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## **REPORT OF ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

## **Two key issues/challenges and two public policies for gender equality and women's rights in St Vincent and the Grenadines.**

### **Lack of gender disaggregated data:**

In 2014 a Crime Intake Form was developed with collaboration from the Statistical Department and the Police. Its main use is to collect data on all crimes reported and then filtered to collate domestic violence information. However, the police department is not consistent in completing the forms. Whenever the forms are completed and submitted, the cases that are being recorded on these forms are cases in their perception what they see as domestic violence cases. Additionally, variables are not consistently defined, which makes it impossible to compare developing trends. Thus, this poses serious limitations to data collection.

One of the major challenges and key issues is the accessibility of data from the line ministries. In most cases what is available is very scattered and often not disaggregated or even computerized. For example, sex disaggregated data on domestic violence is not continuous and is mainly based on cases reported to the police on their perception on what is domestic violence. The Ministry of National Mobilization and Police is working on standardizing of the Crime Form.

### **Domestic Violence:**

Government has accorded high priority to the reduction of domestic violence and violence against women and girls in all forms. In this regard the work of the Gender Affairs Division is strongly promoted within the society and women are encouraged to seek redress in circumstances of abuse.

After a period of 21 years since the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act of 1995, the Parliament of St Vincent and the Grenadines passed an amendment to this Act. The new piece of legislation, the Domestic Violence Act of 2015, includes many important revisions to provide greater protection to women, men and children who are victims of DV.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on May 1996, became a signatory to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Belem do Para and this passage of this new legislation marks a progressive step in the expanding the set

of protection to women in the private sphere, even as there is still need to go further to fulfill the states obligations to the Convention.

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Action Plan to End Gender Based Violence, 2013-2017 represents a significant advance in the country. The plan has been reviewed and approved by Cabinet and the government makes Gender Based Violence a matter of high priority.

### **Two public policies:**

In an effort towards reducing poverty in SVG, the Ministry, and by extension the government has identify the multidimensional issues that are income and socially connected to poverty and other ailments that affects families.

The Ministry with responsibility for families has quite recently completed its reform of services and operations and has deployed the following to improve its capacity:

- A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to assess periodically and evaluate the impact rates of its programmes
- A Management Information System to assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of services
- A Programme and Psycho-social Assessment toolkit to assist in the assessment of quality of care and rate of transition in standard of living of clientele
- A business re-engineering of its programmes and operatives ensuring that the right strategy, tactics and operations are deployed across the main programme areas of the Ministry.

With these tools installed, the Ministry is quite poised to implement and monitor services offered. If human capital development initiatives as well as social protection and integration of the poor and vulnerable policies are designed and or re-engineered, then total state dependency can transition into partial and extensive social independence of existing beneficiaries.

Through the social protection programme, attempts were made towards improving the quality, quantity and access of social assistance and labour market interventions to the indigent, poor, vulnerable and marginalized populations in society.

Our National Public Assistance Social Protection-based Programme of which approximately 4000 households benefit, an average of minimum 50% of the households benefitting are single parents. Therefore if social protection programme are to be sustainable and possess the ability to transition families out of poverty as the Single Parents Programme hopes to achieve, then strategic interventions such as the following are not limited to, but represents the fundamental imperatives:

- Job Placement/Employment Programme
- Skills Development Programme
- Social Protection Programme
- Therapeutic Programme
- Parenting Programme
- Second Chance Academic Initiative

The Single Parents Programme is an initiative of the government implemented by the Ministry of Social Development which aims to provide social protection for the indigent and poor single-headed households in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In these households, unemployment is present wholly or partially. Therefore, this programme provides empowerment to households through employment, agricultural production, therapeutic and skills training interventions.

As such effective collaboration and coordination is facilitated with the Ministry of Education, Agriculture and Health in successfully implementing the programme, and to achieve the desired objective.

### **Child Care:**

The Cabinet of SVG has approved the National Child Protection Unit which was establishing in 2015 and falls under the auspices of the Ministry of National Mobilisation. With assistance from UNICEF, the National Child Protection Policy Guidelines & Principles, National Child Protection Strategy & Action Plan, National Child Care & Adoption Procedures, National Child Abuse Reporting Protocols and Guidelines were passed in sync with Regional Minimum Standards for Children in Care.

The National Child Protection Policy hopes to provide a Macro-based Legal & Social Protection Strategy aimed at strengthening national protection systems, supporting social change, promoting child protection in conflict and natural disasters, building evidence and knowledge management and convening as well as catalyzing agents of change. In an effort to improve our social protection landscape.