



**Twenty-Fifth Anniversary
of the Fourth World Conference on Women
and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration
and Platform for Action (1995)**

National Report

SAINT LUCIA



GOVERNMENT OF SAINT LUCIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, INNOVATION AND GENDER RELATIONS

BEIJING +25

**REPORT ON THE COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL LEVEL REVIEW OF THE STATUS
OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE**

BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

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Table of Contents

1.0 SECTION ONE	1
1.1 Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks	1
1.11 Achievements	1
1.12 Challenges	5
1.13 Setbacks	108
1.2 Priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in the last 5 years	109
1.21 Quality education, training and lifelong learning	119
1.22 Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights....	1110
1.23 Women’s entrepreneurship and women’s enterprises	1210
1.24 Eliminating violence against women and girls	1210
1.25 Rights to work and rights at work	1311
1.3 Measures taken to prevent discrimination.....	1311
1.4 Effects of humanitarian crises.....	1412
1.5 Priority recommendations for accelerating progress for women and girls.....	1412
1.51 Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice	1513
1.52 Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.....	1513
1.53 Poverty eradication and agricultural productivity	1614
1.54 Quality education and training and life-long learning for women and girls.....	1614
1.55 Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes	1614
2.0 SECTION TWO: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern	1715
2.1 Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work	1715
2.2 Poverty eradication, social protection and social services	1715
2.3 Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes	1916
2.4 Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions	1917
2.5 Peaceful and inclusive societies	2017
2.6 Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation	2018
3.0 SECTION THREE: National institutions and processes	2119
4.0 SECTION FOUR: Data and Statistics	2220

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a four section summary of a national review on the status of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) during the last five years. The first section highlights the priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks experienced by Saint Lucia. Section two focuses on the twelve critical areas of concern which are discussed under six clusters, representing the overarching dimensions that highlight the alignment of the BPfA with the Sustainable Development Agenda of 2030. Section three focuses on national institutions and processes and the fourth section speaks to gender data. The process for the preparation of the report, the data presented and the level of analysis underscore the challenges Saint Lucia experiences in the implementation of the BPfA. Notwithstanding these challenges, the report identifies promising strides being undertaken to strengthen the normative framework to support gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

1.0 SECTION ONE

1.1 Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks.

1.11 Achievements

1. The Government of Saint Lucia records a mixture of gains in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls within the last five years. There has been some degree of progress evidenced in emerging trends that challenge gender stereotypes and **through projects and priorities aimed at improving the lives of all citizens**. The most noteworthy achievements are the continuing trends of female students accessing and succeeding tertiary education, including in the areas of Science and Technology; the increase in percentage of women in managerial positions; advances in legislation that positively impact **the girl child**; the introduction of the HPV vaccine; the completion of the National Plan/Partnership of Action to end Gender-based Violence in 2016; training in the area to counter human trafficking and the establishment of a counter trafficking hotline; the provision of caregivers for the elderly; the provision of support for rural women in biodiversity; and the engagement of women in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation initiatives. Another promising development is the naming of a National Committee for Human Rights, approved by Cabinet in 2019.

2. Girls generally take up more of the educational opportunities available to them. The most recent adolescent report on Saint Lucia¹ observes that:

- Gender differentials in examination sitting and passing rates are manifested from Grade 4 at the Primary Education level onwards: for almost every indicator and in every year boys perform less well than girls;
- Girls account for 60 per cent of post-secondary enrollment, although due primarily to a steady increase in technical and vocational education and training where boys make up around half the enrolment this proportion has decreased since 2009;
- Pass rates for post-secondary courses are high, although again those for females are appreciably higher than for males at 90 per cent compared to 74 per cent; and
- The higher success rate of girls at CSEC and post-secondary examinations means that more girls than boys are able to either continue their education or access jobs available to school graduates. As a corollary, more girls than boys will be limited to low-skilled occupations.

¹ Adolescent Well-being and Equity in Saint Lucia, Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, empowerment, Youth Development, Sports, Culture and Local Government & UNICEF Office of the Eastern Caribbean Area, January 2019

3. There is an increasing trend of a slightly higher percentage of the labour force with post-secondary and tertiary education in Saint Lucia being women². Although 48% of the labour force in the last quarter of 2014 was female, 15% possessed post-secondary and tertiary education compared to 14.3% of males. In the last quarter of 2018 whereas 52% of the labour force was female, 16% possessed post-secondary and tertiary education compared to 13% for males. The National Report of living conditions³ further supports this trend and observes that in the workforce “a higher percentage of women were involved as professionals, clerical support workers, and in sales and services. Men were more heavily involved as skilled agricultural workers, in craft and related trades and in plant and machine operations.

4. Although women in leadership continue to be a challenge, an achievement was noted in the number of women in managerial positions in both the public and private sectors. According to a 2017 ILO report⁴, just under 20% of small enterprises in Saint Lucia had a top woman manager. Saint Lucia led in Latin America and the Caribbean in medium enterprises where just under 40% of them had a top woman manager. With regards to large enterprises Saint Lucia was 7th in Latin America and the Caribbean, where in about 12% of these enterprises a top manager is a woman. In the public service, there is a sustained tendency towards gender parity at the managerial level, even with women dominating in some cases.

5. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Juvenile Justice Reform Project (JJRP), which is in its second phase, seeks to strengthen the justice system for children aged 18 and below who are in conflict with the law in six member states. The project aim is to create a rehabilitative system that promotes the diversion of children away from the Courts and their rehabilitation and reintegration into the society. These efforts are supported through the increase of the use of Diversion and Restorative Justice as example of alternatives to custodial sentencing; the provision of robust, evidence-based programming and services to foster the rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law; the reintegration of children in detention back to their families and communities; documentation and sharing of successful models, solutions and best practices aimed at the reduction of child offender recidivism rates across the region; and the development, implementation and promotion of robust advocacy programmes geared towards the sustainability of the reform efforts.

6. Through the Juvenile Justice Reform Project and the stakeholder buy-in and contribution, Saint Lucia has introduced and implemented a number of reform measures that, taken together, will result in more modernized systems of child justice in the Caribbean region and will involve inter alia, continued specialized training for practitioners and policy makers. The strides taken towards the modernization of the Child Justice System within the OECS region include the

² Labour Force Composition; Population 15 years and over by highest level of educational attainment; Central Statistical Office

³ Saint Lucia National Report of Living Conditions 2016

⁴ Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum in Latin America and the Caribbean; International Labour Organization. 2017

updating of laws, regulations, policies, and protocols for the treatment of children who are at social risk as well as those who are in-conflict with the law.

7. On Universal Children's Day November 20th 2018, Saint Lucia passed the **Child Justice and the Child(Care, Protection and Adoption) Acts**. These laws are the first two of the five OECS Model Bills to be enacted under the USAID funded JJRP project. These two Acts replace the Children and Young Persons Act of 1972.

8. **The Child Justice Act** speaks to children in conflict with the law who are between the ages of 12-18, with 12 years being the age of criminal responsibility. It introduces a new mandatory process called the Initial Inquiry, if the child acknowledges responsibility, to determine if the child in conflict with the law can be diverted from the formal Court system. Recognizing and reflecting on the 4 general principles of the UNCRC, convention articles and international instruments, such as the Beijing Rules, applicable to child justice administration, the legislation outlines diversion options, community based alternative sentencing and the use of custodial sentencing as a last resort. This legislation also provides thorough guidance and instruction as it pertains to the roles and responsibilities of the major stakeholders such as police, magistrates, probation officers and Directors of Public Prosecutions (DPPs) regarding the execution of the this Act. Overall, the emphasis is on the creation of a rehabilitative system with the aims of diversion, rehabilitation and reintegration in an effort to abolish the punitive approach to child justice that currently obtains.

9. The enactment of the Child Justice Bill, like the statement from the Chief Education Officer in April 2019 of the intention to suspend and within one year abolish corporal punishment in schools, speak to Saint Lucia's commitment to move away from punitive to restorative means of discipline of children. This proactive measure contributes to nurturing a future where citizens internalize and adopt a non-violent approach to conflict which creates an enabling environment to end gender-based violence.

10. **The Child (Care, Protection and Adoption) Act** provides a more comprehensive way to address neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence affecting children. Its intent is that in all actions and decisions concerning a child, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child shall be of paramount consideration. The Act also addresses foster care and aims to reform the law relating to adoption to provide for greater supervision of adoption procedures and overall welfare of the child. A country that protects its most vulnerable and demonstrates intolerance of cruelty to children, nurtures a society that teaches empathy, an essential skill for non-violence.

11. The balance of the Family Law Bills, the Domestic Violence Bill, Status of Children Bill and the Child Maintenance Bill have been prioritized for enactment in 2019. The Family Law Legislation altogether create a focus on and an avenue for the preservation of functionality within the

family structure, the protection of the most vulnerable and greater parity and equity as it pertains to recourse for victims of exploitation within the family unit.

12. In January 2019 the Government of Saint Lucia through the Department of Health and Wellness approved the administering of the **Human Papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine**, as part of its immunization schedule at schools for boys and girls of ages 11 and 12 years. The vaccine of choice is Gardasil which will help protect against Cancers caused by HPV.

13. The introduction of the family law bills discussed earlier both directly and indirectly support the elimination of violence against women, although the impact has not been assessed. Additionally, some other moderate achievements that have the potential to impact violence against women are noteworthy. One such achievement is the completion of the first National Plan/Partnership of Action (NPA) to end Gender-based Violence in 2016 which involved the collaboration of a number of stakeholders within government and civil society in response to a rise in the number of cases of gender-based violence on the island. The NPA is built around six national objectives (awareness; leadership; research and evaluation; innovative solutions; strategic planning; and integration and strategic alliances), and eighteen specific strategies to achieve these strategic objectives. Partnership is a central principle of the NPA, as all strategies enlist the partnership of various stakeholders while the Department of Gender Relations is the agency responsible for coordinating the implementation of this landmark achievement. During 2019 there have been renewed efforts to implement the NPA within a national framework aimed at strengthening the normative and institutional structures of the agencies engaged in offering essential services to women and girl victims of gender-based violence; thus resulting in a delay of its implementation.

14. Another achievement impacting this critical area of concern is the setting up of a twenty-four hour counter trafficking hotline in 2019 as part of an island wide campaign under the theme “Know the Signs, See it, Report it”. The establishment of this hotline was an endeavour outlined in the mandate of the Task Force to Counter Human Trafficking in an effort to foster awareness and enable greater reporting nationally. The establishment of the hotline was preceded by several training and sensitization sessions for officer across all government departments in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

15. Violence against the elderly, which includes but is not limited to women, was cited as a major concern. In 2015 an elderly care programme was instituted under the National Initiative to Create Employment (NICE) as the Home Care Programme. Although many of the initiatives under the NICE programme have since been discontinued, the Home Care Programme continues with elderly members of the community who would have otherwise been caring for themselves, benefiting from the services of home care providers. As a result of this, there is a reduction in unpaid work as elderly care was predominantly the burden of unemployed older women.

16. This following statement contained in the 5th National Biodiversity Report, 2008 -2014⁵, was the backdrop on which the award winning Helen's Daughters was formed in 2016. "In general, unemployment among women and youth is much higher, than the corresponding level for men, especially those with a primary school education and few marketable skills, which limits their potential to enjoy a reasonable standard of living. It is imperative therefore, that due consideration is given to ensuring increased opportunities for the overall participation of women and youth in biodiversity benefits, within the context of vulnerable groups in the society." Helen's Daughters, formed by Keithlin Caroo, was the winning proposal for the UN Women's Empower Women Champions for Change Program in 2016. This social enterprise directly connects rural female farmers to the hotel industry and in so doing responded to both the need for women's involvement in biodiversity and the low rate of employment of young women with few skills and average to low educational attainment.

17. Saint Lucia has sustained gains over the past decade in the number of women engaged in disaster risk reduction, particularly in the composition of the eighteen District Emergency Committees. In addition, Climate Change initiatives, including the preparation of the National Adaptation Plan for Saint Lucia are highly driven by women both at the coordination and participatory levels.

18. The Cabinet of Ministers has approved a National Coordinating Committee for Human Rights. The Committee is headed by the Department of External Affairs. Its inter-ministerial composition is charged with the mandate of overseeing the promotion and protection of human rights through ratification and implementation of international human rights conventions; ensuring the timely preparation of national reports; and guiding and monitoring the strategic implementation of recommendations.

1.12 Challenges

19. During the five year period, Saint Lucia has encountered various challenges in the advancement of women in critical areas particularly human **rights of women, women in power and decision making, women and poverty and violence against women**. Some challenges were also identified in women and health and the institutional mechanism for the advancement of women. Calls for greater attention in critical areas such as the girl child, education and training of women and women and the media were expressed in stakeholder consultations, as these challenges were highlighted as important barriers to the advancement of women.

20. The acknowledgement of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that, "Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings; their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of Governments," reflects the understanding that protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms is a never ending task.

⁵ National Biodiversity Report Saint Lucia 2014

21. Saint Lucia continues to struggle with all three strategic objectives identified in the Platform for Action under the critical area, human rights of women. Saint Lucia ratified CEDAW in 1982; however, its inclusion into law is a slow process. The combined initial to sixth periodic reports were presented in 2005. The concluding observations and recommendations calls on Saint Lucia to include CEDAW in our domestic legislation. Periodic reports seven to nine are being drafted in 2019. The irregular reporting is due in part to capacity deficiencies in the Department of Gender Relations but is also associated with the absence of a monitoring mechanism for the preparation of national reports and a strategic approach to the implementation of recommendations. The naming of the National Coordinating Committee for Human Rights should accelerate this process.

22. Legal reform in Saint Lucia is a slow process. Equality and non-discrimination in the law must be improved in keeping with international commitments. Increasing the pace of legal reform and the efficiency of the justice system are therefore considered highly urgent priorities. Ensuring widespread knowledge of the law, through the promotion of legal literacy will empower citizens to push legal reform.

23. The slow pace of the judicial system is considered a central contributing factor to some of the other challenges such as the continued prevalence of crime and violence, low prosecution rates, limited services for processing evidence especially for sex offenses, inadequate social protection, rehabilitation and psycho-emotional support services. Moreover gender stereotypes continue to be maintained and enforced by some religious beliefs and practices, resulting in resistance to change at best and the further institutionalization of discrimination against women at worst.

24. Although there were gains recorded in women in power and decision making some challenges persist. Women's participation in the highest decision making level continues to be a challenge. Temporary special measures to increase women's participation in Parliament have not been pursued. The Lower House consists of two women and fifteen men, or 12% participation of women members of parliament. In the Upper House, the President of the Senate is female and of the eleven Senators, three are female, two of whom are on the Government side and one serving as an Independent Senator, representing 27% participation of women. The Cabinet of Ministers comprises four women and ten men presently, a 28.5% participation of women. The Department of Gender Relations publication, *Running in Heels*, published in 2017, points to the high level of involvement of women in politics at the constituency level but lament their general unwillingness to participate as candidates in national elections. This landmark publication highlights the stories of forty women in politics from 1961 to 2016. It points to some barriers and identifies many similarities in challenges faced by women in politics both within and outside of the political parties that they pertain to.

25. The 2017 poverty assessment survey confirms the continued trend of the majority of poor households being female-headed. Teenage pregnancy and burden of child care, although declining⁶, is still a barrier to labour participation of younger unskilled women. Moreover, engagement in unpaid care of children and persons with disabilities, ill and elderly family members are barriers to employment for older women of the workforce. The majority of the poor who live in rural communities are disadvantaged as employment opportunities in urban areas for semi-skilled and unskilled workers are far from their homes, making the cost of transportation and the risks associated with working on a shift system important barriers to employment.

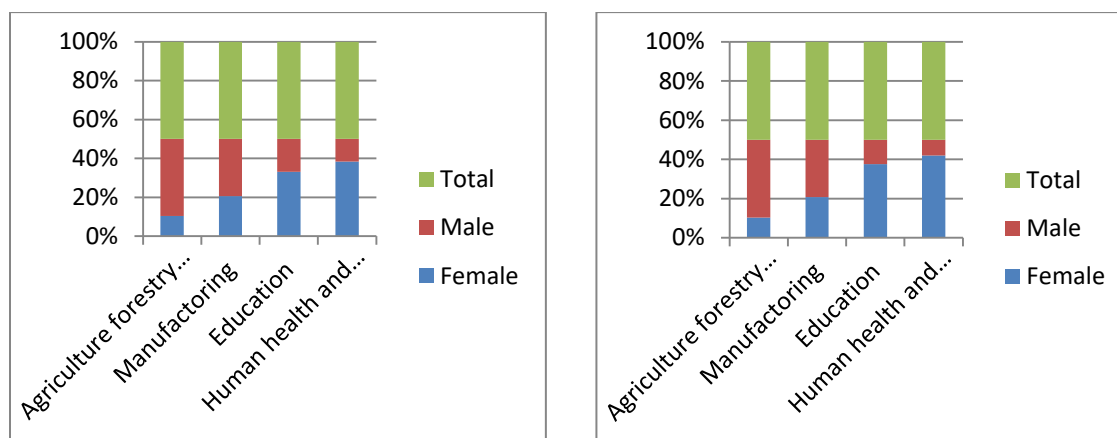
26. The intersectional risk factors create a myriad of challenges that point to a feminization of poverty in our local context. The National Report of Living Conditions of 2016 compares data on poverty in 2006 to 2016. The following findings support this assertion:

- Lower labour force participation rates among women pervade: 81.8 percent vs 68.1 percent.
- Invariably, earnings of women were lower in almost every case.
- The Gini coefficient for male wage and salary workers was 0.359 while for female wage and salary workers it was 0.4, suggesting that there was greater disparity between the highest paid female workers and the lowest paid among them.
- The share of the working poor in total employment fell for men but not for women in whatever age group, again indicative of the inferior labour market experience for women in both survey years.

The social context created by pervading gender stereotypes, unemployment, the lack of emphasis on emotional and social learning in the formal and informal education system and the inadequacy of sexual and reproductive health education forces already vulnerable women into generational cycles of poverty and increases their risk of being victims of intimate partner abuse and domestic violence.

27. Although the participation of women in the economy is increasing, it is still lower than that of men and there was an increasing tendency towards job segregation as demonstrated in the following graphs representing the composition of the labour force by sex in selected industry groups for 2014 and 2018. Job segregation is reinforced by gender stereotypes which continue to create barriers to access decent work for women, especially those who are unskilled.

⁶ Adolescent Well-being and Equity in Saint Lucia, Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, empowerment, Youth Development, Sports, Culture and Local Government & UNICEF Office of the Eastern Caribbean Area, January 2019



Employed labour force by selected industry groups and sex for 2014 and 2018 respectively

28. Violence against women continues to present several challenges. The recommended constitutional and legislative changes to address discrimination against women in all its forms have been slow due to resource and capacity constraints.

29. The legal framework for domestic violence has been in a process of review for the last fifteen years. The Domestic Violence Summary Proceedings Act of 1995 continues to be in effect. The various limitations of this existing piece of legislation in providing redress for victims who are not in cohabiting relationships with perpetrators of violence against them are well documented. A renewed process of review of the Domestic Violence Bill of 2016 has been reinitiated in the context of the passing of a suite of Bills to strengthen Family Law. Whilst this process is ongoing, there is a percentage of victims of domestic violence who have no redress under the existing law.

30. The normative framework guiding the delivery of essential services for victims of gender-based violence needs review. Challenges exist in all sectors including policing and justice, health, social and coordination of services. There is a lack of established and/or enforced protocols for the delivery of services resulting in duplication of services in some instances and a gap in others. Moreover poor and inadequate communication strategies create an information gap both among providers and potential beneficiaries of the services.

31. Notwithstanding this reality, there has been a steady increase in reported cases of offenses of gender-based violence in the last five years, with some years recording particularly grave offenses. Saint Lucia has not conducted a GBV prevalence survey. Service providers report that there are alarming numbers of accounts of unreported cases of gender-based violence perpetrated against women and children which emerge at intake interviews in agencies providing social services. Under reporting is therefore a concerning challenge.

32. In an effort to address this challenge the Division of Gender Relations has initiated an inter-agency steering committee to direct plans and leverage resources to implement the National Plan/Partnership for Action (NPA) to end Gender-based Violence which was completed in 2016

through collaboration with UNWomen and the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police. In keeping with this process, the Department has announced plans to make Saint Lucia a self-starter in the implementation of the UN multi-agency initiated Essential Service Package for women and girls victims of gender-based violence with technical support from the regional office of UNFPA.

33. Although there have been gains in health in the last two decades, there are some challenges. The rate of non-communicable diseases in women in the last five years is increasing. Cancers are particularly common with breast and cervical cancers are among the most common. It is hoped that the introduction of the HPV vaccine will impact this trend in the medium term. Other non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension continue to be diagnosed in both women and men at high rates. There is a higher prevalence of diabetes in women. The World Health Organization reports higher prevalence of diabetes and all related risk factors in women in 2016⁷.

	Males	Females	Total
Diabetes	13.7%	15.5%	14.6%
Overweight	51.0%	63.6%	57.4%
Obesity	19.7%	34.0%	27.0%
Physical inactivity	27.8%	54.5%	41.5%

Prevalence of diabetes and related risk factors

34. The relationship between stress and non-communicable diseases is well documented in various reports. In the short term greater emphasis on gender-responsive awareness campaigns should be prioritized. Increased access to stress reduction services can also have a positive impact on reversing these trends. The rate of obesity and physical inactivity in women is twice that of men. This coincides with the increasing trend of job segregation with women engaging in jobs that require less physical activity.

35. There have been calls for over a decade to increase the staff and capacity of the Division of Gender Relations as the national gender machinery. The Division continues to operate under limitations both in terms of personnel and the capacity of those employed to respond to the unit's mandate. The functioning of the unit is further challenged by constant changes in the Ministry through which it operates. In the last five years the unit has seen another shift from the Ministry of Health Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations to the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development. Undertaking its cross cutting national mandate to mainstream gender in national development is an ongoing challenge. Capacity building of public servants to mainstream gender in the various Government ministries, departments and agencies was limited in the last five years. With no gender focal points in the various ministries, the monitoring of gender in national development is a major challenge. During 2019 a project funded by the Caribbean Development Bank will address

⁷ Diabetes Country Profile; World Health Organization; 2016

capacity needs of public officers to conduct gender analyses and ensure a gender dimension in national development. The Division of Gender Relations has announced plans to reinstate the naming of gender focal points in all line ministries post training.

36. Although the visibility of women, especially in the public service is noted, there was a decrease in the number of active national organizations dedicated towards the advancement of women between 2014 and 2017. During the last two years however there has been a resurgence of initiative among Civil Society Organizations and private interests in promoting activities geared at highlighting the successes and challenges of women. The Division of Gender Relations has a coordinating role in this regard; however, the challenges described earlier has impeded this. This is a missed opportunity for partnership that could be creatively harnessed to ensure that the national gender equality goals are shared and achieved.

1.13 Setbacks

37. There were some setbacks in the past five years that have impacted the advancement of women in various ways. **Constitutional reform still pending and the inadequacy of facilities for girls in conflict with the law and those requiring care and protection** are among the most noteworthy setbacks.

38. The recommendations for gender equality and protection of the rights of women and children contained in the report on the Constitutional Reform Commission tabled in parliament in 2013 have not been realized. One such recommendation was for the provisions of CEDAW to be reflected in the constitution and in domestic legislation, thus protecting women from discrimination under the law.

39. The necessity for adequate facilities for girls in need of care and protection is a long-standing need. The New Beginnings Transit Home is a facility for girls in need of care and protection and boys under the age of 8 in need of the service. There is no centre for the rehabilitation of girls who are at the social risk of offending or who are in conflict with the law. The only option for girls who offend is the Bordelias Correctional Facility. Plans for the establishment of a residential facility for girls did not advance in the period under review. The need however for such a facility is becoming increasingly urgent as protective care for girls at risk is an increasing challenge for the Department of Human Services and the New Beginnings Transit Home is inundated with requests that it does not have the capacity to respond to.

1.2 Priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in the last 5 years

40. Gender equality and the advancement for women and girls is subsumed in pillar #5 “Social transformation: building social resilience and social capital” of the six pillars for long term national development for Saint Lucia. Stakeholders considered the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in Saint Lucia to be, in order of priority:

1. Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls;
2. Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights;

3. Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises;
4. Eliminating violence against women; and
5. Right to work and rights at work.

1.21 Quality education, training and lifelong learning

41 Access to education for all girls from five to fifteen continues to be protected under the Education Act of 1999. Girls generally perform better than boys at all levels of the education system; however, unemployment among girls who performed poorly at secondary school or who did not complete secondary education is higher than for their male counterparts. This is a major threat to the economic autonomy of young women and it is further compounded by an increased likelihood for unplanned pregnancy.

42. The initiatives introduced at the beginning of the decade have continued with new programmes added in the last five years. Some of the initiatives are geared towards increasing employability of young people, including women through skill building and entrepreneurship training. The Single Mothers in Life Enhancement Skills (SMILES) for example offered young unemployed women the opportunity to learn employability skills at little or no cost to them. One of the defining characteristics of these programmes is the inclusion of life skills in the curriculum. Saint Lucia is also benefitting from a sub-regional youth development programme, introduced in 2018, which gives disadvantaged youth an opportunity to learn skills that will improve their employment prospects. This programme is made possible through grant funding from the UK Department for International Development.

43. The Government of Saint Lucia recognizes that the provision of programmes that develop employability and entrepreneurial skills is critical to ensuring greater participation of young women in the economy. The establishment of the International Hospitality Training Institute in partnership with Monroe College in 2018 is geared to do just that. This is the first training institute of its type, providing specific skills for young persons who are desirous of entering into tourism which continues to be the main industry in Saint Lucia. It is strategically located in the south of the island thereby allowing greater access to training for residents of rural communities.

44. Increased access to decent work particularly for women require increased opportunities for women in emerging industries and careers particularly in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

1.22 Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

45. Whilst the Government of Saint Lucia is moving towards the introduction of national health insurance to ensure universal access to primary health care, pregnant women and children, persons with disabilities, hypertension **and** diabetes are already accessing prenatal and postnatal healthcare free of charge, in every community on the island. The Saint Lucia Planned Parenthood Association in collaboration with other Governmental agencies and Civil Society

Organization host television, and radio programmes, health fairs and promotional talks to promote women's access to health services at least three times a month.

46. During the period under review Civil Society Organizations were in the forefront of increasing access to sexual and reproductive health education particularly for young women. HERStoire Collective, an organization launched in March 2018 created a virtual space for young women to access information on sexual and reproductive health in a safe space. They particularly cater for the most vulnerable who may not be inclined to access mainstream services for various reasons. This initiative creates more than just an information center for sexual and reproductive health education and services, but empowers its users to break barriers and improve outcomes in various spheres of their lives. The site considers its platform an avenue to empower young women "to amplify their voices on the culturally "taboo" topics that no one wants to talk about, that they are too scared to talk about, that they would change so many lives with - if only they would talk about."

47. Through Health and Family Life Education, primary and secondary school students continue to benefit from basic sexual and reproductive health education. In an effort to supplement the Health and Family Life Education programmes at the school level, Saint Lucia Planned Parenthood Association partnered with the Department of Education to train teachers in Comprehensive Sex Education in 2017 and 2018. A teachers' manual is now available to schools to supplement the existing HFLE curriculum. In order to ensure wider public access to comprehensive sex education media workers were also trained during the period under review.

1.23 Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises

48. Whereas women's involvement in enterprise has not changed significantly, an enabling environment is being nurtured through the increased focus on skill building, the inclusion of gender in the ICT and TVET policies and the creation of opportunities for apprenticeship within the context of skill development initiatives for young women.

1.24 Eliminating violence against women and girls

49. Access to justice is still considered the greatest challenge to eliminating violence against women and girls in Saint Lucia. During the last five years advocacy for justice has intensified with the increased visibility of Civil Society Organizations such as Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia and female human rights lawyer, Mary Francis. The international attention to initiatives such as the "Me Too" movement has been played out in the local media, resulting in increased conversations around these issues. The "Break the Silence" Campaign headed by the Division of Human Services to end child sexual abuse has also served to highlight child sexual abuse as a problem and seeks to change attitudes of citizens towards reporting. Sexual crimes reported have remained at the same range of 0.14 to 0.16% of all crimes reported. They, however, received greater publicity than previous years because of the severity of some of the crimes committed particularly those involving elderly women.

50. A protocol for mandatory reporting of child abuse is in effect as of 2018. Training has been conducted in the use of the protocol to school staff including principals, teachers and counselors of primary and secondary schools on the island.

51. The culture of non-violence is further strengthened through other Government of Saint Lucia initiatives. Saint Lucia has continued to embrace the Child Friendly Schools framework (effective schools), a major aspect of which is positive discipline. By the academic year 2019/2020 the Ministry of Education will have 100% of primary schools operating as effective schools. In March 2019 the Department of Education announced the intention to ban the use of corporal punishment in schools with suspension from May of 2019 and abolition in May 2020. Furthermore the emphasis on restorative justice for juveniles in conflict with the law is an important provision within the Child Justice Act of 2018.

1.25 Rights to work and rights at work

52. The rights of workers in Saint Lucia continue to be protected under the law in Saint Lucia. Although the last five years have not resulted in the ratification of any new ILO agreements, the environment for advocacy for worker rights remains active and promising. Sexual harassment in the workplace has been extended to include co-workers prior to Beijing +20.

53. Child labour has been given greater attention during the last five years with the rapid assessment conducted by the ILO in 2016. Although this assessment revealed that there is limited evidence of the worst forms of child labour in Saint Lucia, there are provisions to protect children against child labour in the Social Protection Policy of 2017 and the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons 2015 - 2018.

54. Although still on a small scale, consideration is given to the children of employees who have to wait for their parents (who are usually women) at their offices, by the provision of child-friendly spaces within the workplace to accommodate them. This is slowly emerging in both public and private settings.

1.3 Measures taken to prevent discrimination

55. Over the past five years the Government of Saint Lucia has taken various specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Some of the measures taken will be highlighted, specifically in the areas of women with disabilities, women living with HIV/AIDS, older women, women in humanitarian settings and younger women.

55. The rights of persons with disabilities have been placed in the spotlight in the period under review. Since the signing of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2011, the Government of Saint Lucia has been working along with the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities to enact legislation and develop policy to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The Social Protection Policy ensures that sustainable development is inclusive and equitable. Persons with disabilities continue to receive free medication and an allowance

for persons with severe disabilities. There is increased evidence of access to employment for people with disabilities and an accompanying increase, albeit still grossly inadequate, in facilities that are equally accessible by persons with disabilities in public spaces. A Disability Assessment Project funded by the Caribbean Development Bank is ongoing in four Borrowing Member States inclusive of Saint Lucia. This project is particularly focused on assessing the barriers to inclusion for persons with disabilities. Strides are also being made towards the ratification of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through the Ministry of External Affairs.

57. Persons living with HIV/AIDS continue to access medication free of charge available at primary health care institutions. Pregnant mothers who are HIV positive receive preventive medical and social services interventions to improve healthy delivery outcomes.

58. Older women benefit from geriatric care provided through the Home Help programme. This programme improves the quality of life of older women and results in a reduction in hunger for the indigent.

59. A culture of debriefing post disaster is emerging in Saint Lucia. The UNICEF supported Return to Happiness Programme supports children who have experienced loss or other forms of trauma due to natural disasters. In the last five years this programme has responded to hundreds of children and their families in four of the poorest and most vulnerable communities. Women, especially mothers are positively impacted by this programme because it lessens the burden of care for them post disaster.

60. The Counter trafficking Act (No. 7 of 2010) ensures the protection of persons, usually women, who are victims of human trafficking. There have been various training opportunities for officers who may deal with human trafficking. This training has been geared towards the provision of the requisite skills with identification of victims and best practice during investigation to assist officers in ensuring justice and recourse for victims. Public sensitization through the campaign increases awareness of the need to report and the opening of the counter-trafficking hotline helps to improve access to justice.

1.4 Effects of humanitarian crises

61. Extreme weather has caused some setbacks in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Extreme weather conditions have affected agricultural productivity and land. Extreme weather conditions also displace families and increase the vulnerability of women and girls to violence and poverty. Loss of valuable items during severe weather conditions are not replaced due to inadequacy or lack of insurance coverage – plunging people into indigence and poverty.

1.5 Priority recommendations for accelerating progress for women and girls

62. Based on the gains, gaps and lessons learned during the last five years the following are identified as the priority areas for accelerating progress for women and girls:

1. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
2. Provide access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
3. Eradicate overt, and increase agricultural productivity
4. Provide quality education and training and life-long learning for women and girls
5. Change negative social norms and gender stereotypes

1.51 Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice

63. Justice for victims of sexual violence is challenged by several practices in all sectors providing essential services to victims. Some concrete measures have been recommended by stakeholders through the consultative process used to produce this report. One overarching recommendation is the establishment of **Multi-sector Sexual Assault Response Teams**. These teams will provide a one-stop holistic response to reports of sexual violence. This victim-centered approach will decrease the likelihood of re-traumatization of the victim as it allows better coordination, particularly in the vital sharing of information from one service provider to another.

64. With regard to health services, two concrete recommendations were made: establish a **safe space dedicated specifically for examination of sexual assault victims** which is in a private setting, separate from the other spaces in the accident and emergency department of the hospital; and amend existing legislation to allow for the introduction of **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE)**. These recommendations will have implications for two major challenges. Firstly victims will be less disinclined to be examined because the setting is private; and secondly appropriately trained nurses conducting such examinations are understandably more likely than accident and emergency room doctors to be thorough and more socio-emotionally responsive to the victim. These recommendations have not been submitted to Cabinet for consideration but have been discussed within the context of the inter-departmental working group for the introduction of the Essential Services Programme for victims of gender-based violence.

66. A major barrier to justice for victims of sexual violence is the processing of evidence. A recommendation is to **strengthen the forensic science services** to encourage robust scientific support for victims. The more robust the processing of evidence, the more likely it is to be useful in convicting perpetrators and obtaining opportunities for justice for victims. This recommendation can further extend to legislative changes, such as the **introduction of a DNA legislation**, to improve access to justice.

1.52 Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

67. Much of the interventions to support for women living with HIV/AIDS and other non-communicable diseases have been medical and material, (less so for women living with cancer). A recommendation is to extend the psycho-social and emotional support to women living with HIV/AIDS, specifically through the **establishment of support groups/agencies for women living**

with HIV/AIDS, cancer and other non-communicable diseases. This is likely to reduce the level of stress experienced by survivors and improve their quality of life.

68. Sexual and reproductive health should be enhanced by the **expansion of the current Health and Family Life Education in schools to include regulated age-appropriate comprehensive sex education.** This measure is likely to cause a reduction in the incidence of teenage pregnancy, a decrease in transmission of sexually transmitted diseases and a reduction in no or late treatment of sexually transmitted diseases particularly in young women.

1.53 Poverty eradication and agricultural productivity

69. Women who engage in agricultural production in Saint Lucia tend to have few resources to access finance to build enterprise. A recommendation is therefore to encourage women in agriculture by **facilitating access to loans, land and start up grants** for women entrepreneurs in agricultural production and agro-processing.

70. Access to finance is only one aspect of support to addressing poverty. It must be supported by parallel intervention to **develop financial literacy** in women beneficiaries of financial support. This can assist in improving the opportunity for favourable outcomes for the small agricultural enterprises.

1.54 Quality education and training and life-long learning for women and girls

71. Lifelong learning and appropriate quality education and training for women and girls are ongoing priorities for accelerating the progress of women and girls. The outperformance of girls over boys in education at all levels of the education system in Saint Lucia is well documented. Labour force participation rates however do not reflect this trend. **Further analysis** of this tendency for causality is therefore necessary.

72. In order to ensure that women are not left out of the emerging industries, a recommendation is to promote and provide **access to technology related training to encourage job diversification in women.** Job segregation still negatively affects Saint Lucian women, and may be associated with increased risk factors for diabetes and hypertension as discussed in Section 2.

1.55 Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes

73. Regardless how much effort is put into the development and implementation of projects to increase women's access to resources and opportunity for access, if the gender stereotypes and harmful social norms persist gender equality will always be elusive. A concerted effort must be made at the school level to **remove gender stereotypes from teaching and learning.** A concerted effort must be made to increase public sensitization and education through a comprehensive communication strategy, with emphasis on the use of non-traditional methods geared at long term attitudinal changes.

2.0 SECTION TWO: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

74. This section covers progress across the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. It is presented within the six overarching dimensions that highlight the alignment of the Beijing Platform of Action with the Sustainable Development 2030 Agenda.

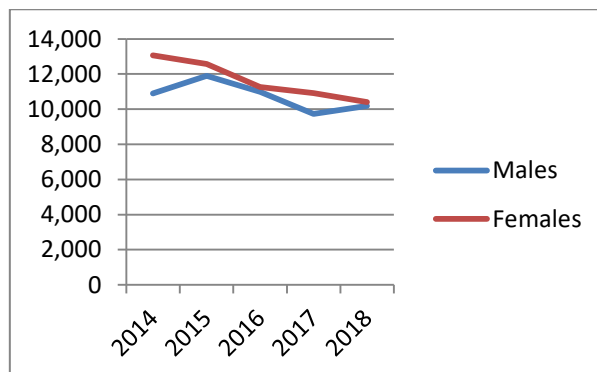
2.1 Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

75. This dimension responds to four critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action, namely women and poverty; women and the economy; human rights of women; and the girl child.

76. The main area where actions were taken in the past five years is in the reduction of unpaid care and domestic work. In particular childcare services were expanded and became more affordable for parents. Elderly care was expanded through the initiative aimed at ensuring that senior citizens received care through the ongoing Home Help programme which is home-based. Time-saving infrastructure in the water sector was developed in two communities in the last five years and the Water and Sewage Company is undertaking improvements to their infrastructure in two other communities.

2.2 Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

77. Women continue to account for the larger percentage of the poor. The following chart shows total unemployment trends in the last five years between men and women.



Apart from lower levels of employment several other factors have been cited in the National Report of Living Conditions 2016 for greater poverty in women:

- Their higher life expectancy guaranteed that women were more likely to be left as widows than men as widowers
- Female heads of households with no education, were a larger percentage of female heads than were male heads with no education.
- Rural households headed by males were on average 2.8 persons compared to those headed by females at 3.1 persons, and among poor households, male-headed households were 3.4 persons on average compared to female headed with 4.8 persons.

Poor women have had increased access to decent work through initiatives such as Home Help Programme. The women who work with this programme are typically women who had engaged in the unpaid care of ageing relatives or children.

Access to technology services continue to broaden with the setting up of community ICT Centers in all districts in the last two years. This year alone five ICT Centers were opened in the town of Gros Islet.

In the last five years Saint Lucia has supported entrepreneurship and business development activities for women through its support of the Network for Rural Women's Producers and the continued efforts of the Small Enterprise Development Unit, the latter, providing training opportunities for owners of small businesses. Two processing plants, located in Anse Ger, Micoud, were officially handed over to the Saint Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers (Micoud cluster) in February 2019. One of the processing plants is for the process of cocoa, a product which is opening up for investment Saint Lucia.

78. Improvement in access to health for women and girls was achieved through expansion of public health services. Primary health services continue to be free for pre-natal and post-natal care. Non-governmental organizations such as HERStoire and Saint Lucia Planned Parenthood Association extended sexual and reproductive health services to vulnerable young women. The Bureau of Health Education introduced gender-specific health promotion campaigns for non-communicable diseases. Comprehensive sexuality education is strengthened through ongoing community outreach programmes such as the Mobile Health Clinic. Organizations such as the Planned Parenthood Association, Bureau of Health Education, RISE and the Community Nursing Programme utilize this medium to conduct community outreach programmes.

79. Education outcomes for girls was improved through various measures. Girls access to TVET and skills development has been improved through several initiatives at the school and national levels to promote the participation of girls in TVET. The Early Childhood Education Unit of the Department of Education, Innovation and Gender Relations through UNICEF provided gender equality training for some early childhood educators. There are ongoing efforts at providing safer environments for women and girls at school through a zero tolerance stance of child abuse effected through the campaigns that encourage reporting, the passing of the mandatory reporting protocol and the recent initiative to abolish corporal punishment in schools. The Department of Education, Innovation and Gender Relations has embarked on several initiatives to increase access for girls in STEM. The Department of Sustainable Development in 2018 hosted a site for women in STEM to encourage young women and girls in STEM. More young girls are supported to continue school after pregnancy.

2.3 Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

80. In the last five years priority was given to intimate partner and domestic violence and trafficking in women and girls. In order to address violence against women and girls, Saint Lucia introduced a National Action plan to end violence against girls, completed a National Partnership/Plan of Action to end Gender-based Violence. In addition Family Court, Crisis Center, PROSAF, Planned Parenthood Association and other private entities have strengthened services for survivors of violence.

81. Some specific strategies were used to prevent violence against women and girls, in primary and secondary education through the continued use of Health and Family Life Education and the Good Touch Bad Touch programmes. Youth A.R.T (Active Response Team), an initiative undertaken by the Division of Gender Relations promoted the concept of healthy relationships. It targeted secondary school students (ages 11-17) and served as a means to combat dating violence. Family Court has introduced some psycho-educational perpetrator programmes particularly for men who are perpetrators of domestic violence, with the aim of strengthening families.

82. There were initiatives that supported the media industry to develop voluntary codes of conduct; provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media; and promoted the participation and leadership of women in the media. CAFRA in 2018 hosted training programmes for media practitioners to sensitize and help improve the image of women in the media.

83. Specific measures were taken to address violence against poor, vulnerable and displaced children through the programmes undertaken by the New Beginnings Transit Home, a center for children under twelve requiring temporary care and protection.

2.4 Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

84. This pillar addresses the following critical areas of concern: Women in power and decision making; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women in the media; and the girl child.

85. With regards to promoting women's participation in public life and decision making, data was collected and analyzed on women's political participation. The Division of Gender Relations published Running in Heels, which examines the stories of forty women who had been active in politics from 1961 - 2016.

86. Another gain in this regard is the naming of the National Coordinating Committee for Human Rights set up by Cabinet in 2019. This is an inter-agency committee which includes Civil Society Organizations. It is hoped that this committee will assist Saint Lucia in better implementing and monitoring human rights treaties and assist in the development and production of national reports.

2.5 Peaceful and inclusive societies

87. This pillar deals with three critical areas of concern: women and armed conflict, human rights of women and the girl child. In the case of Saint Lucia the measures undertaken to combat trafficking in women and children and the introduction of the mandatory reporting protocol, an instrument which contributes towards eliminating violence against girls already outlined in this report are the two initiatives towards this end in the last five years.

2.6 Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

88. This pillar is directly connected with human rights of women, women and the environment and the girl child.

89. Where gender perspectives in environmental policies is concerned Saint Lucia has supported women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance; raised awareness about gender-specific environmental and health hazards like mercury poisoning; and preserved practice of women in biodiversity. The Division of Gender Relations participated in the consultative process for the Draft Climate Change Bill. Women's participation in the development and the implementation of the National Adaptation Process was very high at all levels in decision-making often exceeding the participation of men.

3.0 SECTION THREE: National institutions and processes

90. The national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women is the Division of Gender Relations. It is within the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development. The Director of Gender Relations is not a member of the Coordinating Committee for the SDG implementation. The Ministry is represented by the Deputy Permanent Secretary and the alternate is the Chief Planning Officer. The Director of Gender Relations is invited to participate from time to time at meetings of the Coordinating Committee.

91. There is a formal mechanism in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A National Coordinating Committee for the implementation of the SDGs includes Civil Society Organizations. The United Nations System participated in this process, lending technical assistance.

92. Stakeholders have been consulted in the preparation of and verification of this report. Gender equality is a cross-cutting theme in the national plan for SDG implementation.

4.0 SECTION FOUR: Data and Statistics

93. Saint Lucia has made progress over the last five years in the following three areas:

- Conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topic;
- Improved administrative-based data sources to address gender data gaps; and
- Developed a centralized website, although not specific to gender statistics.

94. The following represent the top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years:

- Establishment of an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics;
- Increased utilization and improvement of administrative-based data sources to address gender data gaps; and
- Development of a centralized web-based database and dashboard on gender statistics which includes new equipment, specifically servers.

95. A central component of all these initiatives is an emphasis on capacity building as it relates to collection, production, analysis and dissemination of gender data. A technical assistance programme from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean seeks to assess the status of gender data management in Saint Lucia and will identify gaps and offer recommendations for improvement.