

Strategic Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence

Antigua and Barbuda
2011-2015

GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORTS, YOUTH AND GENDER AFFAIRS
DIRECTORATE OF GENDER AFFAIRS



Minister's Message

Contents

Introduction	3
Vision & Principles, Goals & Outcomes	9
Leadership and Accountability	10
I. Review, Adopt and Implement Protective Laws and Policies	11
II. Prevention: Advocacy, Community Mobilisation and Raising Awareness	13
III. Building Capacities for Effective Case Management, Care, Support	15
Coordination and Implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan	18
Implementation of Strategies and Approaches	20
Conclusion	22
ANNEXES	23

Introduction

Gender-based violence is a serious, pervasive problem that affects communities across Antigua and Barbuda. Gender-based violence devastates lives – it has no place in society and it will not be tolerated.

The government is committed to ending violence against women. With the support of UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, in 2008, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, in collaboration with the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP) embarked upon a three-year initiative to strengthen the capacity and accountability of the state and community-based actors to end all forms of gender-based violence. This initiative introduced a comprehensive approach, focused on preventing gender-based violence and improving support for abused women and their children when it does happen. By working in partnership with organisations and professionals in the community, health, education, social services and justice sectors, much has been accomplished.

We have learnt from best practices and supported the roll-out of a specialist infrastructure to protect and support victims, including the following:

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) is a one stop location for victims of sexual assault to receive medical care and counseling and enabling the collection of forensic evidence. This was established to enable police, counselors, advocates, health care professionals, prosecutors, courts and specialist services to work together to identify and track sexual violence cases, support victims and bring more offenders to justice.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners: trained specialist nurses providing independent advocacy and support to victims. In 2010 the first 20 nurses were trained as Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE).

We have also recognised the need to raise the standards of our services, as informed by the state-commissioned High Level Task Force on Sexual Violence and Assault, which completed its assessment of the health, judicial and social services sectors in Antigua and Barbuda in 2009. Training for frontline staff became a priority; and the police, nurses, counselors, social workers and advocates received training. The Police Force maintains a range of specialist staff, such as institutionalization of the Sexual Offences Unit. Specialist training programmes have been dedicated for those working particularly closely with victims of violence. All survivors have the right to a high standard of support, and the provision of an enabling environment that ensures they will not be victimised by processes and institutions expected to uphold their rights.

We are building on a national, regional and international knowledge base to introduce **Antigua and Barbuda's Strategic Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence**. The informed perspectives of the UN Women-ACCP "Strengthening State Accountability and Community-based Action to End Gender-based Violence" Project, the work of the High Level Task Force, and the CARICOM Action Plan for Social Development and Crime Prevention serve as models for this Action Plan, taking a coordinated and collaborative approach to prevent gender-based violence and improve support for survivors. We will work across ministries and with women organisations to implement public education campaigns, develop and deliver training and enhance the service system response over the next five years.

Over the years, our efforts have been guided by the advice we have received from survivors and their advocates. This advice is helping us take concrete steps to make system-wide improvements where

gaps exist, while laying the groundwork for the future. We will continue to seek the guidance of organisations and other experts as we implement the Strategic Action Plan.

Scope of the Action Plan

Gender-based violence can take many different forms. **Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence committed against individual or group, on the basis of their gender. It includes any act or threat thereof, which results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm. Gender-based crimes are most often perpetrated by men against women, and thus interchangeably referred to as Violence Against Women (VAW).**

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women has defined violence against women as — “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”. An alternative definition is provided by the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as “violence directed at a woman because she is a woman or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women”. The UN Declaration makes the link between gender-based oppression and violence against women clear, in emphasising that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to the domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women.

Gender violence occurs in both the ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres. Such violence not only occurs in the family and in the general community, but is sometimes also perpetuated by the state through policies or the actions of agents of the state such as the police, military or immigration authorities. Gender-based violence happens in all societies, across all social classes, with women particularly at risk from men they know.

Crimes such as sexual assault and sexual exploitation through human trafficking, as well as other acts including sexual harassment and sexual exploitation through the use of technology and the Internet form part of the recognised nature of GBV in Antigua and Barbuda. It includes physical, sexual and psychological violence such as domestic violence; sexual abuse, including rape and sexual abuse of children by family members; forced pregnancy; and emotional abuse, such as coercion and abusive language.

Age is also a risk factor, with young women being particularly vulnerable. As a result, we have focused our efforts on both women and girls.

The Action Plan addresses the ethnic, linguistic, cultural, sexual, and economic, and geographic diversity of Antigua and Barbuda. As we move forward, we will ensure that initiatives undertaken are implemented through a diversity lens that takes into consideration the needs of women throughout the nation.

The government is also undertaking separate initiatives to respond to violence against men and children. Nation-wide services are currently being developed for male survivors of sexual violence. We

are promoting healthy equal relationships and addressing discrimination, harassment and gender-based violence among children and youth.

Why Addressing GBV is a Priority

Gender-based violence is a health, social, human rights, and development issue that transcend class, culture, age, race and religion which affects every community in every corner of Antigua and Barbuda. Globally, it has been estimated that at least **one in every three women** around the world has been beaten, coerced in to sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. The public health implications of this violence are enormous: according to a World Development report, violence —is more serious a cause of death and incapacity among women of reproductive age as cancer, and greater cause of ill-health than traffic accidents and malaria combined. Gender-based violence also diminishes women’s abilities to protect themselves against HIV. As such, violence against women is both an outcome and an expression of women’s subordinate status in relation to men in societies around the world.

The differences in the roles, responsibilities, opportunities, privileges, expectations, and limitations prescribed to males and to females in any culture are socially constructed, context based, and learned through socialisation. They determine many aspects of the relationships between males and females, as well as among females and among males. Although gendered roles and responsibilities can change over time within and across cultures, they are often deeply rooted in long-standing assumptions societies hold about women, men, boys, and girls.

In virtually every society around the world, these assumptions tend to reinforce patriarchal norms and values, or systems by which males hold more power than females in both private and public domains and, to differing degrees, exercise this greater power as a basic entitlement.

The impact of GBV goes far wider than the justice consequences, encompassing a range of other areas including health, social services, and emergency accommodation. All government departments have a role to play in countering gender based violence. In addition to the well-documented short- and long-term physical and mental impacts on women and children, violence incurs considerable social and economic costs to individuals, such as personal insecurity, lost income, and productivity. The violence also has significant costs for the economies of developing countries because of its strain on healthcare and judicial systems, lower worker productivity and incomes, and lower rates of accumulation of human and social capital. Indirect costs such as the value of foregone earnings in both paid and unpaid work as a result of absenteeism related to violence may also be significant.

Women are more likely than men to experience all forms of intimate violence, but the risk will vary among different groups of women. Children are also affected by gender based violence through exposure to violence perpetrated against their mothers. Children and young people may also be directly abused themselves (physically, sexually and emotionally), most commonly by a family member or other trusted adult. Child sexual exploitation is also a form of child sexual abuse and happens in all areas of the country. It involves exploitative situations which may involve trafficked children and women and relationships often characterised by the inducement of money, accommodation, food or other incentives, or by an imbalance of power such as age or economic resources.

The link between gender-based violence and increased risk of violence for girls is straightforward: girls, like their sisters, mothers, grandmothers, and aunts, are at direct risk of gender-based violence resulting from discrimination. In fact, girls have been identified as one of the subgroups of females most prone to being targeted for violence because of the double vulnerability of gender and young age.

The link between gender-based violence and violence against boys is less direct, but no less significant. Whereas women and girls may be vulnerable to violence due to socially determined power differentials between males and females that increases their risk of violence and limits their options to overcome or address it, boys may be victims of violence based on widely shared expectations of masculinity. Where traditional norms of masculinity are associated with characteristics such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, dominance, strength, courage and control, boys who do not manifest these qualities may be at greater risk of being exposed to violence committed against them by other boys and by men, and in significantly fewer cases, by women.

Many myths surrounding GBV may cause people to question whether crimes are actually committed. People may question whether a woman was assaulted, especially if there are no obvious injuries, or the woman is not as upset as one might expect. Some survivors speak of not being perceived as 'legitimate' victims. Their credibility was called into question, particularly if they were using drugs or alcohol, were in a relationship with the perpetrator, or were reporting historic childhood sexual abuse.

These misconceptions and attitudes have serious consequences for the survivor and for society. They take attention away from the fact that the perpetrator is solely responsible for their actions. They may also prevent a woman, girl, man or boy from seeking help. The trauma associated with GBV can be devastating for the survivor, their family and friends.

This Action Plan aims to promote understanding and prevention through public education, and to foster more responsive and supportive environments for all survivors.

The Consultations

Between February 2008 and November 2010, commencing with the commission of the High Level Task Force on Sexual Violence and Assault, and ending with the training of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), the government, through the Directorate of Gender Affairs, undertook a series of consultative processes to support the development of the Strategic Action Plan. Meetings were held with survivors, service providers and other experts in the community, health, education and justice sectors.

The consultations included regional meetings facilitated by UN Women and the British High Commission to discuss prevention, improvement of services and community coordination, including a site visit to St. Mary's Crisis Centre in London, United Kingdom, with observers from the Royal Police Force, Ministry of Health and Gender Affairs. Meetings with experts were held to discuss key issues such as public education, training, human trafficking and the criminal justice response. Organisations and individuals also had the opportunity to share their thoughts through advocates and counsellors attached to the Directorate of Gender Affairs, and other service agencies, including the Citizen's Welfare Division, which oversees the well-being of children. Overall, we heard a wide range of diverse ideas and opinions on how best to move forward.

An important part of our consultations was hearing directly from women who experienced gender-based violence. These meetings provided us with the opportunity to better understand their experiences and to hear their perspectives on how the current system of supports could be improved.

The consultations provided us with critical insight on the impact on survivors, and how it is perceived within our society. We heard how to best focus our public education and prevention efforts. Priorities were identified to help improve community services, health care, education and the justice system to better support survivors. Consultation participants emphasised the important role of government leadership in fostering collaboration at the community level.

Vision & Principles, Goal & Outcomes

Antigua and Barbuda's Strategic Action Plan is guided by the following vision and principles:

Vision

Antigua and Barbuda is a nation where all women, men, girls and boys live in safety, and are free from the threat, fear or experience of gender-based violence in all forms.

Principles

Gender-based violence is a gendered crime which disproportionately affects the lives of women.

Gender-based violence is rooted in inequality between men and women.

All survivors deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

An effective response requires collaboration between survivors, service providers, government and non-government actors and agencies.

Programs, policies and services must be responsive to the needs of Antigua and Barbuda's diverse communities.

Perpetrators must be held accountable for their crimes.

Everyone in Antigua and Barbuda shares the responsibility to stop gender-based violence by promoting equality, human rights and respect.

Goal

The goal of the National Strategic Action Plan is to eliminate gender-based violence (GBV) in a holistic, systematic, complementary and comprehensive manner, through multi-sectoral, and multi-dimensional approaches, and to provide appropriate care and services to survivors of GBV.

Overall Outcome

The overall outcome is an efficient, effective coordinated effort leading to the elimination of GBV in Antigua and Barbuda

Leadership and Accountability

The Sexual Violence Action Plan requires commitment to work in partnership across ministries, sectors and division, and at the community level, to prevent gender-based violence and improve responses to survivors.

The Steering Committee on Gender-based Violence will be chaired by the Minister Responsible for Gender Affairs, providing government leadership and accountability by overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan.

The Directorate of Gender Affairs will lead an inter-ministerial Directors' Working Group to coordinate the implementation of the Action Plan across ministries. The Directors' Working Group will meet with violence against women organisations to report on progress under the Action Plan annually, and identify strategies for moving forward.

The government will publish a report two years after the launch of the Action Plan, and again after four years, to provide an update on progress.

Members of the Ministerial Steering Committee:

Minister of Education, Sports, Youth and Gender Affairs (Chair)
 Minister of State, Ministry Legal Affairs
 Minister of National Security
 Minister of Health

Members of the Directors' Working Group:

Executive Director, Directorate of Gender Affairs (Chair)
 Clinical AIDS Coordinator
 Director, Youth Affairs
 Director, Citizen's Welfare Division
 Director, Community Development Division
 Commissioner of Police
 Chief Medical Officer of Health
 Head Matron, Mount St. John Medical Centre
 Senior Sergeant, Royal Police Force – Sexual Offences Unit
 NGO/CBO/FBO Representative (2)

I. Review, Adopt and Implement Protective Laws and Policies

A foundation of all promising interventions to prevent Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is attention to the impact of socially determined gender roles in the perpetration of violence and an increased understanding of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) as a human rights problem that is detrimental to the community as a whole, and which should be taken into account in all protective laws and policies.

GBV present challenges to the criminal justice system. These offences often occur in private settings, with no witnesses and little definitive physical evidence. In many cases, sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows.

Of all violent crimes, sexual assault is the least likely to come to the attention of the criminal justice system. Women are often reluctant to report sexual assault to the police. Some women may fear that they will not be believed or that their sexual and personal lives will be publicly judged and scrutinized in court. Others may not realize that a crime has been committed.

Many women who went through the criminal justice system indicated they felt “re-victimized” by the process.

Part of an effective criminal justice response requires that justice personnel have the knowledge, skills and resources they need to conduct effective prosecutions.

There is weak enforcement of laws against sexual and domestic violence because women are ignorant of the existence of laws criminalising sexual and domestic violence. Marital rape is a common phenomenon and has not yet been accepted as an issue neither has it been recognised as a criminal act. The lack of security and protection of civilians create an environment where perpetrators are not denounced for fear of reprisal. As a result, a number of victims do not seek justice and so suffer from psychological and physical injuries in silence.

Public institutions need to be sensitized about their rights to security and protection and on the existing laws and procedures relating to security and protection.

Reforming, Strengthening and Implementing Relevant Laws and Policies includes measures at the broadest level to ensure rights are recognised and protected through international, statutory laws and policies.

What We Will Do:

- **Intensive advocacy for law reform targeting legislators, policy makers, and other stake holders**
- **Substantive and procedural law reform**
- **Supporting policy development through DOGA and within relevant ministries**
- **Human rights education with policy implementers**
- **Advocacy targeting legislators and other policy makers**
- **Budget allocation for implementation of laws and policies**

II. Prevention: Advocacy, Community Mobilisation and Raising Awareness

Public education addresses the root causes of violence by changing the social attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate violence against women. To be effective, public education campaigns need to encourage all community members to take an active role in shifting social norms to prevent sexual violence.

Advocacy strategies and actions are considered pivotal for creating and sustaining an enabling political, economic and social environment for the implementation of the GBV-SAP (Gender-based Violence Strategic Action Plan). The design and implementation of strategies within the framework of the action plan will support and encourage changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior at all levels, particularly within political and decision-making groups, and lead, among others, to revisions and modifications in the existing legal, policy and normative framework. Activities will center on building and strengthening local capacity to understand the root causes of GBV and promote gender equality measures and monitor changes in the environment.

Gender-based violence is a practice that is located and manifested in the family, the community and the state. The family socialises its members to accept hierarchical relations between the sexes and power over the allocation of resources. The community's structures (economic, cultural, and social) provide the mechanisms for perpetuating male control over women including control over their sexuality. Violence against women and girls must be recognised as a fundamental violation of their human rights, including rights to life and security of person, as well as rights indirectly violated, such as the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being of oneself.

The government is currently supporting public education campaigns that encourage men and boys to play an active role in preventing violence against women. These initiatives are inspiring men and boys to speak up against violence against women. Our campaigns further target youth and the adults who influence them – parents, educators, coaches, and mentors – to change attitudes to prevent violence from happening in the first place, through sexual and reproductive health education, and sexuality and masculinity conversations. Through the campaign, tools are developed for peer educators to help them sustain the messages of the campaign.

We recognise that violence in schools, including bullying and sexual harassment, is a serious issue. Through this strategy, students will have the opportunity to learn about gender-based violence, sexuality, sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual behaviours in the classroom. This requires the reporting of all serious and violent incidents including sexual assault. Each school in Antigua and Barbuda should have a team of concerned persons working to promote a safer and more welcoming learning environment.

The main purpose for this component is to provide a comprehensive behavior change communication framework on gender-based violence that will address diverse audience needs in order to eliminate gender-based violence in the country.

What We Will Do:

- **The government will work with key institutions and/or groups– e.g., political, members of parliament, civil servants, NGO and private sector leaders, academics, the media, to provide consultation, sensitisation and training to enhance capacities to advocate for the development and dissemination of information, strengthen networks and coalitions, and increase media coverage of selected issues around gender-based violence and eradicating gender-based violence.**
- **Careful attention will be taken to the development of appropriate baseline data for monitoring progress toward increasing public awareness on issues of GBV, and mobilising resources.**
- **Audience segmentation and targeting will be in use to capture all age groups, policy makers, traditional leaders and professionals. Many communication channels will be used and will include: peer education; mass media; public forums; sessions at workplace and community gatherings; and interpersonal communication and counseling. Participatory mechanisms will be used to generate and develop IEC/advocacy messages and materials.**
- **Widespread Community Mobilisation and Individual Behavior Change will be undertaken. This includes raising overall community awareness, mobilising community-based efforts, providing support for evidence-based advocacy; and conducting mass media campaigns that improve knowledge, attitudes, and practices of community members. A key aspect of community mobilization is involving the media to ethically and accurately report on violence issues.**

III. Building Capacities for Effective Case Management, Care, Support

There is a shortage of competent human resources in all sectors relevant to the GBV Strategic Action Plan (medical, legal, psychosocial, protection/security). There is need therefore to build the capacity of institutions, organisations and individuals that will be engaged in the implementation of one or more aspects of this national action plan.

- The primary aim of the psychosocial sector is to provide the critical and required support for victims/survivors of GBV. In addition to physical injuries, GBV victims/survivors experience psychological trauma (such as stigma, family rejection for the victim and children born out of rape, marital separation, fear, and mental depression). International and NGOs and women organisations in parts of the country are providing psychological assistance to GBV survivors e.g. through advocacy for improved service and by training of counselors. However they lack the requisite technical as well as logistical capacity to effectively implement their programmes. They also lack the relevant tools and guidelines to attend to clients and to coordinate their efforts more efficiently. There is need to assess the capacity needs of these institutions and organizations in order to provide meaningful support to strengthen them.
- Gender Based Violence has numerous health consequences, including physical injury, unwanted pregnancies including unwanted teenage pregnancies, and HIV/AIDS infection. International and local NGOs are supporting government in responding to the immediate health needs of many members of the community including women and girls who are survivors of GBV. Some GBV survivors opt to stay in their communities due to the inaccessibility to care. In most areas, physician, nurses and midwives are operating the clinics and health centers.. Awareness about the individual's rights is very important in the context of referrals. Some of health facilities in the country provide antibiotics to prevent STI and, treat with PEP to prevent HIV/AIDS when the survivors visit the health facility within 72 hours after rape. Pregnancy tests and emergency contraceptives are also provided. Tetanus and hepatitis B vaccines are given during the course of treatment to prevent survivors from attracting tetanus or hepatitis.
- Health professionals do not routinely try to identify the survivors of GBV. There is no available data on how many health professionals have received training in clinical management of GBV cases. The lack of capacity in terms of medical personnel and basic equipment are impediments to fully take into account the needs of victims who often live in remote and inaccessible areas. In order to respond to the victims' immediate needs, health structures must be available and equipped while health personnel must be properly trained.
- The police department has introduced a new user friendly concept of policing which involves the public in crime protection, while sensitizing them on the dangers of crime and how to tackle incidence of silence crime such as GBV. The Sexual Offences Unit is one of the main units in the Police Force, and it provides invaluable assistance to victim/survivors of sexual violence. However they need to be strengthened so that they can operate effectively. The Sexual violence

Unit requires logistical support including transportation, institutional and human resource capacity building.

Using multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary approaches

*In addition to addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) at these multiple levels of prevention, it is also important to institute **multisectoral** approaches. Programming experiences have revealed that no one sector or agency working in isolation can make an impact with its prevention and response activities. At minimum, services to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) must be the outcome of coordinated activities between the constituent community, the national government, health and social services, and legal and security sectors. The multi-sectoral model calls for holistic inter-organisational and inter-agency efforts across multiple sectors. It is characterized by the full engagement of government leaders and the local community, as well as **interdisciplinary and inter-organizational cooperation, collaboration, and coordination**. The goal of collaborative efforts is to create synergy among all stakeholders and to avoid the duplication of efforts.*

What We Will Do:

- **Build the operational and institutional effectiveness of related ministries, sectors, divisions, service professionals, agencies and groups involved in GBV, through strengthening interdisciplinary and inter-organisational cooperation, collaboration and coordination**
- **Fully develop and implement of a multi-ministerial, multi-sectoral and systemised approach to addressing gender-based violence offences, particularly sexual offences, and establishing the appropriate data and information management framework through the establishment of a Gender-based and Sexual Assault Response Centre (SARC), establishing a “one-stop” centre for survivors of gender-based violence**
- **Establish a national framework and national case management structure for GBV, including data and information sharing through institutionalising electronic data management structures, case management and review protocols**
- **Provide for a cadre of committed, certified medical nurse to serve as Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) within the SARC, fully equipped with skills to administer GBSV examinations for both women and children**

Coordination and Implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan

All anti-violence interventions will be implemented under the general framework of the Strategic Action Plan under the motto —one **leader**, one **team**, and one **program**.

One leader: Under the umbrella of DOGA, with the SART providing Secretariat support to the general coordination of the Plan

One team: The SART is a coalition of actors culminating in the building and promoting of a strong effective partnership between government and NGOs and other multi-sectoral stakeholders.

One program: The National Strategic Action Plan to Address Gender-based violence in Antigua and Barbuda provides the framework within which all major activities related to prevention and response of violence against women and children are outlined.

While the implementation of the various aspects of the Plan will be done by identified stakeholders that are engaged in GBV prevention, management, and care within the context of their respective programs and responsibilities, the DOGA will assume the overall coordination of the implementation of this National Action Plan. It will work closely with development partners who are supporting programmes on GBV to ensure programme success.

The Gender Division will also spearhead the mobilization of resources for implementation of the NAP. Other specific tasks required for effective coordination will include:

- Set up the respective coordinating bodies to provide guidance and suggestions on the modalities for bridging the various supports in ways that will benefit survivors/victims
- Providing technical assistance from in and outside of DOGA
- Develop and sustaining a dynamic data base on GBV-NAP as well as other gender related programmes in the country.
- Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for, and monitor all GBV programme interventions
- Develop and implement an advocacy strategy in collaboration with implementing partners in support of the GBV-NAP.
- Coordinate and harmonize all research activities including data collection in relation to the GBV-NAP
- Disseminate analytical and consolidated progress reports on the implementation of activities of the NAP and related programmes
- Document and disseminate lessons learned and —best practices on interventions including relevant data from the data-base through a quarterly news letter or magazine
- Strengthen its Gender Focal Points forum, and create technical committees on key critical thematic areas to assist the division in the execution of its tasks...
- Create gender focal point committees within the decentralized structures the community level to ensure that issues of gender and GBV-NAP are addressed not only at the central levels but also at the grassroots level in line with the principles of decentralization.

In view of the additional tasks and new challenges with respect to GBV-NAP, DOGA will require some capacity building in terms of human resource, equipment and training.

Training will be required for all the staff members in management and organisational skills, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation, as these are core functions of the division in all aspects of their coordination role.

DOGA will need to strengthen its Information Resource Center, and in particular ensure the operationalization of its data –base, in order to document information on existing and past sectoral programmes/activities with relevance to gender in general and GBV in particular.

Implementation of Strategies and Approaches

Several areas of special consideration when developing programming are underscored below. These areas are part of implementing the NAP, and should be recognised as critical to violence against women and children prevention and response strategies.

Using multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary approaches

In addition to addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) at these multiple levels of prevention, it is also important to institute **multi-sectoral** approaches. Programming experiences have revealed that no one sector or agency working in isolation can make an impact with its prevention and response activities. At minimum, services to address GBV must be the outcome of coordinated activities between the constituent community, the national government, health and social services, and legal and security sectors. The multi-sectoral model calls for holistic inter-organisational and inter-agency efforts across multiple sectors. It is characterized by the full engagement of government leaders and the local community, as well as **interdisciplinary and inter-organizational cooperation, collaboration, and coordination**. The goal of collaborative efforts is to create synergy among all stakeholders and to avoid the duplication of efforts.

Promoting and protecting human rights. Violence against women and children must be recognised as a fundamental violation of their human rights, including rights to life and security of person and the right to enter into marriage only with full consent of intending parties, as well as rights indirectly violated, such as the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being of oneself and one's family, the right to be free from discrimination and the right to equal protection before the law.^x A foundation of all promising interventions to prevent violence against women and children is attention to the impact of socially determined gender roles in the perpetration of violence and an increased understanding of violence against women and children as a human rights problem that is detrimental to the community as a whole. To avoid responses that focus initiatives on girls and women solely as —victims,|| it is essential to focus on gender relations between men and women and boys and girls and to address patriarchal attitudes and behaviors that reinforce the notion that violence against women and children is acceptable.

Promoting participatory processes that engage all stakeholders. Widespread reform must be instituted from both the *top down as well as bottom up*. Activities that mobilize citizens of communities and engage leaders in the community and in institutions are critical to changing attitudes and behavior. All planning and implementation of programming and advocacy must include participatory processes that engage communities, including survivors/victims. Without support from the public sector and/or community leaders, interventions may not be taken seriously, and at times, not fully carried out. It also is important to ensure that strong alliances are formed with community-based organizations, tapping into the wealth of knowledge they have gained working against violence against women and children.

Working with men. Working with men is an important factor in preventing violence against women and children. Gender inequitable attitudes can be unlearned and thereby contribute to healthier relationships. Throughout society and the community in general, men are seen as leaders and are a

major force for change. Evidence suggests that coalition building and advocacy are also successful strategies for working with men.

Targeting youth. Programs that work with young men and women have demonstrated more dramatic and sustainable changes in attitudes about the acceptability of gender-based violence. Evidence suggests that youth are more open to change, including their attitudes and behavior regarding violence, gender roles, and masculinity norms. Schools are a key entry point for sensitisation, through school curricula as well as youth groups, theatre, etc. Strategies related to working with youth are most successful when they also engage older community members and leaders.

Researching promising programming approaches. There are many gaps in our understanding of the pervasiveness and character of violence against women and children in Antigua and Barbuda. Research is needed to better understand the perpetuation and impact of violence against women and children. There is also a need to undertake operations research to assess the effect of different programmatic approaches on preventing and reducing violence against women and children and on changing social norms that are tolerant of violence within relationships and in the society. The emerging evidence on the relationship between violence and women's and girls' risk of HIV also indicates that this is a critical area for more focused research.

Ensure sustainability through gender- and gender-based violence responsive budgeting at the national and local levels. Policy reform, systems change, behavior change, and community mobilization are complex and lengthy processes that are influenced by many other factors that are difficult to control in the short term. Reducing the prevalence of violence against women and children requires that the State prioritizes the attention and resources needed at all levels to tackle it with the seriousness and visibility necessary. At the most essential level, the State must create sustained budgeting mechanisms.

Advocacy and Communication

Advocacy is the foundation of addressing GBV. It involves speaking up and drawing attention to the issue of GBV and directing decision makers towards the solution. Advocacy must be prioritised, both to ensure ongoing attention and funding to the issue and to draw attention to particular cases in which international intervention is warranted. An advocacy plan shall be developed and this will help to conduct national advocacy and media campaigns on key issues of GBV relating to laws, compliance and procedures for the reporting of GBV, and also attitudinal change towards negative sexual behaviors. Communication strategies to be used shall include media campaigns of all forms TV and radio adverts, talk shows, posters, bill boards, music and dramas in both mainstream media and also on the internet.

Resource Mobilisation

Mobilisation of internal and external resources by participating agencies and other partners is crucial to the implementation of core components of the Strategic Plan of Action. The government will support the adoption of the GBV National Strategic Action Plan and incorporate it in its development agenda.

It is important to make it mandatory to explore other options for partnerships in and outside the country. Consequently, with the leadership of the government, the private sector and donors, common financing schemes will be set up, monitored and expanded. At national and community levels, community financing scheme will be strengthened to support GBV interventions and fund raising activities.

Conclusion

Gender-based violence in all of its forms is a devastating social problem that has a long history and very real consequences for the women who have experienced it.

Ending GBV is a shared responsibility that will require the efforts of all Antiguan and Barbudans. It starts with changing attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs. It requires a commitment to ensure that survivors are treated with respect and dignity and receive the supports they need to recover and change their lives.

When we went out to communities and began our conversations with survivors, service providers and other experts, our goal was to collect ideas, seek advice and generate solutions.

Our Strategic Action Plan builds on what we heard and on the ongoing efforts of individuals and institutions across the province committed to ending gender-based violence. It lays out concrete and pragmatic steps to prevent violence and improve supports to survivors in the short term, while working together on longer term solutions.

Through our collective efforts, this National Strategic Action Plan will lay the groundwork for an Antigua and Barbuda where all women, girls, men and boys live in safety, and are free from the threat, fear or experience of gender-based violence.

I. Review, Adopt and Implement Protective Laws and Policies		
Objective		
To review, strengthen and implement relevant Laws and Policies for the prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), ensuring accordance with international requirements and standards.		
Outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender sensitive legislation and procedures on GBV are in place and protect the rights of women and children The legal justice system is strengthened and GBV cases are expeditiously handled by judges, prosecutors, lawyers and there is general improvement in the conditions of service of magistrates and judges 		
Outputs	Activities	Indicators
I. Increased availability and accessibility to relevant gender sensitive legal instruments and procedures on GBV	Review and assess existing legal instruments and procedures on GBV; (in areas not covered by previous assessments)	Number of legislative instruments passed at Parliament which relates to prevention and prosecution of GBV
	Conduct a study into current legal and constitutional provisions against GBV and recommend needed legal reforms	Number of judges, magistrates, prosecutors, lawyers including those operating at the local courts trained on issues of GBV and on how to deal with victims/survivors during court proceedings
	Review powers of the magistrates to enable them pass stiffer sentences	
	II. Increased advocacy for legislation which will allow survivors to gain easier access to justice	Assess capacity of civil society organisations to offer legal support to GBV victims/survivors and families
III. Increased knowledge of stakeholders on GBV related laws, and legal consequences of GBV	Undertake intensive advocacy for legislative and policy reform; Advocate for the incorporation of provision for compensation to victims/survivors of GBV	
	Amendment of existing legislation and periodic review of its effectiveness ; Enforce procedures that ensure that offenders and perpetrators are duly punished in line with existing laws.	No. of Workshops on the GBV related law held for members of the judiciary
IV. Increased reinforcement of existing legislation and periodic review of its effectiveness, with specific focus on prevention of violence, protection of survivors, prosecution and/or rehabilitation of offenders;	Organise training workshops for judges, magistrates, prosecutors, lawyers and the police on the emotional, psychological dimensions of GBV vis a vis the victim/survivors and how to deal with such cases	
	Establish institutional and legal framework for GBV redress (Both short/medium term): Prioritize GBV and sexual offence cases at the courts and enforce the need for timely adjudication of all GBV cases including any backload of cases; Build networks of judges, prosecutors, police to ensure that existing laws relating to GBV are upheld	

II. Prevention: Advocacy, Community Mobilisation and Raising Awareness

Objective

To ensure that the population of Antigua and Barbuda develops a zero tolerance to Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Outcome

Women, men and children in Antigua and Barbuda are assertive to issues of GBV and proactive in its prevention

Outputs	Activities	Indicators
I. Increased availability of accurate and reliable information on GBV related issues	Develop an advocacy/IEC/BCC strategy in support of the implementation of the GBV-SAP	A comprehensive Advocacy, IEC/BCC developed, circulated and implemented
II. Increased level of awareness about GBV and its consequences by all members of the Antigua and Barbuda community	Develop and standardise Information Education and Communication materials on GBV	Number of awareness campaigns organised
III. Increased availability of accurate and reliable information on security and protection facilities at national and decentralized levels;	Translate/simplify GBV related laws/articles into local dialects and dissemination at all levels community level;	Number of NGO/CBOs, Media agencies trained in advocacy for the prevention of GBV and in gender sensitive messaging and reporting on GBV issues
IV. Increased knowledge of stakeholders on security and protection issues within various levels of the country;	Undertake awareness raising campaigns addressing gender relations that focus on men, youth and other target groups	Level of commitment by communities in identifying and reporting cases of GBV
V. Level of increase in reported cases of GBV and related sexual offences	Use of educational entertainment or _edutainment programs (radio soap operas) to share key messages with the audience	Number of GBV prevention committees constituted and trained in all communities with reports on activities
VI. Increased awareness on negative effect and impact of GBV leading to behavioral change	Use of community-wide meetings, knowledge-building workshops, peer group discussions, and drama to challenge gender inequities related to Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	Number of GBV networks per community established operational
VII. Increased involvement and participation of community leaders in GBV related discourses and dialogues	Awareness raising through seminars and workshops with students, their parents, teachers, government officials, and NGOs in relation to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in schools	Inventory of logistics supplied; field workers motivated and regular reporting frameworks in place and being used
VIII. Enhanced capacity of Media to provide appropriate reportage on GBV at all levels	Building capacity of all communities so that they are sensitised/aware of GBV and subsequently able to address and mitigate the impact of shame and stigma on individual survivors/victims, families, and communities	Number of IEC materials using verbal or visual messages on GBV produced and disseminated
IX. Increased collaboration among NGOs/CBOs in rallying around issues of GBV,		

III. Building Capacities for Effective Case Management, Care, Support

Objective

- Build capacity of the relevant sectors (Health, Education, Social welfare, the judiciary and the justice system, NGOs) for mainstreaming GBV prevention and case management interventions in their policies, plans and programmes.
 - Offer comprehensive and ethical response to survivors/victims.

Outcomes

- Trauma Counseling services and all other forms of counseling are available at all levels especially at the grassroots and is being accessed by victims;
 - Psychosocial support for victims and families is available in all communities.
 - There are referral systems in place for victims to receive medical and judicial redress
 - Medical referral centres are available and equipped to handle GBV cases;
 - Victims of GBV receive the needed medical attention and medication

Outputs	Activities	Indicators
I. Needs assessment reviews and research conducted and existing community networks strengthened; II. Increased availability and utilization of credible assessments/survey reports and recommendations on critical traditional, cultural and psychosocial issues relating to GBV III. Increased awareness on negative effect and impact of GBV leading to behavioural change; Reduced stigmatization of GBV survivors and families IV. Enhanced capacity of NGOs, Networks, personnel and individuals to provide psychosocial support at the national, and community levels V. Enhanced Capacity of counselors to ensure effective counseling of both victims and perpetrators VI. Enhanced capacity of Media to provide appropriate reportage on GBV at all levels	Undertake baseline surveys and reviews especially in the areas that are not yet covered by previous assessments	Needs assessment conducted on GBV, and reports (disaggregated by sex disseminated to all relevant stakeholders
	Assess the psychosocial perception of offenders and men in GBV and rape; and disseminate results to stakeholders for action	Number of public and media institutions awareness campaigns on GBV
	Prioritize psychosocial needs in the area of behavioural change and trauma healing including trauma counseling	All Ministries have Gender Focal Points
	Conduct Trainer of Trainers workshop in Trauma Counseling	Number of persons trained in trauma counseling and the trained persons replicating the training in other places
	Establishment of an effective referral network and linkages	Production, dissemination and utilization of GBV protocol and guidelines
	Recruitment of personnel in relevant sectors and NGOs	-Client satisfaction
Establish one vibrant GBV network per community	-Number of emergency accommodation established and psychosocial support centers strengthened equipped and operational	
Establish linkages between community, health clinics/centers, police stations and courts	-Inventory of logistics supplied; field workers motivated and regular reporting frameworks in place and being used	
Conduct health and medical reviews/assessments on GBV in (in areas not covered by previous assessments)		

<p>VII. Reports on needs assessment / reviews and research prepared and disseminated;</p> <p>VIII. Standardized guidelines and information packages developed</p> <p>IX. Increased capacities of Government, NGOs, CBOs and individuals in dealing with health needs of GBV</p> <p>Improved, equipped and functional medical infrastructures available at all levels to handle clinical aspects of GBV</p> <p>Increased service provision with linkages to psychosocial and legal needs of victims</p>	Undertake reviews and assessment of who is doing what and where at all levels	All available health-related assessment and review reports available and presented as baseline information;
	Conduct awareness creation and counseling on health aspects of GBV	
	Organize training for relevant personnel	Training modules designed, disseminated and in use by health training centers
	Strengthen the MSJMC to be able to perform DNA tests	Number of public and private institutions trained
	Community level sensitisation meetings on the health effects of GBV including transmission of HIV/AIDS and other STDs for health personnel	- Number of community leaders (both male and female) trained as GBV advocates
	Sensitisation on the health needs of GBV victims and where to secure health support for victims	- Increased number of rape cases processes with forensic evidence in a timely manner;
		- Number of Trainings conducted for health workers in all referral clinics
		- Number of trainings on clinical management of GBV and Rape provided