❖ Recruit spokespeople who believe in your message.
- ❖ It is not necessary to know everything about an issue in order to address it.
- ❖ The media recognizes confidence not arrogance.
- ❖ Be identified with particular issues preferably those you are comfortable with or knowledgeable about.

Session II: Collaborations, Networks and Caucuses – Ms. Lilette Barkley-Waite, National Representative for CAFRA; Ms. Jean Nisbet-Harris, Minister of Health, St. Kitts-Nevis; Ms. Hazel Brown Coordinator, Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women

(General information on CAFRA and its work, areas of concern regarding women and political participation)

Facilitator: Lilette Barkley- Waite

- The Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) is committed to follow-up actions on the Beijing Platform for Action. CAFRA's objectives are to create a pool of women candidates, to provide a support system for all women in politics, to assist women in preparing themselves as viable candidates and to create supportive environments for women politicians.
- The organization facilitates effective communication among women at the organizational, local and regional levels. It confronts power issues among women with respect to class, color and race, encourages non-partisan networking. CAFRA assists women to acquire or hone lobbying, advocacy and negotiation skills. CAFRA also helps women establish branch offices.
- CAFRA implements training programmes for potential candidates, candidates and parliamentary representatives in the following areas: image building, conflict resolution, media relations, women's history, organization building, community development, gender sensitization and analysis, basic technology skills, and the rights of candidates.
- CAFRA is in the process of conducting a survey of women's involvement in politics over the past ten years.
- CAFRA outlined 12 critical areas of concern, one of which was "Women in Power and Decision-Making." CAFRA carried out an assessment for the Beijing +5 Review that revealed the following:
 - ❖ CAFRA needs to address the impediments to women politicians and women aspiring to political office.

❖ CAFRA noted that there was evidence of regression in the participation of women in positions of influence, particularly in the political sphere. In general, the problems of women in decision-making have much to do with the deep socio-cultural resistance to their participation in the public sphere. Women's participation in the political institutions has also been an ongoing concern in the region over the last five years.

- Accountability and capacity for leadership is a major challenge.
- The lack of resources to run campaigns and administer constituencies is another challenge
- Family responsibilities mean that women generally have to think harder about becoming and staying involved in politics.
- Despite the work women have accomplished mobilizing support, organizing campaigns, fund-raising etc., they are not seen as viable candidates by party leaders.
- Women remain under-represented since the Beijing conference in 1995. In Belize, there are 29 members of Parliament - in 1998, two were women. Since the 2003 elections, there is only one-woman member of Parliament.
- With more women than men entering universities in the region a new argument that men are now marginalised is emerging. This argument fails to recognize that higher levels of education have not translated into increased numbers of women in decision-making positions.
- Resistance to programmes designed to increase women's participation has increased over the last five years. For instance, men demonstrated a great deal of hostility toward the national dialogue on gender relations sponsored by the Division of Women's Affairs in Barbados. There seems to be a growing sentiment that women have had enough and that men must now have a chance.
- In the Caribbean, representation of women in Parliament falls short of the 30percent target recommended by the Commonwealth Heads of Government. Traditional political party structures affect women's participation in politics.
- Lack of support systems for women politicians at all levels is another factor affecting women's political participation. Women have made strides in Jamaica and Guyana but too many of our other Caribbean sisters in elected office are like a single leaf hanging onto the branch.
- While statistics show a reduction in the percentage of women in Caribbean Parliaments, there are some exciting improvements. In Trinidad and Tobago and Belize, the number of women elected at the local government level in 1999 increased. Trinidad and Tobago launched a massive campaign and training programme designed to increase the number of women at the local level. NDI is doing some tremendous work with women in Guyana.
- The Campaign for Political Reform in Belize submitted a list of over 90 recommendations of which approximately 60 have been implemented. 14 are slated to be accepted by the end of 2003 and no decision has been made about the other 14.

- Structural adjustment policies have disempowered people in the region and led to an increase in poverty which affects women generally and female-headed households particularly.
- Women's rights as inalienable human rights are not widely recognized.
- We need to develop non-tribal, non-territorial political culture in the Pan Caribbean Region. Such a political culture should be geared toward strengthening female leadership and women in decision-making roles at all levels, with special emphasis on rural, grassroots and Amerindian women.

Comments /Q & A

Comment

CAFRA is in good position as a regional organization with groups in various countries to act as a coordinating body for activities occurring in different countries.

Answer

CAFRA has written a proposal for funding to do just that.

Comment

CAFRA's effectiveness in the region can best be demonstrated by its work on violence against women.

Comment and question

At a meeting last year facilitated by CARICOM, we had urged them to set up a web page to assist with networking and coordination of programmes. Why is CARICOM not involved in this meeting?

Answer

Directed to the organizers of the conference. (Organizers later responded that CARICOM was invited to the conference. When the deadline for registration passed and the office had not received a response conference staff called CARICOM and were informed that the appropriate officer was ill and would be unable to attend).

Question

Does CARICOM have a women's desk?

Response from the floor

The current officer has been absent because her contract has ended. At this time, there is no particular officer appointed. However, there is a director who is in charge of a number of portfolios; consequently, the question is really whether the role that CARICOM plays is recognized?

Regarding the marginalisation of boys – this is a problem but this does not negate women's problems. Girls are staying in school because they are following traditional roles by doing the right thing. Boys are leaving school because they are not getting what they need out of the school system.

Comment

- Women cannot deal with the issue of boys' marginalisation. Men should deal with the issue and then come to the table and talk with us. They have all the institutions, YMCA, their parties among a few. The educational system is for boys and girls. Why are we diminishing our accomplishments by saying, "let's wait for them to catch up?" The onus

is on them as much as it is on us to educate ourselves. Education is for everyone and it is available to everyone.

- Men are saying that female teachers focus on the girls. That is not so. Males tend to move on to positions that are more lucrative while women are left behind. Female teachers do not cause the lack of male role models in the schools.

Answer

Women need to support one another. The resources are there we just need to cooperate in order to maximize them.

Jean Nisbet - Harris

Jean Nisbet-Harris is the only elected woman Minister of St. Kitts & Nevis. She was elected as Minister of Health Gender and Social Development and is the only woman to be in the Cabinet Administration, she is now serving her second term. A nurse by profession, she is the only female among seven men. She was instrumental in developing the Ministry of Health for which she is responsible.

- I believe that politicians should know their constituents. I tell them what I'm going to do and I tell them I will serve them better. Not me. But serve you better. That was my platform. You also need to keep in touch with your constituents. For example, every Tuesday I knock at everyone's door and I take it village by village. I go with my pen, notepad and I take everyone's name, and concern and I try to address it.
- I was never daunted. I took the negatives and turned them into positives. All women who are coming up against these men, when they discourage you and tell you negatives, take them and turn them into positives. Dwell on your strengths and improve your weaknesses.
- Women must encourage other women to read, educate themselves and to keep themselves informed on current events. Women need to educate themselves and develop their strengths and try to deal with weaknesses.
- As a Minister of Health, I believe mental and physical health are very important and must be constant.
- Finances are also another essential part of campaigning and when campaigning, I was encouraged to have individual funds. In this regard, it must be noted that women have great potential. If you want to be successful in politics, you have to learn to save. Women can pool our resources together but we are encouraged to have individual funds so that we can distribute to our constituency as well as finance our campaign.
- Politics is not only a man's game.

Questions, Comments, Responses

Comment

My congratulations to you. As a member of the old nurses community, what was the reaction of the nurses to your decisions of going into politics? What was the support like?

Comment

We have a proportional representation in that all votes are counted a bulk and distributed by the party's percentage. Here in Guyana, all the candidates must be put on a list. You should be commended for knocking on everyone's door.

Hazel Brown

(Examining the Networking and Caucuses and their importance in women's political activity)

- Networking and caucuses can help achieve our objectives using four different strategies: **Communication; Cooperation; Coordination and Collaboration.**
- Communication: this is where women talk together and share information.
- Cooperation: this is where you help each other in a very informal way. Cooperation should be informal but structured, e.g. Discussions on the past and lessons learned, etc.
- Coordination: this includes planning and working on projects together. It is basically a little more interaction for a specific type of result/outcome.
- Collaboration: this level is actually collaborating to achieve some specific goals/objectives. At this level of collaboration, all goals are active specific goals.
- A couple of years ago, networking was not a popular word. At that time, networking was a mechanical process where computers were linked together. It didn't link people. Networking is a woman's word now. It is a process by which women have been able to maximize their resources and collaborate. It is a process that we know works.
- Networking as a personal strategy is one that any successful person will tell you works for them. It is whom you know and where you can find the information, as well as who can tell you what is going on that will make for successes at a personal level. It is now a new methodology for organizations, that provides for flexibility, connectivity and inclusion. However, one of the reasons it works is because it is not hierarchal.
- Networks connect people to the center and sometimes there are networks, which are not really centralized, but are the center connecting to another.
- Caucus: In creating caucuses we create new circles for specific limited purposes. The difference between networking and caucusing is that networking is coming together on a broad agenda, while caucuses have specific purposes. You can form a caucus for a specific reason and dissolve it when the objective is achieved. Caucuses are ad hoc and not structured - the only structure is the objective.
- The network of women's organizations in Trinidad and Tobago started with women in the political forum. It allowed neutral space in which women who work in Parliament could come together on common issues without rupturing relationships with their parties. With some very controversial issues, like abortion, there would be some people with an opposing point of view so a space was created for opposing viewpoints.
- Gender budgeting is a new area that women are starting to do some exciting work in.
- Trinidad is trying to facilitate collaboration by creating a local government fora in each region. Each region will have a computer with the Internet to assist with networking and collaboration.

Questions and Comments:

Comments

- The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, organized an event to highlight women in sports for International Women's Day. I chair an advisory committee to the minister. Since we have been involved, we have been able to approach the government to increase funding to women in sports. Guyana has signed on to receive funding from the Australian government to develop some areas of sports; we also talked about improving reproductive health through sport.
- Using sports as one of the methods through which we can build collaboration and provide messages to younger women has enormous potential as a model.
- We need to cooperate with each other to get to the goals ahead. We need to identify those that will be supportive and work together to achieve our goals.
- We need to communicate with each other and with those that represent us. Women politicians are there to represent the people that elected them and must stay in close contact with their constituents.
- Networking maximizes resources, distributes the workload, encourages participation and gets results.
- The National Organization of Women in Barbados, an umbrella organization with 14 members took the opportunity on Valentines Day to launch a campaign about Violence. NOW used the play "The Vagina Monologues" which ran for 15 days. It is a play looking at different aspects of domestic violence, sexual harassment and cultural expression that keep women oppressed. It was an initiative that served two purposes: to educate and to inform.

Session III: Towards a Women's Agenda of Political Participation for the 21st Century – Ms. Cheryl Sampson, Member – National Council of Women, Guyana; Ms. June Zeitlan, WEDO, New York; Ms. Roxanne George – Guyana Association of Women Lawyers; Ms. Indra Chandarpal – Women's Progressive Organisation, Guyana and Mr. Selmon Walters, Minister – St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Cheryl Sampson

(Examined the historical perspective of the experiences of Guyanese women working towards a Women's Agenda, i.e. where we came from, where we are, and where we are going.)

- A political declaration coming out of the special session on Women 2000 on Gender, Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century of the United Nations General Assembly stated:
"We (the participating Governments) reaffirm our commitment to the goals and objectives contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995 at the 4th World Conference on Women and the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women for the year 2000 as a culmination of the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985)."
- These documents have been used ever since as a "Bible" for the advancement of women's agenda throughout the world.

History of Women's Political Participation Government Action

- At the end of the 1940's in Guyana there was the Women's Political and Economic Organization (WPEO). This was the forerunner to all other women's political organizations.
- After the first national elections in 1953, three women entered the legislative assembly (the first Parliament). In that year the first Women's Political Organization (WPO) was formed.
- In 1957, there was the formation of the Women's political arm of the People's National Congress. This was referred to as the PNC Women's Auxiliary. The name changed to the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement and is now called the National Congress of Women.
- Women in those days were more involved in social and religious activities. Not many were interested in politics. Those that were interested preferred to play auxiliary roles.
- Between 1957 and 1975 women in the two major parties (PNC and PPP) worked to support their parties in strengthening the role of women.
- In early 70s, women in the developed countries began to raise their voices for equal opportunities for women. During this period, more Guyanese women became involved in politics and more women's political organizations came on board e.g. Red Thread.
- 1975 was designated International Women's Year, by the United Nations, and the UN organized its first world conference for women in Mexico City. A Guyana delegation attended.
- 1976- 1985 was designated the UN Decade for Women. Governments the world over were asked to put their houses in order as it related to women's issues.
- In 1976, Guyana's Head of State, Mr. Burnham, decided that mechanisms should be put in place to have women play a more participatory role in the development of the country.
- Guyanese women also participated in the UN Decade Conferences in Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985).
- In 1976, the Prime Minister presented a State Paper on the Equality of Women in Parliament. In that year, there was also a removal of barriers to women's entry into professional fields in the public service, and women's accessibility to work in factories on the same basis as men. Further, there was free education from Nursery to University levels, equal educational opportunities for women in the technical and professional spheres, and an increase in women professionals.
- By 1980, there was a new constitution for the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. Enshrined in this Constitution was Article 29, which dealt with equality for women. The Desiree Bernard Committee was set up to review the necessary laws to make Articles 29 and 30 a reality. However, to date, some of these laws have been neither completed nor implemented.
- In 1980 there was also the signing and ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- In 1981, the Women's Affair Bureau (WAB) was established. In 1982, there was representation at CEDAW and on the UNICEF Executive Board. In 1983, there was the

establishment of the Removal of Discrimination Against Children Born Out of Wedlock Act.

- In 1990 - the Equal Rights Act and the Married Persons Property Amendment Act was enacted in parliament.
- 1995, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill was supported and passed in Parliament, and in 1996-Domestic Violence Act was passed in Parliament. In 1997- the Prevention of Discrimination Act was passed in Parliament.
- After constitutional reform consultations during 1998 and 1999, the principle of 33percent participation by women was to be a mandate for all political parties. This has not been totally fulfilled. GAP/WPA had 100percent representation of women in parliament (post 2001 elections); PNCR had 33percent representation in parliament. Both parties are to be congratulated.

Non-Governmental Action

- A national non-governmental organization - The Conference on the Affairs and Status of Women in Guyana (CASWIG).
- As a result of the efforts of Forbes Burnham and the role of Guyana as a founding member of CARICOM, a regional NGO, the Caribbean Women's Association was formed in Guyana in 1970.
- Through the work of NGOs, the CARICOM Women's Desk was established.
- The Women's Studies Unit at the University of Guyana was also established.
- The work of the women's organizations and the strides made by the women attracted international funding agencies such as the UN, CIDA, NDI which have all assisted in training women to become more actively involved in decision making.
- Although women are politically involved, there is minimal representation at the executive levels. With international calls for gender equality women in Guyana look forward to better representation of women at all levels. As we continue to look beyond Beijing realizing gender equality in the 21st century must continue to be our watchword.
- As we work towards a women's agenda of political participation for the 21st century we need to reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Declaration For Action, which are:
 - a. Women and Poverty;
 - b. Education and Training of Women;
 - c. Women and Health;
 - d. Violence against Women;
 - e. Women and Armed conflict;
 - f. Women and the Economy;
 - g. Women in Power and Decision Making;
 - h. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women;
 - i. Human Rights for Women;
 - j. Women and the Media;
 - k. Women and the Environment;
 - l. The Girl Child.

- Networking at the national, regional and international levels must be intensified. We must continue to press for 50/50 participation by 2005.
- We must take note of UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan's statement at the Millennium Summit, September 2000 when he declared "no government can claim to be democratic until women are guaranteed the right to equal representation."

June Zeitlan (looked at the Political Agenda and the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Development Goals.)

- Women's representation can be linked to economic justice and poverty eradication. WEDO's work examines women's participation in policy-making bodies like the IMF and the World Bank. There are no women on the executive board of the IMF and only two women on the executive board at the World Bank. If there is going to be an economic justice agenda, women need to be in these decision-making arenas.
- In 1992, before the Earth Summit in Rio, 1500 women came together to develop their own Action Agenda. At Johannesburg in 2002, women put together an agenda for a Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2005. It is organized around five themes:
 - ❖ Peace and Human Rights
 - ❖ Globalization for Sustainability
 - ❖ Access and Control of Resources
 - ❖ Environmental Security and Health
 - ❖ Good governance for Sustainable Development

It is an agenda for basic recommendations to governments and international bodies.

- Global documents that governments have to subscribe to, continue to be a foundation that we build on for a platform. In addition, a number of groups in various countries have tried to develop their own Manifestos for the 50/50 campaign. This model can be adopted in other countries.

The Millennium Summit and the Millennium Development Goals

Governments have signed on to these goals and they are the number one priority of the Secretary General of the United Nations. The whole UN system is organized around these Millennium Goals.

Gender equality is central to the achievement of the Millennium Goals. The goals focus on poverty eradication, hunger eradication, access to water and sanitation, access to education, reduction of maternal and child mortality, and gender equality.

Although these are basic goals, they set numerical, time-bound targets, with the target date for the development goals being 2015. This has been one of the strengths of the summit.

- Gender Equality must include primary and secondary education. Two additional issues addressed at the Millennium Summit were:
 - ❖ Women's share of wages and increasing women's representation in Parliament.
- Countries will have to report on whether they have achieved the 30percent target.

- The World Bank and the IMF have both subscribed to the Millennium Goals. They can be held accountable for not adhering to the goals and the contradictions between some of their global macro-economic policies. The impact of these contradictions on women at the country level can be highlighted.
- 2005 is an important year in terms of global accountability. At that time, there will be a five-year review of the Millennium Development goals and the Beijing Platform for Action by the UN General Assembly. In 2015, there will be a ten-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action.
- Concerning a political agenda, there is no shortage of ideas but there is a lack of political will for implementation.

Roxanne George (examined how the political agenda was approached in Guyana. She also examined the highlights of the process of Constitution Reform in Guyana)

Three key International declarations are important. These are:

- Paragraph 13 of the Beijing Declaration, which states “women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision-making process and access to power are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.”
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 21 states “everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country.”
- The CARICOM Charter states “that women have equal rights as men including the right to be elected or appointed to public office and to be eligible for appointment to positions of decision-making bodies at all levels in their society.” Heads of Government recommitted to this Charter in July 2002. The contents of the Charter should be used as a lobbying tool.
- The Beijing Declaration was mirrored in Guyana’s Constitutional Provision on equality for women, which states “every woman is entitled to equal rights and status with men in all spheres of political, economic and social life. All forms of discrimination against women based on gender or sex are illegal. Every woman is entitled to equal access with men to academic, vocational, professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration in social, political and cultural activities.”
- This proposed fundamental right would bind the Government of Guyana and all its arms and agencies to ensure that it holds to the equality principle. This principle has not been enacted because there were problems with the Non-Discrimination and Sexual Orientation Provisions of the Fundamental Rights Legislation.
- The National Commission on Women (NCW) spearheaded and coordinated the drive for women’s voices to be heard in the Constitutional Reform process, which began in 1995. The committee established to review the Constitution comprised two women out of a total of 14 parliamentarians. The National Commission on Women’s strategy was to present an argument based on what should have been achieved in terms of Constitutional Provisions, and not only on International Conventions. Drafts of provisions from various countries were presented.
- Certain principles were highlighted. These included:
 - Creativity in language was necessary for the draft plans.

- Maximum support was necessary for the representative, who formed alliances with other like-minded persons on the Commission to gain their support. The representative also liaised with Women's Groups.
- The NCW provided the language for the legislation, which was based on drafts of the provisions from South Africa and Malawi. The result was the equality provision as it is worded.
- The outcome of those elections proved to be both politically and socially disruptive; CARICOM intervened and a menu of measures was formulated.
- When the menu of measures was developed, women were not at the table. We have to accept responsibility for that because we did not insist on being represented.
- Magda Pollard and others invaded a meeting of the constitutional reform commission after a call from Anande Trotman and I understand they took over the meeting. This is what we have to do in terms of forcing the agenda for women.
- We managed to get them to agree to include six international human rights conventions into the constitution including the Inter-American Conventions on the prevention, eradication and punishment of violence against women.
- We had to be vigilant because 12 men were in charge of deciding how the constitutional reform recommendations were going to be drafted. No women were included on the Oversight Committee. We achieved the inclusion of the requirement that 1/3 of the candidates on the parties' lists had to be women but at the end of the process, they "forgot" to put in the provision about 1/3 on the list translating into 1/3 in parliament.
- We still need women parliamentarians to address women's issues. Although the government may set the agenda for parliament, women parliamentarians can raise issues both in and out of the House. The Constitutional Review Committee has been established but it still has only one woman on it. That is not acceptable.
- Women, especially women Parliamentarians, need to understand Free Trade of the Americas Agreement (FTAA) and our lobbying work has to continue.

Indra Chandarpal (examined women's participation and its importance, and critical issues which are necessary to achieve women's participation. She also examined the experiences of Guyanese women to achieve political participation).

- Women's equal political participation plays a pivotal role in the process of women's advancement.
- The section of the Beijing Platform dealing with Women in decision-making states that women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.
- Important research and analyses were done to make the case for some of the recommendations that came out of the Georgetown Accord in 1997 when Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs in the Caribbean met. Also, there was the International

Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity in July 1997, which focused exclusively on Women's Political Participation. The Inter-Parliamentary Conference in the same year made a number of recommendations with regards to women's participation.

- In 1999, Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs across the hemisphere met to discuss women's participation in decision-making structures. Many strategies were identified and adopted for implementation.
- The Beijing Platform for Action set the goal of 30percent women in national decision-making positions as a milestone towards the ultimate objective of 50percent.

Experiences of Guyanese Women Working Towards Advancing a Women's Agenda

- There is a high level of political activism among women in Guyanese political parties. Many party women are committed to gender issues. They have worked and are continuing to work in their respective spaces to give leadership to women. Many gender-based measures and policies were carried out through the insistence of some of these women while the respective parties were in government.
- Women comprise nearly 30 percent of parliament, but we do need more representation on Committees.
- All of us should ensure that 30 percent representation by women exists on the slate as well as in parliament.
- Women started coming together and lobbying for changes early in our political history. A strategy that worked for me was to start by identifying the males who do not necessarily agree with our objectives and work on them from as early as a year in advance.
- Women across the divide can work together. Women who are supportive of their respective parties have a critical role to play in ensuring issues that are gender related are not left off the agenda.
- Women have to encourage men who are not gender conscious to become sympathetic to women's issues.
- Women must learn to be supportive rather than destructive towards women aspiring to political office.
- In Guyana we need to examine our legislative and policy framework and determine whether or not they are adequate.
- Women must be able to use technology so that they will be able to do research and prepare for discourse.
- We need to encourage grass roots women to come forward and be heard. We have to work with them to enable them to do so.
- Lobbying and networking, mentoring and role modeling are all important tools.
- Women must be able to work together despite differences. We need to have collective responsibility for our issues.

Selmon Walters

- Women are the backbone of politics and society. In politics, women do most of the party work, in fundraising and in household campaigning.
- The importance of women in politics cannot be ignored. They are the majority and therefore their impact will be felt.
- Cultural factors hinder women's participation despite the fact that women do a lot of political party work.
- Women do not have to wait until they are elected to push for women's issues to be given more attention.
- The women's agenda must be built agenda where an agenda is set to work toward participation at the decision making level. Women are participating at the lower levels. They must now achieve parliamentary participation, which will allow women to influence public policy.
- Politics is still a male-dominated arena. Women should approach their male counterparts in a spirit of partnership rather than in an adversarial manner.
- In the final analysis the agenda is set, and women simply have to work towards it.

DAY 3: METHODS AND SOLUTIONS

Session 1: Review and Summary of Day 2. Ms. Jessica Odle, National Organisation of Women, Barbados; Ms. Rome I. Johnson, Former Speaker, House of Assembly, Bahamas; Hon. Selmon Walters, Minister, Ministry of Social Development, St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Interventions and comments from the floor.

Controlling the Image
Jessica Odle

Facilitator:

- It is important to create your own image. Have a clear vision, which will help you articulate your mission and determine the best way to communicate it.
- Know how to use the media but do not expect the media to be your Public Relations Officer.
- Have a backup copy whenever you are making a presentation to avoid being misquoted or taken out of context.
- Build alliances with the media.
- Reflect on your own personal power to enhance your image.
- Be conscious of your internal and external image. The internal image refers to the image you hold within your organization and the perception that members have of you. Your external image has to do with how your image impacts prospective voters.
- Use your power to support others.

- Celebrate your achievements and acknowledge the accomplishments of others.
- Take advantage of every opportunity to get in the media.
- Be informed at all times.
- Bring passion to your issues.
- You must have a message you can be identified with. It is important to be informed on other issues, but you should also have a signature issue.

Advocacy and Networking Johnson

Facilitator: Rome I

- Identify the issues of importance to the community and act on them.
- Women can approach politics as a way to confront the policies that affect the lives of our children, our communities and ourselves rather than seeing it as a mysterious, intimidating domain.
- Advocacy is the process of taking an issue forward.
- Forming coalitions with like-minded groups and individuals is key to a successful advocacy campaign.
- Establishing sub-committees can assist in breaking the issue into manageable components that are appropriate to the skills of the group.
- Focus and discipline are important in accomplishing objectives.
- Develop a plan to get the issues on the national agenda.
- Form coalitions with men – get their support.

Collaboration of Networks and Caucuses

Facilitator: Jessica Odle

- CAFRA is seen as a tool for regional networking.
- Networking involves communication, cooperation, coordination and collaboration.
- Networking allows for connectivity and inclusion. It is not hierarchical but flexible.
- Networking provides strong cohesive fronts.
- Caucuses can be used for specific adhoc purposes.
- It is better to work as a body to accomplish our goals.

- If you are in an organization, and your vision is not in line with theirs, you can go and caucus elsewhere.
- If you network and caucus, you come to realize that, we have a common vision. Very often if we move like a tide, we can achieve our goal so much more readily.

**Towards a Political Agenda
Walters**

Facilitator: Selmon

- Women must set the agenda or it will be set for them.
- Women must not wait to be selected but must adopt a proactive approach to participating in political life.
- Women have access to power. They are very active in social clubs, service organizations, religious bodies, PTAs and trade unions.
- Fear prevents some women from participating. In the Caribbean, election campaigns can involve personal attacks, which discourages many women.
- Women parliamentarians should ensure that women's issues are on the parliamentary agenda. They must start to be vocal at the party level when parties prepare their manifestos.
- Women at the parliamentary level have to have strong constituency bases.
- There should be security for young women.
- No government can be truly democratic unless there is a very high representation of women in that government.
- Take a friendly but firm approach to male counterparts rather than an adversarial approach.
- Networking is important among various women's groups.
- Ensure that there is women's participation in Constitutional Reform processes.

Session II: Developing a Women's Agenda for the 21st Century – General Discussion of Issues

Facilitator: Hazel Brown and Jessica Odle

- Our goal is 50/50. Strategies include training in successful campaigning and policy formulation. A certain level of training has to happen with women as electors to sensitize them as to why they should support women candidates.
- Training is power- thank you to the management of NDI. There are many Guyanese who have benefited from this training.

- Sensitizing women in particular and the community in general about international Conventions that support increasing their participation is important.
- Documentation is important. A document on women in politics was published in Trinidad and Tobago. It is very important to know our history, where we've come from and what we have achieved so far. CAFRA is also in the process of preparing a publication on women in politics.
- It is a very important place for women to become involved with constitutional review processes. We need to collaborate regionally to identify women with the technical skills to make a meaningful contribution.
- Constitutions as such don't impede women's political participation but electoral laws in some countries are barriers. Electoral laws should be reviewed with this in mind.
- Efforts must be collaborative to maximize impact.
- Women can lobby for systems to be put into place with regards to social services.
- A general survey should be done to see where we are and to find out what positions are under-represented by women. Pilot projects that increase the number of women in key positions should also be implemented.
- We have to examine globalization and its effects on our economies.
- Women must be properly represented at CARICOM.
- There are laws in all CARICOM countries. There must be strong mechanisms in place to ensure that laws are implemented.
- CARICOM has a women's desk staffed by one person. This is insufficient to meet the needs of women in 15 member states. CARICOM needs to establish a secretariat to deal with women's issues and coordinate activities in member states.
- A mechanism should be developed to coordinate efforts in various countries and push for implementation of relevant legislation.
- "Sistering" which is the women's version of mentoring, should be a priority.
- Follow-up to conferences is normally very poor. Delegates should make an effort to implement recommendations from this conference in their countries.
- Women need to know how to lobby and advocate, ensuring that recommendations are implemented.

- Women's groups and women activists must develop partnerships with women parliamentarians.
- Women need to create structures and platforms across party lines.
- Women should set the agenda instead of waiting for government to do so. Women can organize "name and shame" campaigns using party Manifestos as scorecards. If parties do not follow through on their manifestos, the campaign will target them and ask women not to support them at election time.
- There should be a women's agency in each country to ensure that laws are implemented. One possibility is to strengthen women's bureaus so that they are able to carry out this function.
- In addition to a women's secretariat in CARICOM there should be a women's representative to the CARICOM council.
- There should be a women's agency in each country to ensure that laws are implemented. One possibility is to strengthen women's bureaus so that they are able to carry out this function.
- In Guyana we don't know how to lobby or advocate on issues. We also have to develop community mobilisation skills.
- Delegates should have been required to make country reports, which would have allowed us all to hear what was happening in other countries.
- Religious organizations can support advocacy programmes and lobbying strategies.
- Programmes designed to increase women's participation should include strategies to attract women under 30.
- The millennium goals should be a priority for all women working on increasing women's political participation.
- Women need to address how these meetings can be done in a more gender sensitive manner.
- There will be times when women politicians must show loyalty to the party, but women must also be able to stand up and support women's issues in parliament. In order to be able to move the agenda forward women must support one another across party lines.

Session 11: Checklist

Increasing Women's Political Participation in the Caribbean

- I. Training for candidates and potential candidates in:
 - Image Building
 - Conflict Resolution

- Media Relations
 - Organization Building and Community Development
 - Gender Sensitization and Analysis
 - Negotiation and Consensus building
 - Advocacy and Lobbying
 - Political Structures and Political History
 - Campaign Management
- II. Establishing networks and coalitions between parliamentarians and women organizations nationally and internationally.
- III. Constitutional Reform to facilitate women's political participation
- IV. Voter Education and Outreach.
- V. "Sistering".

Delegates committed to achieving 50 percent representation by women by 2005.

The Commonwealth target for women in Parliament is at least 30 percent. The target of women in the Caribbean is 50 percent.