GENDER at WORK in the CARIBBEAN

COUNTRY REPORT:
Antigua and Barbuda
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Despite the progress towards achieving gender equality in the world of work, considerable constraints remain. As a result, and as the Organization approaches its centenary in 2019, the Director-General launched the Women at Work Centenary Initiative. The initiative aims to better understand and address why progress on delivering on decent work for women has been so slow and what needs to be done towards securing a better future for women at work.

In March 2016, the ILO published the Women at Work – 2016 Trends Report, which presented in-depth analysis of the gender gaps in the world of work and explored the key policy drivers for gender transformative change. Taking this publication as a reference guide, the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean commissioned country studies to establish an up-to-date and comprehensive picture of five ILO member States: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. This research is timely since at this juncture we do not have a comprehensive overview of the situation of women at work in the Caribbean. The findings of the report would provide information relevant for the implementation in the Caribbean of the “Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030”, adopted in October 2016. It will also contribute to SDG 5 on Gender Equality, SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 10 on Inequalities, as well as the UN Women initiative on 50 50 by 2030.

The goal is to widen our knowledgebase on gender dimensions in the world of work in the Caribbean and how they are currently addressed. It is our hope that this will help direct policy makers as they mainstream gender in decent work policies. The studies use existing data to address important questions such as: What are the gender inequalities in the labour market? What is causing them? Do we have the data we need to understand the realities? Where are the inequalities mostly concentrated in terms of sectors and groups of workers? Are there legal protection and policy issues that are to be addressed? How well have countries done in mainstreaming gender equality dimensions across policies? What institutions, measures, policies and laws exist which promote women’s labour force participation, including in non-traditional types of work, as well as in trade unions, political and social organizations and how well are they being used? What are the good practices that can be identified and possibly replicated?

This initial study is expected to then further inform and guide additional research into the situation of women and men at work and the obstacles to equality and economic empowerment.

I would like to acknowledge, with deep appreciation, the guidance provided by Dagmar Walter, Deputy Director, and Shingo Miyake, Specialist, Labour Law and International Labour Standards, ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean, in supervising the project and preparing this publication. I would like to express special thanks to Caroline Allen who conducted the research and prepared the draft text, with the invaluable assistance of representatives of the Gender Ministries who provided the information relating to their respective countries. Finally, I am also grateful of all Specialists of ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean who have provided comments and inputs to the draft text.

Claudia Coenjaerts
Director
ILO Decent Work Team and
Office for the Caribbean
# Contents

Foreword iii  
Contents v  
Acknowledgements vii  
List of figures viii  
List of tables ix  
List of abbreviations x  
Introduction 1  

**Part One. Overview of Gender at Work in Antigua and Barbuda** 3  
1.1 Labour force participation 5  
1.2 Employment to population ratios, including proportion of informal employment 7  
1.3 Unemployment rates 7  
1.4 Division of labour, employment sectors and occupational segregation 8  

**Part Two. Institutional analysis** 13  
2.1 National entity responsible for gender 14  
2.2 Ministry responsible for labour and employment 15  
2.3 Mechanisms to resolve disputes 17  
2.4 Other organisations 18  
2.4.1 Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Centre (GARD) 18  
2.4.2 Professional Organisation for Women (POWA) 18  
2.4.3 Antigua and Barbuda Trades and Labour Union (ATLU) 18  
2.4.4 Women Against Rape (WAR) 18  
2.4.5 United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) 18  
2.4.6 The World Bank 18  
2.4.7 United Nations Entity on Gender and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) 19  
2.5 Initiatives and tools for gender mainstreaming 19  

**Part Three. Legal and policy analysis** 21  
3.1 International conventions on gender and work signed by Antigua and Barbuda 21  
3.2 Discrimination and equal opportunity issues 22  
3.2.1 The Constitution 22  
3.2.2 The Labour Code 22  
3.3 Maternity, paternity and parental policies 23  
3.4 Equal remuneration for work of equal value 25  
3.5 Work–family responsibilities, including state–provided child care services 26
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Social protection</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1</td>
<td>Social security and pensions schemes</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2</td>
<td>Workers compensation and disability schemes</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Tackling the issues of sexual harassment and gender-based violence</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Policies and initiatives to stimulate entrepreneurship</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Four: Discussion of the findings and the way forward for future research | 35   |

References | 39   |
Ms Caroline Allen, PhD, undertook the research and authored the present reports, which are aimed at providing a comprehensive overview of the Gender at Work situation in the Caribbean. Drawing from her regional level work, she focused on five country studies — Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. Ms Chantal Toby, Research Assistant, provided support for this report on Antigua and Barbuda. The findings and insights will allow for informed discussions with constituents and partners to take the subject forward in the countries concerned and beyond.

We thank UN Women and other collaborators who shared literature, data and recommended additional sources of information.

Staff of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean (DWT/O-POS) contributed in various ways to this report. Managing the initiative from start to finish were Ms Dagmar Walter, Deputy Director, and Mr Shingo Miyake, Labour Law and International Labour Standards Specialist. Mr Diego Rei, Employment and Labour Market Specialist, provided extensive contributions with respect to statistical data. Other colleagues of the DWT/O-POS provided further technical inputs and administrative support.
List of figures

Figure 1. “Economically inactive” population by status and sex, 1991 5

Figure 2. Population (aged 15 and over) by sex and type of economic activity over the past 12 months, 2011 6

Figure 3. Unemployment rate by sex and age group, 2011 8

Figure 4. Employment sectors by sex and by contribution to GDP, 2012 10

Figure 5. Occupation by sex in Antigua and Barbuda, 2001 11

Figure 6. Percentage of seats held by women in Parliament (2000 to 2012) 13
List of tables

Table 1. Antigua and Barbuda Population (15 years and over) by main economic activity during past 12 months by sex, 2011  
Table 2. Antigua and Barbuda employment to population ratios by sex, 2011  
Table 3. Antigua and Barbuda employment by sector and by sex, and economic sectors’ contribution to GDP, 2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABDB</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSSB</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda Social Security Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTEP</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda Skills Training and Empowerment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABWU</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda Workers’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPIA</td>
<td>Beijing Platform for Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community and Common Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community-Based Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>Caribbean Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEACR</td>
<td>Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIM/OAS</td>
<td>The Inter-American Commission of Women, Organization of American States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSMDG</td>
<td>Caribbean Specific Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOGA</td>
<td>Directorate of Gender Affairs (Antigua and Barbuda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWT/O-POS</td>
<td>Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECLAC</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRACE</td>
<td>Government Residential Assistance Care for the Elderly and Eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGDS</td>
<td>Institute of Gender and Development Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDRC</td>
<td>International Development Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MESECVI</td>
<td>Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIPAA</td>
<td>Brasilia Declaration of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>National AIDS Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGAC</td>
<td>National Gender Advisory Committee (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTC</td>
<td>National Tripartite Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECs</td>
<td>Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANCAP</td>
<td>Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDP</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOHCHR</td>
<td>United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Women</td>
<td>United Nations Entity on Gender and the Empowerment of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWI</td>
<td>University of the West Indies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT</td>
<td>Value Added Tax</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

To mark the commitment of Constituents of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to gender equality, and as the Organization approaches its centenary in 2019, the Director-General launched the Women at Work Centenary Initiative. The Initiative takes stock of the status and conditions of women in the world of work, and identifies action taken in response to gender inequalities found.

This Report is part of an ILO Project to take stock of the situation and identify the response to gender issues in the world of work in the Caribbean. It presents an initial assessment of gender at work in Antigua and Barbuda, one of five countries initially included in the Project. The information presented is based on desk review of research, policy documents and legislation.

An overview of gender at work in the five countries is presented separately in the Project’s Synthesis Report. The Synthesis Report presents a literature review based on Caribbean research on gender at work. It summarizes the results and draws general findings from the five countries. Readers are invited to review the Synthesis Report alongside the individual country reports.

The information in this Country Report is based primarily on secondary sources of information, accessible via publications and the Internet. A wide variety of statistical, policy, national and multilateral agency reports, laws and academic studies were identified and reviewed. The aim of these country studies (and the Synthesis Report) is to provide a basis on which to engage with constituents and stakeholders to further refine and enrich the analysis and fill information gaps, as well as foster explicit gender equality actions in the world of work over the years to come.

The Antigua and Barbuda Country Report begins with an overview of the general features of gender at work in the Caribbean, based on a review of research literature (Part One). It is based mainly on quantitative data analysis.

The focus of Parts Two and Three is analysis of the institutional and legal response to gender at work issues, again comprising mostly on qualitative information from reports, laws and academic studies. In the discussion of the findings in Part Four, there is an examination of the specific barriers to gender equality in the world of work in Antigua and Barbuda, and an evaluation of the actions taken to address them.
Overview of gender at work in Antigua and Barbuda — Key trends and research findings

Antigua and Barbuda is a country comprising two islands with an estimated population of some 93,000 people.\(^1\) The Census of 2011 put the population total at 84,816.\(^2\) The country is classified as having high human development, and in 2016, was ranked 62nd out of 188 countries in terms of the Human Development Index. The ranking reflects high life expectancy (76.6 years in 2015); good access to education (average expected years of schooling = 13.9), and moderate income per capita (Gross National Income per capita was approximately US$20,900 in 2015).\(^3\) Life expectancy at birth in the 2010–2015 period was estimated as 78.2 for women and 73.3 for men.\(^4\)

As with other English–speaking Caribbean countries, girls and women generally attend educational institutions in greater numbers, at least from secondary school upwards, and outperform boys in examinations. For instance, women comprise 62.5 per cent of those attending tertiary institutions in Antigua and Barbuda. Also in common with other Caribbean countries, women comprise a substantial proportion of heads of households — 48.4 per cent in 2012.\(^5\)

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More women than men live in conditions of poverty. Of the population with income in the two poorest quintiles, 54.7 percent are women. Antigua and Barbuda's adolescent fertility rate in 2013 stood at 48.1 per thousand women aged 15 to 19 years. This is close to the average for the non-Hispanic Caribbean (46.9), and the global average (46.1). However, it is lower than the average for Latin America and the Caribbean (66.5), but more than twice as high as for the “more developed regions” (19.2).

There is a mixed picture in terms of health, education and other social indicators in terms of their likely impacts on the world of work for women and men. On the one hand, high levels of life expectancy and education appear likely to offer advantages for women. On the other hand, adolescent fertility restricts prospects for economic advancement. High female headship may challenge female labour participation in a context where there are few official facilities for child and elderly care and women perform the majority of caring and domestic tasks, as will be shown later.

Antigua and Barbuda often is not represented in large international compilations of national statistics such as those of the United Nations. Although a 2009 questionnaire from a Labour Force Survey in Antigua and Barbuda was identified, no report from this survey has been identified online. According to a news article, a Labour Force survey was conducted in Antigua and Barbuda in 2015. However, no Labour Force Survey reports were found on the Government Information Service website.

Gross National Income is higher in Antigua and Barbuda than in several other Caribbean countries. It is to be expected that national income levels affect the capacity for expenditure on gender and other programmes. However, in 2017, Antigua and Barbuda suffered devastation from Hurricane Irma, with the island of Barbuda rendered uninhabitable. Antigua has provided accommodation to displaced people from Barbuda who stayed in the country. The hurricane is likely to depress incomes and require reconstruction expenditures for years to come.

Antigua and Barbuda is one of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean. Severe weather events are among the leading sources of vulnerability. These events affect not only expenditures on development programmes, but have gender–specific impacts, with loss of employment and absorption into physical reconstruction, especially among men; and reduced ability to meet family needs and vulnerability to gender–based violence among displaced persons, especially among women.
1.1 Labour force participation

The labour force participation rate is a measure of the proportion of a country’s working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work; it provides an indication of the size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services, relative to the population at working age.\(^\text{13}\)

Results from Antigua and Barbuda Labour Force Surveys appear not to be available online; however, data from Population and Housing Censuses for 1991, 2001 and 2011 are available online. A United Nations data collection states that, in 2001, labour force participation was 65.9 per cent among women and 78.4 per cent among men.\(^\text{14}\) Thus, male labour force participation exceeded that of females by 19.0 per cent. On the CARICOM Statistics website, a report of labour statistics appears for Antigua and Barbuda, with data from the 1991 Population and Housing Census. This shows labour force participation as lower in 2001 among women (60.5 per cent) and higher in 2001 among men (81.2 per cent).\(^\text{15}\) The difference between the sexes in labour force participation fell in the ten-year period.

Data from the 2011 Census are presented in Table 1. This shows that in 2011, male labour force participation ("economic activity") exceeded female labour force participation by 9.8 percent (74.1 percent and 67.5 percent respectively). Again, we see a narrowing of the gender gap as compared with previous years. Within the economically active groups, there were more men than women with jobs and more male than female jobseekers, while the other categories differed little between the sexes.

On the other hand, women’s “inactivity” exceeded that of men by 30.6 per cent (the percentage of women who were “inactive” was 31.1 while the percentage of “inactive” men was 23.8). Interestingly, in 2011 the percentages of men and women engaged in “home duties” as a principal activity was roughly equal. However, far more women than men were attending school, or studying. This represents a major shift from 1991, when far more of the women than the men described themselves as engaged in “home duties”, as shown in the following diagram.

### Table 1. Antigua and Barbuda Population (15 years and over) by main economic activity during past 12 months by sex, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Economic Activity During Past 12 Months</th>
<th>Total Population (15 years and over)</th>
<th>Male Population (15 years and over)</th>
<th>Female Population (15 years and over)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total labour force</td>
<td>Per cent of total</td>
<td>Active/ inactive total per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job and worked</td>
<td>40,400</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job but did not work</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking first job</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking work which was not the first</td>
<td>3,454</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not seek work but wanted to work and available</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home duties</td>
<td>7,036</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended school</td>
<td>2,794</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired did not work</td>
<td>6,521</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>1,109</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>64,415</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The following chart shows that, in terms of absolute numbers, in 2011 there were slightly more women than men with jobs, who were engaged in home duties, were retired or disabled. Again, there is a striking difference between the sexes in the number of people studying.

### Figure 2.
Antigua and Barbuda population (aged 15 and over) by sex and type of economic activity over the past 12 months, 2011


1.2 Employment to population ratios, including proportion of informal employment

Employment to population ratios for Antigua and Barbuda are not included as an indicator in the publications and datasets reviewed. However, using 2011 census data, the following calculations have been made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Had a job and worked</th>
<th>Population 15+</th>
<th>Employment/Population Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male/female ration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19,628</td>
<td>20,772</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Antigua and Barbuda, more of the men than the women are employed, by a margin of 7.9 per cent.

1.3 Unemployment rates

The 2011 Population and Housing Census gives the following rates of unemployment: 18 19

\[ \text{Male} = 11.0 \text{ per cent} \quad \text{Female} = 9.4 \text{ per cent} \quad \text{Total} = 10.2 \text{ per cent} \]

Unusually for the Caribbean, in Antigua and Barbuda, male unemployment is higher than female unemployment, by a margin of 17 per cent.

The following chart shows higher female than male rates of unemployment among youth, but from the 25–29 age group upwards, the situation is reversed, with more men than women unemployed, until late in retirement age. The lower unemployment rates among women in most adult age groups is unusual and may be explained by a wide variety of factors, including (but not restricted to) an institutional and legal environment which is relatively supportive of the employment of women. This environment will be presented in sections 2 and 3 of this Report.

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17 Antigua and Barbuda Statistics Division (2014), ibid.
1.4 Division of labour, employment sectors and occupational segregation

In examining the division of labour between men and women, it is important to look, not only at employment, but at the balance between “productive” and “reproductive” work. According to traditions in many countries, men are supposed to work primarily in “productive” roles, mainly through employment, while women are supposed to be responsible for “reproductive” roles, caring for families and members of society less able to participate in “production”.

Reproductive activities refer to domestic duties as well as all those activities associated with the care, maintenance and social reproduction of the family. They include caring for children and other members of the family, cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, etc. and participating in community and social activities. Reproductive work is generally unpaid or paid at a low rate, and the time taken to accomplish reproductive tasks reduces the amount of time available for employment.


This aspect of the sexual division of labour is often taken for granted and is not often the subject of study or policy–making. The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC) has promoted the conduct of time–use surveys to compare the allocation of time to employment, domestic chores, childcare and other matters between men and women. A seminar to provide training in time–use surveys was carried out by UN ECLAC in 2014, and Antigua and Barbuda was one of the participating countries. However, the current review did not find evidence that any time–use survey has been carried out in Antigua and Barbuda.

It appears plausible that gender differences in labour force participation and employment can be partly explained by differences in time allocation to reproductive tasks by women versus men. We saw above that in Antigua and Barbuda in 2011, only slightly more women than men were engaged in home duties, whereas twenty years earlier, female engagement in home duties exceeded that of males several–fold (illustrated in Figures 1 and 2). At the same time, the proportion of women engaged in studying increased. It may be that women’s reduction in time allocation to home duties and their increased time allocation to studying can help explain the narrow gender gaps in labour force participation and unemployment in the country. Longitudinal econometric studies would be needed to test the possible associations.

Turning our attention to paid employment, the Caribbean Development Bank’s Antigua and Barbuda Gender Assessment (2014) included data from 2012 on the distribution of employment by sector and by sex. It also presented data on the contribution of each sector to Gross Domestic Product. Data are shown in the following table and chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Sector</th>
<th>Number of males employed</th>
<th>Number of females employed</th>
<th>Percentage of sector's employees who are male</th>
<th>Percentage of sector's employees who are female</th>
<th>Percentage of males employed in the sector</th>
<th>Percentage of females employed in the sector</th>
<th>Share of GDP (per cent, 2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, hunting, forestry</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas, water supply</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3,419</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24 Aguirre, R. and Ferrari, F. (2013). Surveys on time use and unpaid work in Latin America and the Caribbean Experience to date and challenges for the future. Santiago, Chile: UN ECLAC.
26 Huggins, T (2014), ibid.
Table 3. Antigua and Barbuda employment by sector and by sex, and economic sectors’ contribution to GDP, 2012 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Sector</th>
<th>Number of males employed</th>
<th>Number of females employed</th>
<th>Percentage of sector’s employees who are male</th>
<th>Percentage of sector’s employees who are female</th>
<th>Percentage of males employed in the sector</th>
<th>Percentage of females employed in the sector</th>
<th>Share of GDP (per cent, 2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade</td>
<td>2,586</td>
<td>2,931</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>2,327</td>
<td>3,455</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and communication</td>
<td>2,082</td>
<td>1,121</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and business services</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate, renting and business activities</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government services</td>
<td>2,399</td>
<td>2,587</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>1,507</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and social work</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>1,614</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>1,337</td>
<td>1,720</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

na = Data not available on contribution to GDP for this sector

Figure 4.
Antigua and Barbuda employment sectors by sex and by contribution to GDP, 2012

[Graph showing employment by sector and by sex]

* = NA = Data not available on contribution to GDP for this sector

27 Huggins, T (2014), ibid
As the chart above illustrates, men represent a clear majority of employees in construction, and transport and communication. These sectors also make the largest contributions to GDP. Thus, men dominate in sectors that are major engines of economic growth. Women are the majority of employees in financial and business services, which is the sector with the third largest contribution to GDP. However, the number of employees in financial and business services is relatively small. There are more female than male employees in hotels and restaurants (tourism) and in wholesale and retail trade, but the contribution of these to GDP is smaller than for construction, transport and communication and financial and business services. Women are the majority of Government service workers and this makes the fourth largest contribution to GDP. Women also dominate the caring professions of health and social work and education; the contribution of these to GDP is not shown and may form part of the Government services category.

The data found on occupation by sex for Antigua and Barbuda date back to 2001, in a CARICOM collection of indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The data are presented in the following graph and show that a substantial percentage of the population studied did not state their occupation (30.5 per cent of men and 41.8 per cent of women). Among the remainder, the vast majority of plant and machine operators and assemblers, craft–related workers and agricultural workers were men. Women predominated in service occupations such as service/shop workers and clerks. While the information is dated and incomplete, the pattern reflects what was found in the Caribbean Development Bank Country Gender Assessment, which showed more recently that Caribbean women are the majority of workers in service occupations and that manual workers in industry, craft and agriculture remain predominantly male.

Figure 5. Occupation by sex in Antigua and Barbuda, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Occupations</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and Machine Operators</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Assemblers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft Related Workers</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Agricultural Workers</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Workers/ Shop Workers</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians and Associate Professors</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislators, Senior Officials</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the category of “elementary occupations”, domestic work is an important source of livelihood for women, especially those with lower levels of education. In a survey among female domestic workers in Antigua and Barbuda, 59 per cent had only primary education and six per cent had not attended school at all. Only six per cent were Antigua and Barbuda nationals, illustrating the importance of migration for women seeking to improve their economic prospects. Of the women surveyed, 50 per cent were from the Dominican Republic; 17 per cent were from Dominica; four per cent from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; ten per cent from Jamaica; and thirteen per cent were from Guyana. Work tasks commonly were cleaning, ironing, laundry, cooking and childcare.

Several of the vulnerabilities and infringements of rights faced by the women included:

- Thirteen per cent had no work permit or were undocumented immigrants;
- Eighty-three per cent had experienced abuse at work, most commonly insults (29 per cent), shouting (31 per cent) or inappropriate language;
- Roughly half of them (52 per cent) had worked overtime, but only 25 per cent had received payment for these extra hours;
- While 64 per cent indicated that employers made statutory deductions (e.g. national insurance payments), most did not know which deductions were made and thus to what statutory benefits they may be entitled; and
- Most were only paid for the days they worked (90 per cent) and did not receive paid vacation, sick leave or maternity leave. 29

Institutional analysis

This section examines institutions concerned with work and gender in Antigua and Barbuda and analyses how they impact on gender equality and non–discrimination in the world of work.

As an introduction to the institutional analysis, it is relevant to look at the representation of women in Parliament, since Parliament is the Institution responsible for national governance. Figures for Antigua and Barbuda show an encouraging increase in the percentage of parliamentarians who are women; however, fewer than one in five Members of Parliament is a woman.


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Source: CARICOM (undated) Caribbean Specific Millennium Development Goals Indicators For CARICOM Countries.

30 CARICOM (undated) Caribbean specific Millennium Development Goals indicators For CARICOM countries. Available online at http://www.caricomstats.org/CSMDG.html
The low proportion of women in Parliament may reflect the fact that, in Antigua and Barbuda, there are no quotas for the percentage of women in Parliament or women on candidate lists for Parliament. There is also no affirmative action in the form of quotas for women in other areas of leadership, such as corporate boards, local government and candidate lists for local government.\textsuperscript{31}

\section*{2.1 National entity responsible for gender}

Antigua and Barbuda’s national gender machinery was established as a Women’s Desk in 1981. In 1985, after the UN Decade for Women, the desk was renamed the Directorate of Gender Affairs (DOGA).\textsuperscript{32}

The Division currently sits in the Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development\textsuperscript{33} and is made up of a relatively large team (nineteen staff members), as compared with other national gender machineries in the region.\textsuperscript{34} The team comprises an executive director, an executive secretary, a development officer, an accountant, two messengers/cleaners, a research officer, eight support officers, a clerical assistant, a project officer, a programme officer as well as a communications officer.\textsuperscript{35} In addition to its staff members, the work of the Directorate is supported by a voluntary board of advisors, who are gender equality advocates.\textsuperscript{36}

There is no national gender policy in place (or in draft form) in Antigua and Barbuda.\textsuperscript{37} The challenges arising from this in relation to gender mainstreaming will be discussed below, in Section 2.6. Nevertheless, the DOGA offers advisory services to NGOs, CSOs, faith–based organizations and Government agencies, on gender and development issues, providing them with information and assisting them in the creation of gender aware policies and performance standards.\textsuperscript{38}

In addition to its extensive services for victims of domestic abuse, the Division runs several employment–related initiatives. One such Programme is its Work and Life Skills Programme which initially targeted single mothers,\textsuperscript{39} but which is open now to both men and women who are out of work and between the ages of 18 and 30. The Programme promotes soft skills for work such as effective communication and stress management along with sessions on gender sensitivity and gender–based violence.\textsuperscript{40}

The DOGA also offers training courses such as crafts and weaving, literacy, information technology (IT) skills, cake making and clothing and construction.\textsuperscript{41} DOGA has provided IT training to women for at least ten years.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{32} Huggins, T. (2014), ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Huggins, T. (2014) ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Staff and Team. Available online at https://genderaffairs.gov.ag/staff-and-team.
\textsuperscript{36} Huggins, T. (2014), ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Huggins, T. (2014), ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Skills training. Available online at https://genderaffairs.gov.ag/services/14483781370549.
\textsuperscript{42} Hesse–Bayne, L.N.O. (2014), ibid., page 22.
The DOGA assists in creating employment for women with the help of the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank (ADBD). The two organizations partnered to offer job opportunities to women, and formed the Densepium Cotton Company Ltd, specializing in the production of West Indies Sea Island Cotton. The Company allows groups, associations and cooperatives to purchase shares in the initiative, in order to encourage a wide base of shared ownership to bolster its sustainability. The DOGA oversees the recruitment of seasonal pickers and weavers for the business, who are trained by Canadian companies to produce baby products locally from the cotton. The aim of the project is to increase the earning potential of women, as well as their presence in the agricultural sector.

In 2012 the Division requested additional funding to go towards those gender equality commitments it had made nationally, regionally and internationally. It also requested this funding to implement its goal of mainstreaming gender across Government institutions. However, in 2013 the Division was given only 0.7 per cent of the Ministry’s total budget. The vast majority of these funds (77.4 per cent) went towards staff salaries and allowances. While the DOGA staff team is much larger than in many other countries in the Caribbean, its capacity to support the development agendas of other Government agencies is said to be limited. This is because the Executive Director, Programme Officers and the Research Officer are the only team members tasked with providing policy guidance and technical support interventions, which they must carry out alongside their programmatic work.

The Division relies heavily on funds from external organizations, in part because of the limitations of Government funding. While the DOGA has been successful in obtaining funds from donor agencies, its mandate is said to have become dictated by the interests of its funders, as it is beholden to them. Huggins (2014) notes that the DOGA faces challenges when its own priorities do not match up to those of its donors, which results in these targets being disregarded.

### 2.2 Ministry responsible for labour and employment

The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code of 1975 upholds the core principles of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and is designed to protect the welfare of the country’s workers, regardless of gender. The Department of Labour — in the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, Public Safety and Labour — is responsible for ensuring that the Labour Code is adhered to, as well as for developing appropriate policies to foster good employment practices. Details of the Labour Code are provided in Part Three.

One Department of Labour Programme that has been particularly successful at attracting female participants is the New Work Experience Programme. The objective of this Programme is to afford unemployed people the opportunity to experience a working environment.
Participants, who are between the ages of seventeen and thirty–five, go through an interview process in which their skills and goals are identified. They are then matched with an employer with whom they stay for six months. They are expected to attend career–building sessions throughout this time. They are paid minimum wage and receive contracts for six months which can be extended.

In 2009 Programme beneficiaries worked in community centres, the private sector, Government agencies and NGOs and had an average age of thirty years. While the Programme is open to both men and women, of the 91 persons enrolled in 2011, 85 per cent were women. Since the Programme did not specifically target women, the predominance of women may reflect women taking up opportunities for economic advancement through work experience schemes at a faster rate than young men. However, according to the Antigua and Barbuda Social Protection Assessment, participants in the Programme are referred to it by politicians. The Social Protection Assessment report also noted that the Programme involved job experience, but training was not provided in practice.

The One Stop Employment Centre is an initiative of the Department of Labour. A 2011 Study found that the Legal Aid and Advice Centre referred people to One Stop, since their clients often asked them for job opportunities. Clients of the Centre were often women affected by domestic violence and marital disputes. The Social Protection Assessment found that there is no information on how many inquires the Centre has received from employers and how many persons it has helped find work.

One of the Programmes of the Centre is the Antigua and Barbuda Skills Training and Empowerment Programme (ABSTEP), launched in 2013, to improve the income and employability of low–income, low–skilled workers through two complementary interventions: Temporary Employment Programme and Training Programme. No figures were found on the numbers of men and women using the ABSTEP.

Antigua and Barbuda’s Labour Department falls short of its commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action which identifies the need to recognize unpaid domestic labour. No time-use studies have been conducted and there has been little attempt to value or involve men in sharing the care, beyond an unsuccessful attempt to introduce paternity leave (see Section 3.3 in Part Three). In marital disputes about resources, there is no legal provision to value the nonmonetary contribution brought by domestic work.

54 World Bank (2016), ibid.
2.3 Mechanisms to resolve disputes

In 1975, the Government enacted the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code which sets out clear authority for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration of Labour Matters. The Labour Code is managed by the Labour Commissioner, Labour Department, who is responsible for fostering good employee–employer relations, and receives 350 disputes on average per year, of which 90 per cent are settled through mediation. When an agreement cannot be reached, the Labour Minister, or a party to the dispute, refers the case to the Industrial Court and the Labour Commissioner ends mediation.

The Industrial Court was set up in accordance with the Industrial Court Act of 1976 to deal with labour disputes. The Act requires the Court to have a president with a background in industrial relations, public or business administration or a related field. The Court is also comprised of an experienced lawyer and other members (who may be barristers, solicitors, economists, accountants, or of similar backgrounds to the president), the number of whom are to be determined by the Governor General. It is not bound by the rules of the civil courts in that it is not required to adhere to the Evidence Act. Rather, it can deliver judgments based on what the majority of members think is just or fair for all affected parties. Furthermore, members are expected to judge cases against what they consider to be principles of good industrial relations as illustrated in the Labour Code.

This desk review was unable to find any information regarding cases involving gender issues, nor how many cases are brought by men and women. It was therefore not possible to conduct gender analysis of the mechanisms to resolve disputes.
2.4 Other organizations

2.4.1 Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Centre (GARD)
This is a Project run by the Methodist Church which offers vocational and business training to
disadvantaged people.\textsuperscript{58} It was started with the intention to encourage young people’s interest in
the agricultural sector but it has expanded its focus to include entrepreneurship.\textsuperscript{59} It has partnered
with the DOGA to provide life skills courses to youth and women and supported women in pursuing
employment and the establishment of businesses in agriculture and in rural areas. \textsuperscript{61}

2.4.2 Professional Organisation for Women (POWA)
Created in 1997 as a networking and resource group for professional women, POWA aims to advance
the position of women in the society. It does this by lobbying for gender aware policies and improved
healthcare along with encouraging female entrepreneurs to succeed. \textsuperscript{62}

2.4.3 Antigua and Barbuda Trades and Labour Union (ATLU)
This Organization is a member of the Caribbean Domestic Workers’ Network which lobbies
governments in the Caribbean region to improve working conditions for domestic workers and to
ratify the ILO’s Domestic Workers’ Convention. \textsuperscript{63}

2.4.4 Women Against Rape (WAR)
WAR provides counseling and follow-up including home visits, for survivors of rape and other sexual
abuse. They have a 24–hour hotline and also provide legal advice and education. They have helped
to develop a rape protocol, specifying the procedures and responsibilities of agencies, following
agreements reached at a workshop attended by health care workers, the police and NGOs. Their focus
is on sexual offences, but advocacy also covers other issues concerning women’s empowerment,
including work–related issues. They have conducted outreach to sex workers in partnership with the
National AIDS Secretariat. \textsuperscript{64}

2.4.5 United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
UNICEF has assisted with the development of the country’s National Youth Policy, which set goals for
the achievement of gender equality in the nation. \textsuperscript{65}

2.4.6 The World Bank
The World Bank commissioned the Social Protection Assessment in the country, which highlighted
several, gender–related challenges. \textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{58} Marques, J.S. (2011), ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Kairi Consultants Ltd. (2007).
\textsuperscript{60} Hesse–Bayne, L.N.O. (2014), ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Huggins, T. (2014), ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} UN Women (2012) Domestic work is work.
\textsuperscript{64} Allen, C.F. (2011), ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Health, Sports and Youth Affairs. (2007). Antigua and Barbuda National Youth Policy.
\textsuperscript{66} Kairi Consultants Ltd. (2007). Living conditions in Antigua and Barbuda: Poverty in a services economy in transition. Barbados: CDB.
2.4.7 United Nations Entity on Gender and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

UN Women funded a Study on domestic workers and their working conditions in Antigua and Barbuda titled: *Advancing Decent Work for Domestic Employees in Antigua and Barbuda.*

In addition, it led a Project in Antigua and Barbuda on violence against women and HIV — “Empowering women and girls to halt and reverse the persisting and prevailing gender inequalities through GBV and HIV initiatives”. This included peer education for young women, information on HIV testing and treatment, as well as a support group for young women.

In 2010, following a United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) workshop, an organization called Men of Purpose Network was formed, with the message “MAN – Mobilizing, Advocating, Nurturing”. The Network worked with men’s groups in the community to educate them on roles and responsibilities.

2.5 Initiatives and tools for gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a priority outlined by the Government as key for the advancement of gender equality in the nation. In keeping with this vision is the *National Youth Policy* of 2007, which has been held up as a model of best practice for policy development. It lists gender equality as a core value and recognizes the commitment of the youth, Government and other stakeholders, as being crucial drivers for its success. In its strategic objectives, it promotes gender mainstreaming in youth policy and in the wider policy space. It also advocates for the promotion of young female entrepreneurship and vocational skills training as a means of decreasing the incidence of female poverty. Furthermore, it aims to encourage positive gender relations as well as to promote gender sensitization initiatives.

Other policies which consider gender are the *Food and Nutrition Security Policy* and the *National Strategic Action Plan to End Gender–based Violence*.

However, implementing gender mainstreaming across the board has been a challenge in Antigua and Barbuda. Without a National Gender Policy in place, there is said to be lack of coordination among Government agencies and their development partners, which leads to inconsistent applications of gender aware interventions. Gender budgeting is not systematically carried out across Ministries. A gender policy would have helped establish an overarching mandate, goals, strategies and indicators.

Other ministries driving economic development do not have a framework for producing gender aware policies and plans. For example, despite the differential impacts that policies have on men and women in the tourism sector and its importance to the economy as its main source of income, the country’s Sustainable Tourism Development Plan (STDP) does not address gender issues. This Plan was designed to promote sustainable projects that would maximize returns for investors and protect the country’s natural beauty. However, it does not acknowledge ways in which programmes that
are shaped from it are experienced differently by both sexes, as part of the industry’s labour force and in communities surrounding tourism venues. Huggins notes that the majority of women in the sector are concentrated in low paying jobs in restaurants and hotels, and argues that the tourism development strategy for the country should seek to achieve greater gender equality in the level and types of tourism jobs.  

The National Energy Policy also lacks any gender considerations, as does the Public Sector Transformation Strategy. According to the CDB gender assessment, in some policies and plans, gender is mentioned in a tokenistic way and not applied to the actual policy design to effectively harness the potential of both men and women. This is despite the presence of the DOGA representatives on policy development committees across the ministries.  

Another difficulty that inhibits the gender mainstreaming agenda is the lack of gender related data available to produce informed strategies. The DOGA sees the collection and dissemination of gender disaggregated data as the responsibility of the individual ministries rather than as its own responsibility. The Country Gender Assessment discovered that most gender–disaggregated data are in externally–funded studies that collect data for regional initiatives.  

Another challenge is determining what percentage of the national budget goes towards advancing gender equality. This is because programmes supporting women’s empowerment are dispersed across ministries and departments, and the national budget office has not established a mechanism to record gender–related spending.

Legal and policy analysis

3.1 International Conventions on gender and work signed by Antigua and Barbuda

The key Conventions which have been ratified include:

- Equal Remuneration Convention 1951 (No. 100) — ratified in 2003
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958 (No. 111) — ratified February 1983

The following Conventions with relevance to gender at work are yet to ratified:

- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)
- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)
- Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (no. 189)

80 International Labour Organization, NORMLEX International Labour Standards, Ibid.
3.2 Discrimination and equal opportunity issues

3.2.1 The Constitution
The Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda (1981) prohibits sex discrimination in Article 14, which is consistent with the country’s ratification of the CEDAW in 1989. The Constitution prohibits laws that are directly discriminatory or likely to result in discrimination from being passed. It defines ‘discriminatory’ as:

“…affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, place of origin, political opinions or affiliations, colour, creed, or sex whereby persons of one such description are subject or are accorded privileges or advantages that are not accorded to persons of another such description...”

However, the Constitution does allow for privileges to groups of persons under special circumstances, which are deemed “reasonably justifiable”. Targeted measures to address gender inequalities could be seen as justifiable, because they are aimed at balancing the opportunities available to citizens.

3.2.2 The Labour Code
The Labour Code prohibits gender discrimination in the workforce. It states that no employer can discriminate against an employee or potential employee regarding their hire, wages, tenure or any other working conditions on the basis of sex, age, political affiliations, creed or race. This statement in the Labour Code is, however, followed by the proviso that “this shall not be construed as forbidding the taking of personnel actions genuinely related to that person’s ability to discharge the duties of the employment in question.” This proviso may open the door to discrimination if employers assume a woman is not suited to a particular type of work, such as certain types of manual labour; or, indeed, that a man is not suited to certain kinds of work because of his sex. Furthermore, the Law may not protect against indirect discrimination in recruitment, since section 1, on Commencement, Elementary Requirements, and Termination of Employment, does not prohibit prospective employers from asking about family status.

This can constitute indirect discrimination against women given the assumption that caring responsibilities can interfere with ability to carry out job functions.

A criticism that has been levied against the Labour Code is that its provisions regarding sex discrimination (in Section 1, paragraph C.4) focuses on employer/employee relationships. The Code...
does not protect against discrimination carried out by employment agencies, vocational training institutions and trade organizations, thus leaving a blind spot in protection against discrimination. 90

On the other hand, in Antigua and Barbuda, there are no legal restrictions on the types of work men and women can do. Men and women can do the same jobs and work the same hours, including at night. They can work in the same occupations and tasks, including: mining, factories, construction, metalwork and heavy lifting. Neither women nor men are prohibited from carrying out hazardous, morally inappropriate or arduous work. These occupations and types of work have been specified by the World Bank as markers of sex discrimination in legislation. 91

The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) is an ILO Body of independent legal experts responsible for monitoring the implementation of ILO Conventions by member States. With respect to the implementation of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) by Antigua and Barbuda, the CEACR has been requesting that Government ensure workers are protected against direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of national extraction and social origin, as both the Constitution (Article 14(3)) and the Labour Code (Section C4(1)) do not expressly prohibit discrimination on these grounds. 92 National extraction and social origin are among the grounds provided for under Article 1(1)(a) of Convention No. 111, on which discrimination is prohibited.

### 3.3 Maternity, paternity and parental policies

The *Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code (Amendment) Act, 1998*, stipulates that a female employee is entitled to six weeks maternity leave if she has worked for her employer for twelve months. A female employee who is granted maternity leave under these conditions is entitled to receive not less than forty per cent of her basic wages during the period of the maternity leave. 93

The *Social Security Act* allows for the provision of maternity benefits (Part III, Paragraph 27.1.d). 94

The Social Security Board pays maternity allowance weekly for a maximum of thirteen weeks: commencing as early as six weeks before confinement, or as late as the week of confinement. It constitutes 60 per cent of the insured person’s average insurable weekly earnings. The average insurable weekly earnings is calculated by totaling the earnings in the 52 weeks immediately preceding the 6–week period before the expected date of delivery. This figure is then divided by the number of weeks worked, which cannot be less than 26.

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91 World Bank (2016), ibid.
The Maternity Grant is a one–time payment, payable to a woman if she or her husband has paid 26 weekly contributions since entering the scheme and has paid 26 weekly contributions in the year immediately before the confinement. 95

In 2014, the President of the Antigua and Barbuda Workers’ Union (ABWU), Esrome Roberts, called for the development of paternity leave benefits, saying:

*The pay should qualify for the period that that family would have to make provisions. In paternity (leave) you see that men are given time to support the mother during the period when she might be very tender.*

He said fathers need to receive enough benefits to support their families when there is a newborn. Paternity leave is among proposed amendments to the Labour Code, 96 97 and has been discussed between employers, trade unions and the Government. 98 99

Notwithstanding legal provisions, there appear to be challenges in practice. The Directorate of Gender Affairs (DOGA) cites accounts of women being warned by employers not to become pregnant while being employed by them. 100 In a study on domestic workers, most of the workers surveyed were allowed to take maternity leave, but were not granted paid maternity leave by their employers. 101

The country’s Maintenance and Access to Children Act of 2008 treats men and women as equals regarding custody and maintenance of children.102 The Act states that access to the child and maintenance fees should be dealt with at the same time. Either parent is allowed to make an application for maintenance and custody of the child.103 In practice, however, custody is granted predominantly in favour of the mother, but joint custody is not uncommon. Furthermore, the Act includes provisions for an attachment order to be placed on the income or pension of anyone defaulting on their child support payments.104 This can be assumed to be particularly significant for women, given the high incidence of single mothers in the country 105 and their risk of being trapped in chronic poverty. 106

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102 Directorate of Gender Affairs (2017), ibid.
104 Directorate of Gender Affairs (2017), ibid.
3.4 Equal remuneration for work of equal value

The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code provides as follows concerning “equal pay for women”.

(1) No woman shall, merely by reason of her sex, be employed under terms or conditions of employment less favourable than that enjoyed by male workers employed in the same occupation and by the same employer.

(2) Any person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine of one thousand dollars and in addition thereto the Court may order that the employer convicted of an offence under this section shall pay to the employee concerned such sums of money as the Court is satisfied she has been underpaid and such order shall rank as a judgment debt and may be enforced accordingly. 107

This Code specifies that women must be paid equally for the same work, but it does not address work of equal value, which requires consideration on equality not only within the same job or occupation, but also across different occupations based on such factors as level of responsibilities or professional experience. The CEACR has flagged this issue and advised the Government that the Labour Code be amended so that the Law would apply fully the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value. 108

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107 Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code (Cap. 27), Paragraph E8.
Despite legislation to prohibit it, trade unions continue to report instances of wage discrimination taking place in the private sector. Instances of paying female employees lower wages than their male counterparts who functioned in the same position, were reported during interviews with labour union representatives and a few individuals in focus group discussions, during the Antigua and Barbuda National Review of the Beijing Platform for Action +20. In addition, the DOGA notes that gender stereotypes and norms persist, despite legislation that places men and women on equal footing. As a result, women often pursue employment that pays less than those occupations dominated by men.

### 3.5 Work–family responsibilities, including state–provided child care services

As indicated earlier, Antigua and Barbuda has not yet ratified the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156).

In Antigua and Barbuda, child care is not subsidized and is scarcely provided publicly. For children below the age of five, daycare and pre-school services are run predominantly by private owners and the church, with very few public institutions available. Of the 110 early childhood centres functioning in 2007, ten per cent were Government operated. The rate of participation in early childhood institutions was also quite low in comparison with the rest of the region. When surveyed in 2009, only 69 per cent of primary school children in the country had attended an early childhood education institution.

Policy has not been developed to provide support to working parents and workers with other dependents. The Government does not provide a child allowance to parents, according to the Social Security Act (cap 408) or the Social Security (Amendment) Act, 2005, and employers are not legally required to provide leave to care for sick relatives according to the Labour Code (cap 27). These deficits have been noted by the World Bank, which also observed that childcare payments are not tax-deductible.

The lack of universal childcare forces poor women, in particular, to weigh their potential earnings in the workforce in comparison to the cost of childcare. This can result in their inability to access paid employment. In the Antigua and Barbuda Social Protection Assessment it is noted that "virtually the entire supply of Early Childhood Development / pre-schools is private" and that fees for the services are at a level that is out of reach for most poor women.

Thus, while evidence above suggests relatively small gender gaps in labour force participation in Antigua and Barbuda, lack of affordable child care may present specific challenges for women on low incomes. This is an important deficit in Antigua and Barbuda, where 41 per cent of households

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111 World Bank (2016), ibid.
114 World Bank (2016), ibid.
are female–headed and are the sole providers for their families without the support of a partner.\textsuperscript{118} The shortage of affordable child care for women on low incomes may be assessed with regard to CEDAW Article 11, which states that governments should support the establishment of childcare facilities in order to ease care burdens for working parents.\textsuperscript{119}

\section*{3.6 Social protection}

\subsection*{3.6.1 Social security and pensions schemes}

\textit{The Social Security Act of 1972} established the \textit{Social Security Fund} and appointed the \textit{Social Security Board (ABSSB)} to administer it.\textsuperscript{120} The Social Security Scheme is a contributory, compulsory one for all employed persons up to the age of 60, which covers old age, disability, funeral, survivor, illness and maternity benefits. Employees in the private sector pay three per cent of their wages into the fund while their employers contribute the other five per cent of their wages. Meanwhile, public sector employees pay two per cent while the Government contributes the other five per cent of their wages into the fund. Self–employed persons are expected to pay eight per cent of their salary into the scheme.\textsuperscript{121}

The Pensions Act governs the manner in which old age benefits are dispensed in the country. Old age benefits are provided primarily by the ABSSB and the Government. Both women and men can retire at age 60 and receive full benefits, but there is no mandatory retirement age.\textsuperscript{122} Beneficiaries are required to contribute for a period of at least ten years to be eligible for a minimum pension of EC$4,200 and a maximum pension of EC$27,000, annually. For insured persons who have not contributed to the Fund for ten years, there is a reduced pension.

The Scheme also includes a non–contributory, means tested pension known as the Old Age Assistance Pension. This benefit is for senior citizens who live on less than EC$5,000 annually and entitles them to receive EC$255 per month. In 2009, 55 per cent of the 43,635 recipients of the Fund were women.\textsuperscript{123}

The ABSSB provides disability benefits for employees who have not yet reached retirement age and are unable to work. This can come in either grant or pension form. The pension is paid to persons who have paid into the Fund for a minimum of 156 weeks. The full pension is paid to those who have paid in for 500 weeks or more. This full pension is 25 per cent of earnings per annum, plus one per cent for every set of 50 weeks of contributions after 500 weeks of payments. Persons who have contributed to the Scheme for less than three years, but for a minimum of one year, are entitled to a grant of EC$1200 or 75 per cent of their total contribution, whichever is higher.\textsuperscript{124}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{118} Huggins, T. (2014), ibid.: page 25.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Available online at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#intro.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Marques, J.S. (2011), ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{122} World Bank (2016), ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Marques, J.S. (2011), ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Invalidity Benefits. Available online at http://www.socialsecurity.gov.ag/benefits/invalidity-benefits.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Non-contributory benefits are especially important for women, as they are less likely than men to have accumulated sufficient years of employment to be eligible for full pensions. As unpaid work in the home is not considered to have an economic value, social security does not extend to persons who engage in this type of work. Social security also is unavailable to people in the informal sector. Huggins comments:

‘The informal, segmented and precarious participation of women in the workforce means that Social Security benefits may not be sufficiently secured over the course of their working lives, in proportion to men...’

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda also runs the Civil Service Scheme for workers in the public sector. The Scheme, which is funded by the Government budget, is a non-contributory pension plan and employees are entitled to receive these benefits alongside those from the ABSSB. The minimum annual Government pension is EC$9,600 and there is no maximum limit. Within the scheme, teachers are entitled to receive pensions after 25 years in the profession regardless of their age. In 2009, the Civil Service Scheme accounted for 1.3 per cent of the country’s GDP. Given that women are the majority of Government and public sector employees, this Scheme is particularly beneficial to them and their families.

There are also a number of social assistance programmes for the elderly. Here again, given the greater longevity of women (life expectancy 78.2 as against 73.3 for men), these programmes are of particular benefit to them. The Senior Citizens Utilities Subsidy Programme is an initiative funded by the Government-owned PDV Caribe Antigua and Barbuda Ltd., that provides vouchers to senior citizens which go towards their utility bills. Similarly, the DOGA runs the Over 80 Utility Programme which pays for the water and electricity bills of elderly people who are unable to pay their bills on their own.

In addition, the Government provides assistance to the homes of senior citizens. The Government Residential Assistance Care for the Elderly and Eligible (GRACE) initiative grants home care assistance to the elderly and disabled, as many of them are unable to leave their homes. The Programme is aimed at reducing the loneliness and isolation that the elderly feel, as well as at fostering their sense of independence. Duties of homecare assistants include running errands, personal care and domestic duties and involving their charges in recreational activities such as picnics, tours and concerts.

3.6.2 Workers compensation and disability schemes

Workers in Antigua and Barbuda are entitled to compensation after an injury at work in accordance with the Workmen’s Compensation Act. The ABSSB Scheme does not cover employment injuries but the Workmen’s Compensation Act requires employers to be in possession of an insurance policy or a contract of indemnity, to establish them as liable in the event of an accident or death of an employee.
The insured employee is eligible to have their medical bills related to the injury paid and employers must pay any costs that an employee incurs in making their claim for compensation. In addition to these expenses, employers must pay 54 months wages in the event of permanent total incapacity. For temporary, partial or total incapacity, employees must receive 75 per cent of their weekly wage during the period of their incapacity. The Act also states that employers are liable to pay benefits to the dependents of the employee if the accident results in death.  

All employees are entitled to paid sick leave as set out in the Labour Code. According to the Code, employees can have up to two continuous days of sick leave, after which they are required to present a doctor’s certificate to their employer if requested. Employees are entitled to twelve days of paid sick leave in twelve months if required, calculated from the date that their employment commenced.

Despite the provisions for paid sick leave in the Labour Code, not all employers honour these rules. Due to the absence of legislation related to domestic workers and the lack of formality around their work as a result, one study found that most of these employees were not paid for any sick days.

There is social assistance in place for disabled persons in the form of cash transfers. The Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development administers the Board of Guardians’ Grant, which has a mandate to assist the poor and vulnerable. Their beneficiaries include: people with mental health problems; adults and children living in poverty; people with leprosy and who have been discharged from health facilities; and the visually impaired, who are referred by social workers, doctors, neighbors, etc. In 2014 there were 417 recipients of this fund who were paid twice per month.

The People’s Benefit Programme, funded by PDV Caribe, also carries out similar work. This initiative specifically targets people living in poverty and those with disabilities who must earn less than EC$800 monthly to qualify for assistance. They are given a debit card with EC$215 per month which they can use at two Government owned marketing boards and one private supermarket for food and cooking gas. This initiative has been especially important for women who constituted 65 per cent of recipients in 2012.

3.6.3 Healthcare
Primary healthcare in Antigua is free. In addition, medical services and pharmaceuticals for a number of chronic illnesses are free under the Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS). The MBS is a mandatory medical insurance scheme administered by the Medical Benefits Board. It allows beneficiaries to access medical services and pharmaceuticals free of charge for asthma, diabetes, glaucoma, epilepsy, Parkinson’s, leprosy, sickle cell anemia, mental illness, cancer, cardiovascular disease and hypertension. Employees between the ages of sixteen and sixty years contribute seven per cent of

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their earnings to the Fund, of which 3.5 per cent is paid in by both employees and employers. Self-employed people contribute five per cent of their salaries to the Scheme. People over the age of 60 and under the age of sixteen are eligible for free treatment.

One challenge that still remains for the public health service is the limited opening hours of clinics. The absence of a 24–hour clinic in the country makes it difficult for working people to access these services. Health centres are generally closed by late afternoon and physicians are sometimes unavailable. It has been reported that some of the doctors in the public service do not keep their required hours. These barriers to access affect women especially, given their role as principal caregivers and their greater sexual and reproductive health care needs.

The National AIDS Secretariat (NAS) in the Ministry of Health offers free HIV testing and counseling services to all citizens. In Antigua and Barbuda, 99 per cent of pregnant women are tested; mothers with HIV are entitled to receive formula milk, at no cost, to feed their babies up until they are six months old. Participants on the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV Initiative are reported to have had a 100 per cent success rate. Additionally, infected persons receive antiretroviral and opportunistic infection drugs at no charge. To assist in preventing the spread of the illness, condoms are made available to the public at Government health centres.

Even though steps have been taken to improve the lives of people living with HIV and AIDS, the system is not without its flaws. The NAS reported a stigma around the use of their services which prevents infected persons from accessing treatment. While foreigners are said to use these services freely, it has been observed that people from Antigua and Barbuda have a higher incidence of AIDS because they come in when the virus has already progressed as a result of this stigma. The stigma affects women in a different way from men, because women are expected to be monogamous according to social conventions. Meanwhile, it is believed that men may avoid the service because of fears of being branded homosexual.


139 Kairi Consultants Ltd (2007), ibid.


3.7 Tackling the issues of sexual harassment and gender–based violence

The Directorate of Gender Affairs developed *The Strategic Action Plan to End Gender–based Violence Antigua and Barbuda 2011–2015*. This Action Plan, while addressing gender–based violence, concentrates on domestic and sexual violence. Sexual harassment is mentioned, but no specific actions are proposed to address it. There is no specific legislation in place in Antigua and Barbuda concerning sexual harassment at work. Sexual harassment is not addressed in the Labour Code or the Sexual Offences Act. This is contrary to CEDAW, which recommends that countries enact laws to protect women from all forms of violence, including sexual harassment. There are no civil remedies, legislation or criminal penalties with respect to sexual harassment in employment, in education or in public places.

The Department of Labour states that cases of sexual harassment in the workplace are under–reported due to fears of retaliation. The Industrial Court could hear cases of sexual harassment as it contravenes the requirement of employers to ensure a safe working environment for employees. However, this review discovered that in 2016, no sexual harassment cases were filed in the Court. The DOGA identifies the lack of legislation in this area to be a cause for concern and says that it is committed to tackling the issue with the help of other civil society organizations.

Domestic violence is an area where legislation is in place (the Domestic Violence Act, 2015) covering people in a "domestic relationship", including unmarried intimate partners, former spouses and married people, and providing for protection orders. However, it does not cover sexual and economic forms of violence, and marital rape is not recognized or criminalized. There also are no clear criminal penalties for domestic violence.

DOGA has minimal resources to assist survivors of domestic violence. As of 2011 there was no shelter accommodation. In reality, DOGA staff sometimes tried to assist survivors by contacting people who may be willing to offer temporary shelter at their homes. This review discovered that the domestic violence crisis hotline was a cellphone carried by a DOGA member of staff.

There is also a Sexual Offences Unit in the police service, but it, too, has limited capacity. For instance, most forensic tests have to be conducted abroad because of a lack of laboratory capacity.

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146 Directorate of Gender Affairs (2017), ibid.
149 World Bank (2016), ibid.
152 Directorate of Gender Affairs (2017), ibid.
154 Domestic Violence Act, no. 27, 2015, Part I, section 2.
155 Domestic Violence Act, no. 27, 2015, Part II.
156 World Bank (2016), ibid.
3.8 Policies and initiatives to stimulate entrepreneurship

There are no legal restrictions on women being able to operate businesses in the same way as men. For instance, women can sign contracts, travel outside the country, register a business and open a bank account in the same way as men. The default marital property regime is separation of property, so that women retain all rights over property they originally owned. Sons and daughters have equal inheritance rights, as do male and female surviving spouses. These are important areas of legal equality, but challenges remain. Most notable is that there is no prohibition of discrimination in access to credit based on gender or marital status.

The Government established its commitment to the development of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) with the approval of the Small Business Development Act of 2007. The Government recognized the ability of these businesses to create jobs and contribute to the economy, especially in the tourism sector. The promotion of these enterprises is particularly significant for female economic empowerment as they make up the majority of micro–business owners, often operating in the informal sector. They sell goods such as jewelry, t-shirts and caps to tourists, or offer services like hair braiding. The Country Gender Assessment found that much of their work was under-reported due to its informal nature.

A major concern for any small business owner is access to credit, an issue which is addressed through the Credit Guarantee Scheme that emerged from the Small Business Act. The Scheme allows business owners or potential business owners to access loans from a commercial financial institution of their choice. This loan is then backed by the Government via the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank (ABDB) up to EC$100,000.00. Unfortunately, this review was unable to find information regarding the number of businesses that had been granted loans and their distribution by sex.

Despite the Government’s efforts, access to credit remains an issue for many entrepreneurs from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Single women, unemployed and underemployed women are especially at a disadvantage as they face daunting application processes. They are often unable to produce suitable collateral. Specific to the island of Barbuda is legislation that prevents citizens from using occupied land as collateral. This is unfortunate as women in Barbuda make up the majority of landholders on the island, which is unusual in the region, yet they cannot use this land to access credit for their businesses.

Female entrepreneurs also encounter difficulties in the face of an increasingly open market–based economy. Women's traditional role as homemakers has influenced the goods that they choose to produce for sale, which then places constraints on their success in the domestic and regional markets. Interviews conducted as part of the Antigua and Barbuda gender assessment revealed that, rather

158 World Bank (2016), ibid.
159 World Bank (2016), ibid.
161 Financing your small business.
than making products based on market demands, women tended to produce goods that they enjoy preparing. In addition, the productivity of female-owned MSMEs is hindered by unreliable and unsafe public transport, which raises concerns for female entrepreneurs on their own (especially at night). This limits their ability to access customers and traders to whom they can sell their merchandise, thereby reducing the competitiveness of their businesses. 165

Discussion of the findings and the way forward for future research

Globally, a gap of 26 percentage points separates women and men in labour force participation (76 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women are in the global labour force). Antigua and Barbuda has proportionally more people in the labour force, and the gender gap is much smaller, with 78.4 per cent labour force participation among men and 65.9 per cent among women, based on data from 2011.

Among women who are out of the labour force, there has been an increase in “attending school” as the main activity, to around seven per cent of all women in 2011, while an increase in studying has not taken place among men. A further unusual finding is that unemployment rates are slightly higher among men than women, or roughly equal. Women are doing relatively well in the world of work according to these indicators, and their studying and uptake of training and work placement opportunities suggests a will to do even better.

The progress of women in the world of work in Antigua and Barbuda has been underpinned by a fairly equitable legal environment, underpinned by a Constitution that prohibits discrimination, but which falls short of pledging gender equality. To recap, seven key areas of progress are:

1. Women can legally do many things in the same way as men, such as enter contracts and set up a business, and they have equal rights to property in marriage and at the death of a spouse.

2. Men and women have equal child custody rights, and there is legislation against domestic violence.

3. Maternity leave is in place, and labour unions and the employers’ association have expressed support for instituting paternity leave.

4. A number of NGO and Government schemes exist to train and find work placements for people from poorer communities, with an emphasis on women’s empowerment.

5. Social protection provisions are generally equitable and there are several non–contributory schemes which benefit women as they generally have fewer years of paid work in which to accumulate national insurance contributions. The ability of the self–employed to contribute to the national insurance scheme is unusual in the Caribbean and facilitates women who often choose self–employment, as it offers flexibility in balancing work and family responsibilities.

6. Among 173 countries studied in the World Bank’s Women, Law and Business 2016, Antigua and Barbuda was 31st in the ranking of countries with the least number of legal differences between men and women.

7. Antigua and Barbuda also has a relatively large gender machinery in terms of the number of staff at the Department of Gender Affairs.

Nevertheless, there remain substantial areas of inequality, because there is no over–arching gender policy to provide a guiding framework for moves towards gender equality:

1. Only about 20 per cent of Members of Parliament are women, and no affirmative action quotas are in place to remedy this or other leadership deficits, such as in membership of corporate boards.

2. There is no sexual harassment legislation, and domestic violence legislation does not include sexual or economic violence.

3. The Labour Code does not legislate for equal pay for work of equal value. There is substantial occupational segregation, with men having most of the jobs in construction and transport and communication, which are the two largest contributors to GDP. Women’s occupations are predominantly in the services sector and in roles reflecting their caring responsibilities, such as health, social work, education, retailing and administration.

4. Gender mainstreaming has been constrained by the lack of a gender policy, and budgeting is not systematically carried out across Government Ministries.

5. In the tourism sector, women are concentrated in the lower paying jobs and play little role in ownership, except in microenterprises.

A major area of concern is the lack of initiatives addressing the predominant responsibility of women for domestic and caring work. For example, legislation is not in place to provide state–funded child care, allow sick leave to care for relatives or provide tax breaks for child care. For paid domestic workers, there is evidence that employers fail to implement basic safeguards and conditions of work that would be taken for granted in many other professions. These gaps affect the possibilities of
entrepreneurship among women, as well as their performance in jobs. Women are making good use of entrepreneurship initiatives and organizations, but there is a need for better coordination between them.

Another important issue identified is a need for greater monitoring and evaluation to assess the progress of gender equality initiatives and mechanisms. To recap:

1. Antigua and Barbuda is not included in several international databases of information relevant to gender and work, possibly as a result of its small size.

2. Labour Force Surveys are conducted in Antigua and Barbuda, but this review did not find evidence that their results are used in gender programming. Recent results of these surveys are not accessible online to the public, which limits their use in evidence–based policy–making.

3. Sex–disaggregated labour statistics accessible online are largely outdated. There is a dearth of publicly accessible information on informal labour, part–time and seasonal work. Reports of gender pay gaps are not backed up by publicly accessible statistics.

4. Lack of reporting on programmes make it difficult to assess their state of implementation and degree of success in meeting objectives.

5. The number of male and female cases brought to the Labour Commissioner and Industrial Court is not accessible.

Several of these information deficits may be addressed by further contact with policy–makers and other stakeholders in Antigua and Barbuda. However, capacities to address gender inequalities and other social issues are likely to be constrained by the effects of Hurricane Irma and the allocation of resources towards the reconstruction of the country.
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