



FINAL REPORT

# EVALUATION OF THE UN WOMEN CARIBBEAN MULTI-COUNTRY OFFICE 2011–2019



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Finally, the evaluation team would like to dedicate this report in the memory of Mary Alison McClean, former Representative of the Caribbean Multi-Country Office, who was a tireless champion for women and girls and gender equality in the region.

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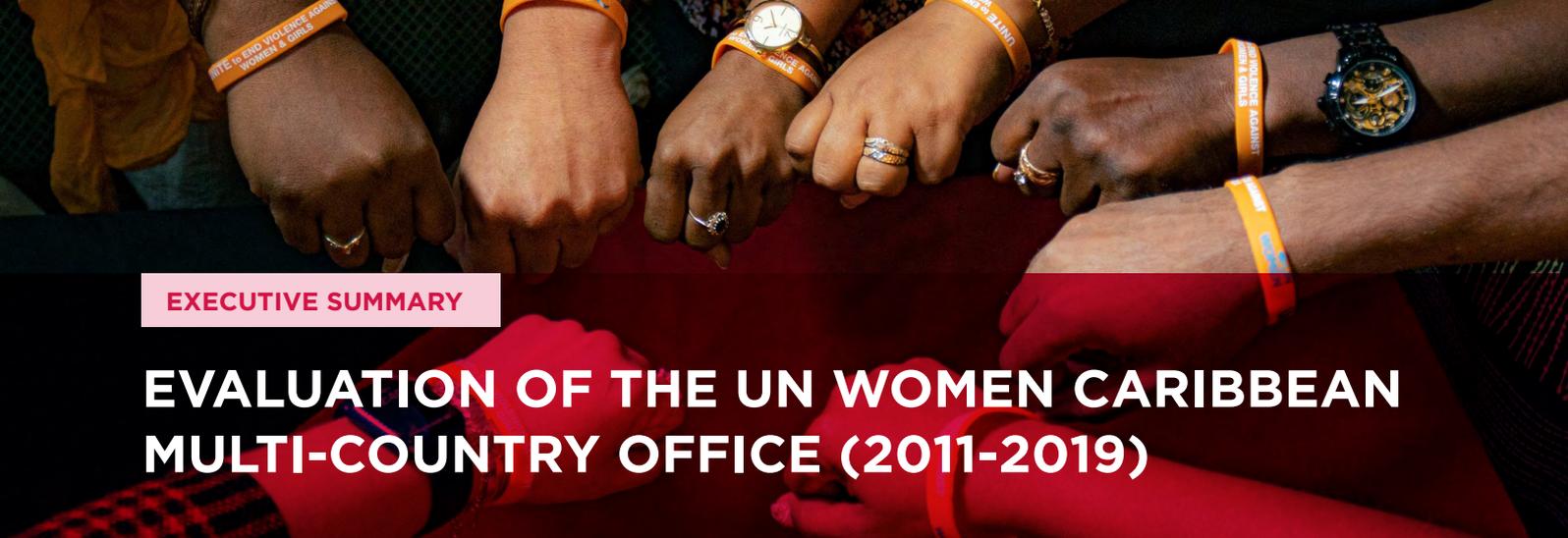
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# ACRONYMS

<b>ACP</b>	African Caribbean and Pacific Group
<b>ACRO</b>	Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office
<b>AWP</b>	Annual Work Plan
<b>CAFRA</b>	Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action
<b>BRC</b>	Business Review Committee
<b>BPOA</b>	Barbados Programme of Action
<b>CAJO</b>	Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers
<b>CANROP</b>	Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers
<b>CARIBANK</b>	Caribbean Development Bank
<b>CARICOM</b>	Caribbean Community
<b>CARIMAN</b>	Caribbean Male Action Network
<b>CCJ</b>	Caribbean Court of Justice
<b>CDB</b>	Caribbean Development Bank
<b>CDEMA</b>	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CERMES</b>	Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies
<b>CDEMA</b>	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
<b>CIWiL</b>	Caribbean Women in Leadership
<b>CIM</b>	Inter-American Commission of Women
<b>CO</b>	Country Office
<b>CSD</b>	Commission on Sustainable Development
<b>CSME</b>	Caribbean Single Market Economy
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>CSW</b>	Commission on the Status of Women
<b>DFATD</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
<b>DRF</b>	Development Results Framework
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>ECLAC</b>	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>ECSC</b>	Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based Violence
<b>GCF</b>	Global Climate Fund
<b>GDI</b>	Gender and Diversity Division
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>HA</b>	Humanitarian Action
<b>IACHR</b>	Inter-American
<b>IAEA</b>	International Atomic Energy Agency
<b>IDB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>INSTRAW</b>	United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

<b>IPCC</b>	International Panel on Climate Change
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate Partner Violence
<b>ISE4GEMs</b>	Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender equality, Environments, and Marginalized voices
<b>JEITT</b>	Judicial Education Institute of Trinidad and Tobago
<b>JAWIC</b>	Jamaican Women in Coffee
<b>LACC</b>	Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic
<b>LGBTQI</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex
<b>LOA</b>	Letter of Agreement
<b>MCO</b>	Multi-country Office
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MERP</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plan
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MSDF</b>	Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework
<b>MSM</b>	Men-who-have-sex-with-other-men
<b>MTR</b>	Mid-Term Review
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NGM</b>	National Gender Machinery
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>OECS</b>	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
<b>PAHO</b>	Pan American Health Organization
<b>PCA</b>	Principal Component Analysis
<b>RBM</b>	Results-Based Management
<b>SAMOA Pathway</b>	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing States
<b>SRO</b>	Sub-Regional Organization
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>UBRAF</b>	Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework
<b>UNAIDS</b>	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>UN MSDF</b>	United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Framework
<b>UNDCO</b>	United Nations Development Coordination Office
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDS</b>	United Nations Development System
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNOCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UNSG</b>	United Nations Secretary General
<b>UNST</b>	United Nations Sub-Regional Team
<b>UNTF</b>	United Nations Trust Fund
<b>WEPs</b>	Women's Economic Principles
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# EVALUATION OF THE UN WOMEN CARIBBEAN MULTI-COUNTRY OFFICE (2011-2019)

Photo: UN Women Caribbean Multi-Country Office

This report presents the main evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the portfolio evaluation of the UN Women Caribbean Multi-Country Office (MCO) led by the Independent Evaluation Service. This evaluation was a systematic assessment of the normative, coordination and operational aspects of UN Women's contribution to development results relating to gender equality and women's empowerment in the region.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

While there are distinct challenges at the country level across the Caribbean region for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, common trends continue to present obstacles to sustainable development across several key dimensions such as:

- **High levels of citizen insecurity**, with some of the world's highest per capita murder rates, organized crime and gang violence, high rates of gender-based violence, and trafficking in persons
- **Low levels of economic growth** in some countries compounded by high levels of inequality, particularly affecting those in lower socio-economic classes
- **Increasing fundamentalism**, including targeting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI) rights more broadly
- **Gender-based labour segregation** remains marked, in addition to extreme wage gaps among women and men in lower socio-economic classes
- **Labour migration trends** characterised by high outflows of skilled workers and regional inflows from surrounding Latin American countries
- **High levels of exposure to natural hazards**, including hurricanes causing significant economic losses and damages
- **High rates of gender-based violence (GBV)** with low levels of access to justice and rule of law as exacerbating factors

Additionally, structural social inequalities have led to the marginalization of many groups across countries in the region, including persons with disabilities, LGBTQI persons, youth, elderly, persons living in urban and rural poverty, indigenous and minority groups, female-headed households, and persons living with HIV/AIDS.

## EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, AND USE

The purpose of the evaluation was to foster accountability and learning as well as support decision-making of the UN Women Caribbean MCO in the context of UN Development System reform, corporate change management and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its key objectives were to:

- **synthesize the evidence** collected to develop credible findings on the Caribbean MCO's strategic positioning and delivery of results
- **assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency** in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the Strategic Note
- **demonstrate where/how the Caribbean MCO can integrate a more intersectional approach** to its work on gender equality, environments, and marginalized voices
- **offer good practices, lessons learned**, and reflections derived from the specific experiences of the Caribbean MCO
- **develop conclusions on the contribution of the overall work** of the Caribbean MCO to the countries it serves
- **provide forward-looking and actionable recommendations** to improve the overall work of the Caribbean MCO

The evaluation results are meant to feed into: Caribbean MCO's overall strategic planning and implementation; ACRO and UN Women headquarters oversight and strategic reflection; United Nations system in the Caribbean for supporting coherence; as well as national stakeholders from the countries and territories covered by the office.

## METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION APPROACH



### METHODOLOGY

- Mixed methods approach
- Theory-based analysis
- Gender-responsive evaluation
- Web and social media analytics
- Systemic Evaluation for Gender equality, Environments and Marginalized voices (ISE4GEMs)
- Observation of relevant meetings and events



### 182 STAKEHOLDERS SURVEYED

- UN Women: 32
- Civil society: 55
- Government: 34
- United Nations: 31
- Other stakeholders: 30



### 130+ DOCUMENTS ANALYSED

- Programme and project documentation
- Annual reporting
- Evaluations and other literature



### EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Relevance and coherence
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Sustainability
- Human rights and gender equality



### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- Interviews conducted from a sample of 123 stakeholders and coded with NVIVO software



### MULTI-FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

- Evaluation incorporates strategic frameworks from three periods, namely 2011-2013, 2014-2017 and 2018-2021

## BACKGROUND OF UN WOMEN IN THE CARIBBEAN

UN Women has been present in the Caribbean region since the organization's establishment in 2011 as a sub-regional office then a multi-country office covering 22 countries since 2013. The Caribbean MCO articulated its strategic objectives and intended activities in three strategic frameworks over 2011-2013, 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 implemented through the organization's integrated triple mandate of normative, coordination and operational work. The office had a core team of eleven staff located in Barbados, which was supplemented by service contractors and consultants with a small programme presence in Jamaica beginning in 2014.

Over the three strategic periods, the Caribbean MCO's total available budget was \$22.6 million. The office had a consistent programmatic portfolio in the thematic areas of Women's Economic Empowerment and Elimination of Violence against Women. The office employed a wide range of programmatic and operational strategies, including advocacy, capacity building, communications, knowledge generation, partnerships, social norms change, South-South Cooperation; and United Nations coordination, among others.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CONCLUSION 1.

**The UN Women portfolio and response to emerging events and crises in the Caribbean region demonstrated its strong relevance. The “sub-regional” approach also allowed for its wide reach with relatively limited resources. There was potential to further strengthen intersectional and “multi-country” approaches as well as linkages to the Americas and Caribbean Regional Office.**

Across thematic areas in terms of prioritization and focus, the overall UN Women Caribbean MCO portfolio was assessed as being relevant in its thematic orientation, and responsive to the region’s emerging priorities, for effectively supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment. There was consensus among stakeholders that its thematic portfolio was both relevant and high priority areas in which UN Women provided comparative advantage. UN Women showed in its planning efforts a focus on marginalized groups, which evidenced a broad programmatic portfolio. The office nonetheless faced challenges in operationalizing an intersectionality approach more broadly as well as translating the targeting of such groups to significant impact.

The office’s reach to 20 of 22 countries and territories over the period under evaluation indicated a significant effort to respond to the needs of the expansive geographic area of responsibility across the Caribbean, as evidenced by office’s effective response to COVID-19 in producing relevant knowledge products in close collaboration with United Nations partners and relevant stakeholders.

While UN Women’s “sub-regional” approach allowed the office to provide more generalized common support to more countries to implement its triple mandate, the “multi-country” approach also provided further opportunity for strengthening. Promising practices used by the office that could be further used included the piloting of work in one country where a strong implementing partner could be identified, then scaled to other countries/territories. Finally, there was significant scope to strengthen linkages between the Caribbean MCO and the Americas and Caribbean Regional Office (ACRO), constituting an area of internal consensus to address.

### RECOMMENDATION 1.

**UN Women should articulate a clear approach to enhance internal coherence between the Caribbean MCO and ACRO.**

### CONCLUSION 2.

**UN Women’s work to address violence against women in the Caribbean was assessed as relevant, effective, sustainable, and recognized as a key contribution based on its integrated and innovative approaches, including social norms. The Caribbean MCO’s comparative advantage was also evident in its work on disaster risk reduction/recovery and climate mitigation/adaptation, while facing challenges in translating regional work on norms and governance to concrete results at the country level.**

UN Women’s work on Ending Violence against Women was considered to have been effective in addressing the issue in the region. Indeed, the Caribbean MCO portfolio integrated the thematic area through the deployment of various strategies that helped to drive results, such as: data and statistics; awareness and social mobilization; crisis response and disaster risk reduction. The use of non-traditional and cultural spaces allowed for targeting harmful social norms and enhanced the potential of advocacy and outreach of the office. UN Women could further build on its track record of supporting the identification of women’s needs, as evidenced by the rapid assessment of small holder women farmers in Dominica and mapping of social services.

UN Women’s normative work made gains in the Caribbean at the outcome level in supporting development of international agreements and advancing national legislation. The Caribbean MCO also leveraged its convening role effectively to facilitate exchanges among National Gender Mechanisms. Nonetheless, it faced challenges in extending its normative support to the country level with its limited resourcing and could not fully participate in other United Nations interagency forums on Small Island Developing State (SIDS) issues where advocacy for gender equality could have provided an important advocacy pathway.

### RECOMMENDATION 2.

**Build on UN Women’s ample social norms experience in the Caribbean to further facilitate a shift in behaviours, and scale work on climate change as part of its ongoing Strategic Note implementation.**

**CONCLUSION 3.**

**UN Women's approaches for programmatic integration showed strong results across the Caribbean MCO portfolio, in particularly data and statistics. These positive results would be enhanced through more concerted monitoring and evaluation efforts.**

The UN Women Caribbean MCO demonstrated a consistent integration of programmatic strategies across its portfolio, including between thematic areas. The data and statistics area in particular was leveraged for effective advocacy efforts, including in the context of the pandemic. That said, monitoring and evaluation in the office was an area to be strengthened, in particular for core-funded activities that did not have donor-related stronger monitoring requirements. In fact, often the results of these core-funded activities were not captured despite the RBM systems in place in UN Women, therefore requiring a need to better integrate them into monitoring practices and reflect them in reporting.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.**


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**Enhance its monitoring, reporting, and evaluation capacities both internally and through mainstreamed practices with partners.**

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**CONCLUSION 4.**

**UN Women mainstreamed capacity development approaches to enhance the sustainability of its work in a cross-cutting manner, notably with National Gender Mechanisms in the Caribbean. The Caribbean MCO also faced challenges with enabling CSO partners' capacity development due in large part to organizational constraints. A more inclusive lens would drive greater sustainability of results.**

Normative work to support National Gender Mechanisms was reported as an important contribution and the Caribbean MCO demonstrated adaptive management to increase the resilience and sustainability of results. Follow-up and continuity of short-term results needed to be further strengthened to drive medium and long-term outcomes and impact. While financial resources have been a factor, inclusive criteria for engaging in initiatives would help to guide decisions on where and how to engage with actors in capacity building efforts, and the office would benefit from a more targeted overarching strategy. Additionally, a focus on building capacities of national partners continues to provide an avenue for sustained results. In facing the challenge of staff turnover in National Gender Mechanisms and maintaining knowledge, UN Women will need to deploy novel sustainability strategies that target multi-stakeholder groups.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.**


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**Enhance capacity building and knowledge management to support long-term work and sustainability.**

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Photo: UN Women Caribbean Multi-Country Office

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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This section provides an analysis of the regional context in the Caribbean, particularly the challenges related to socio-economic development and achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as an overview of the UN Women Caribbean Multi-Country Office (MCO).

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## 1.1. Regional context

Although the countries of the Caribbean shared similarities in the development challenges that they face, the depth and scope of each country's issues are nuanced, including how gender inequality, environmental sustainability, and marginalization exacerbate these challenges.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding, there are general regional trends which continue to present obstacles to sustainable development across the sub-region and specific contexts related to the gender equality dimensions:

- **High levels of citizen insecurity**, with some of the world's highest per capita murder rates, organized crime and gang violence, high rates of gender-based violence, and trafficking in persons.
- **Historically low levels of economic growth**, though there is evidence of this trend changing in some countries, while others face more challenging economic circumstances compounded further by high levels of inequality, particularly affecting those in lower socio-economic classes.
- **Increasing fundamentalism**, which has increased influence in the region challenging constitutional reform efforts to better reflect gender equality and women's empowerment in some countries and often targeting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI) rights more broadly.<sup>10</sup>
- **Labour migration trends**, characterised by high outflows of skilled workers to the United States, Canada, and the UK, as well as broader regional inflows from surrounding Latin American countries, such as Venezuela.
- **High levels of exposure to natural hazards**, as evidenced in 2017 when 3 deadly hurricanes hit 7 territories in the Caribbean in one month causing significant economic losses and damages.
- **COVID-19 pandemic's** major economic and social repercussions including rising rates of Gender Based Violence (GBV), more limited access to services, and the additional care burden the pandemic is placing on women and girls, and the gaps in social protection policies that may not provide adequate or equal assistance for facing the crises, and the loss of income with sector such as tourism hard hit by travel bans.

Strides towards gender equality have resulted in gains for women and girls in the Caribbean, relating primarily to high education rates, and increases in employment rates. However, critical gaps remain, and the overall persistence of traditional patriarchal attitudes, social structures, religious fundamentalism, and ideas of masculinity continue to limit progress towards gender equality and have also generated a context in which gains made contribute to a backlash against women's empowerment within overall gender equality efforts and have produced a narrative of male marginalization or because it is seen to be achieved at the detriment of men and boys.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, issues of how gender inequality manifests itself across socio-economic class, race, age and its ability to stunt development remain largely unexplored and unaddressed. Many countries in the region have national action plans and policies around gender equality, but government departments and agencies responsible for implementing these plans and policies are often under-resourced and gender has yet to be mainstreamed across development agendas in most of the countries in the region. Some ways in which gender inequality manifests itself in the region include:

- **High rates of GBV:** Caribbean countries are placed among the highest in the world in terms of sexual violence, with low levels of access to justice and rule of law considered contributing factors.<sup>3,4</sup> Approximately 50 per cent of the first sexual experiences of adolescents in the region are neither voluntary nor consensual.<sup>5</sup> Child marriage and early unions is an issue in some countries.
- **Gender-based labour segregation and wage gaps:** The Caribbean experiences a relatively high rate of female labour force participation, but labour market segregation by gender remains marked and women's level of ownership of businesses and representation at the senior leadership level is low when compared to men.<sup>6</sup> There are also extreme wage gaps among women and men in lower socio-economic classes, with several assessments also demonstrating that female-headed households constitute a large percentage of the most vulnerable and deprived households in the region.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> More detailed information on each of the 22 countries is included in the annexed Boundary Story and country backgrounds.

<sup>2</sup> For example, data about women's increased rates of tertiary level graduates presented without appropriate context or analysis has led policymakers and the general public to argue that women's empowerment has been achieved and that increased focus should now be placed on men and boys. University of the West Indies, 2009-2013 Statistical Review. <http://www.uwi.edu/uop/sites/uop/files/statistical-review-2009-10-to-2013-14.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRC.P5?most\\_recent\\_value\\_desc=true](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRC.P5?most_recent_value_desc=true)

<sup>4</sup> "Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence", World Health Organization, 2013. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564625>

<sup>5</sup> "Compromisos y Ruta hacia un planeta 50-50 al 2030. Foro de los Países de América Latina y el Caribe sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible", 2017,

<sup>6</sup> "Exploring Firm-Level Innovation and Productivity in Developing Countries. The Perspective of Caribbean Small States", p. 89. Inter-American Development Bank, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> "Country Gender Assessment Synthesis Report", Caribbean Development Bank, 2016.

- **Gender and climate change:** Caribbean SIDS are characterized by high levels of environmental vulnerability as one of the most hazard prone regions in the world. The projected ongoing infrastructural, economic, and social impacts of disasters<sup>8, 9</sup> has underlined the role of gender in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies, though many countries have yet to fully mainstream gender into these policies.<sup>10</sup>

Structural social inequalities, many rooted in the post-colonial nature of societies in the Caribbean, have led to the marginalization of many groups across countries in the region, including the follow groups (see Annex 8 for a more detailed explanation of the situations of such groups):

- **Persons with disabilities**, including approximately 1.3 million persons in the Caribbean. **LGBTQI persons**, who are frequently noted as one of the most marginalized and stigmatized groups across multiple countries.
- **Youth**, given that children and young people who are more likely to be living in poverty, become victims of some form of violence, and more likely to be unemployed than older adults.
- **Elderly**, who frequently cited hunger as a complaint alongside difficulties in maintaining their homes, affording medical expenses, lack of assistance and loneliness.
- **Urban and rural Poor**, where the severity of poverty can be greater in inner-city communities and the number of poor in rural areas may exceed other areas.
- **Indigenous and minority Groups**, which include the roughly 160,000 people that identify themselves as indigenous in the Caribbean.
- **Female-headed households**, in which many women face cascading vulnerabilities with poverty and violence.<sup>11</sup>
- **Persons living with HIV/AIDS**, including men-who-have-sex-with-other-men (MSM) who are often stigmatized and subjected to both social and institutional discrimination.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.2. UN Women Caribbean Multi-Country Office

With the creation of UN Women in 2011, the UNIFEM Caribbean Sub-Regional Office located in Bridgetown, Barbados became the UN Women Caribbean Sub-Regional Office, which was converted a year later to a Multi-Country Office to signal a shift from a sub-regional to a multi-country approach to servicing the region.<sup>13</sup> Since 2013, the Caribbean MCO has covered 22 countries (see table below) in the Dutch Caribbean Islands and British Overseas Territories and remains located in Barbados, with a programme presence in Jamaica as of 2019.<sup>14</sup> The Caribbean MCO reports directly to the UN Women Americas and Caribbean Regional Office (ACRO).

Since 2014, the Caribbean MCO has had a core team of eleven staff all located in the Bridgetown, Barbados office. The core UN Women team was supplemented by eleven additional service contractors/SSA consultants during 2014-2019, including a small programme presence in Jamaica beginning in 2014.<sup>15</sup>

### Strategic Note and Theory of Change

The Caribbean MCO articulated its strategic objectives and intended activities in results frameworks created for each of its strategic periods over 2011-2013<sup>16</sup>, 2014-2017 and 2018-2021. These frameworks indicated important changes over time in response to shifts in the regional context, corporate strategies and financing landscape (see Annex 8 for detailed explanation of the Caribbean MCO strategic frameworks over time). Nonetheless, they also indicate a consistent body of work in the thematic areas of Women's Economic Empowerment and Elimination of Violence against Women.

<sup>8</sup> D. Scott et al, "Tourism and Climate Change: Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation", Routledge, 2012

<sup>9</sup> In the case of Grenada, Hurricane Ivan, a category 3 storm, which hit in September 2004, had a disastrous financial impact leaving in its wake damage that was estimated at US\$ 900 million, or up to 200 per cent of the country's GDP.

<sup>10</sup> "Mainstreaming Gender in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean", ECLAC.

<sup>11</sup> "Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development in the Caribbean A review of the period 2013-2018", ECLAC, 2019. [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/44473/S1801148\\_en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/44473/S1801148_en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>12</sup> Beck, Eduard and others (2017), "Attitudes towards homosexuals in seven Caribbean countries: implications for an effective HIV response", AIDS Care, Vol. 29, Issue 12, Taylor & Francis, December.

<sup>13</sup> At this time, the Haiti CO reporting line was shifted to the Americas and Caribbean Regional Office.

<sup>14</sup> The office was able to expand its presence to other countries in the region from 2020.

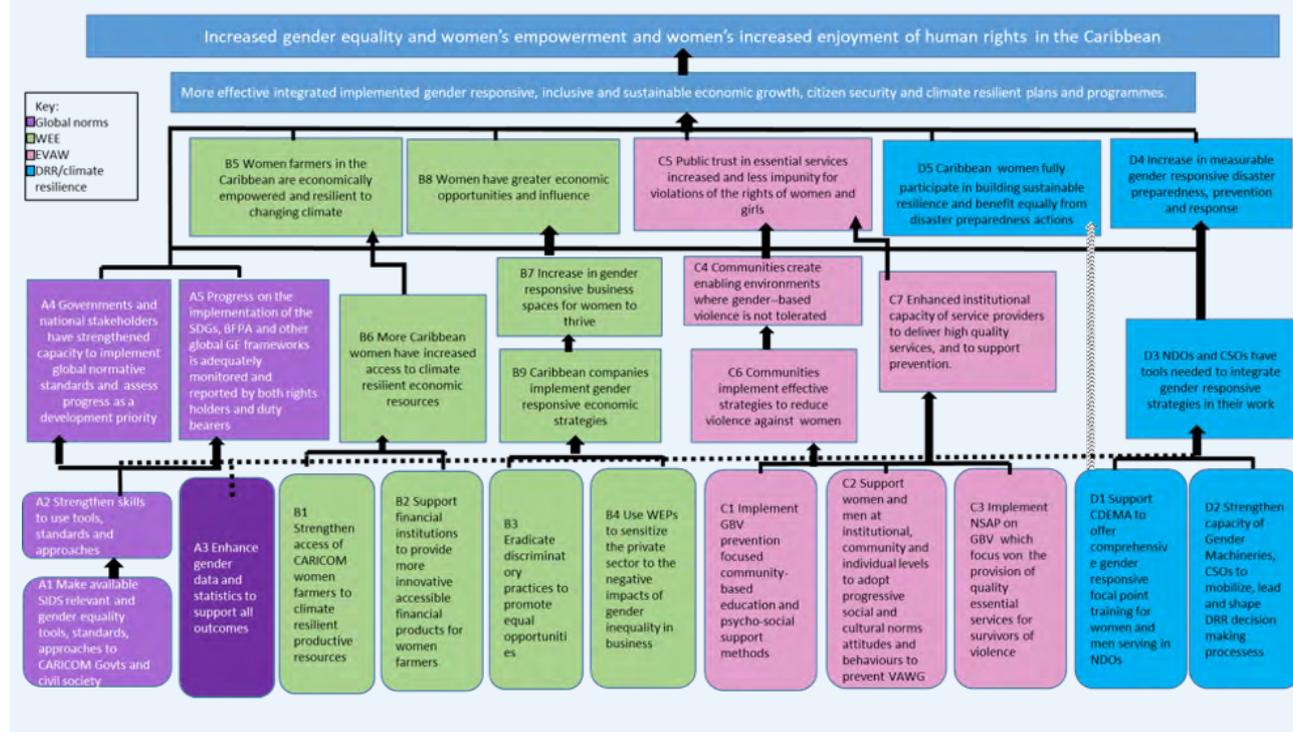
<sup>15</sup> The office made efforts to shift staff funding from core to IB, XB and non-core project funds in alignment with the cost recovery strategy, initiated in 2017. Source: Cover Note to the AWP 2018.

<sup>16</sup> In 2011, the office developed a one-year annual workplan. The Strategic Note was developed at the end of 2011 and covers only 2012-2013. However, in this report we refer to the full period of 2011 - 2013 to indicate both the 2011 AWP and the 2012 -2013 Strategic Note.

The Strategic Note 2018-2021 included a theory of change (ToC) statement at the overall programme level and each outcome, and placed emphasis on strengthening the normative framework in the region as a means of tackling the root causes of gender inequality whilst concentrating on economic empowerment for the most vulnerable, preventing and providing improved services to women and girls victims of violence, and building resilience.<sup>17</sup> The below statements are presented in visual form, while also re-constructing several implied causal pathways.<sup>18</sup>

The Caribbean MCO put in place a wide range of programmatic and operational strategies, including: advocacy on gender equality and women's empowerment; capacity building; communications and knowledge generation; partnerships and the ability to work with stakeholders; social norms change recognizing a context of static gender roles and social norms unfavourable to women; resource mobilization; South-South Cooperation; technical support; United Nations coordination; as well as monitoring, reporting and evaluation. See Annex 8 for a detailed explanation of these strategies.

**Figure 1. Reconstructed theory of change of Caribbean MCO Strategic Note 2018-2021**



Source: Elaborated by evaluation team based on Strategic Note 2018-2021

## Key partners

The Caribbean MCO works closely with relevant regional bodies through, such as the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and others. The Caribbean MCO is also part of the wider United Nations Development System in the Caribbean, which in practice translates to reporting to five UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and one UN Sub-Regional Team (UNST) along with nineteen UN entities in operation across the region. See Annex 8 for a breakdown of this configuration.

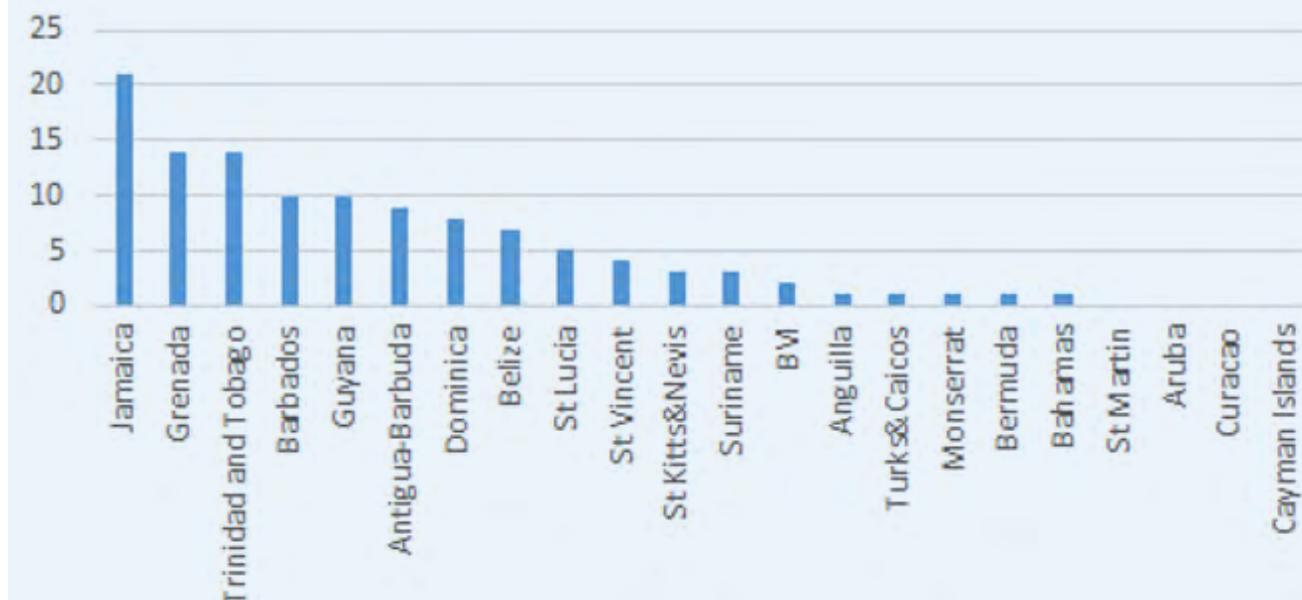
<sup>17</sup> UN Women's normative mandate is understood as being encapsulated in this workstream, although some platforms are not mentioned – including work around CEDAW, the UPR and CSW. Note that the function of UN Women's coordination mandate is not included in this narrative or depiction

<sup>18</sup> This version was validated by the Caribbean MCO during the Boundary Story consultation process.

## Portfolio and funding

The Caribbean MCO has implemented its Strategic Notes and Annual Workplans through formal programmes and projects, as well as a blend of other types of normative and coordination initiatives. Based on the information available to the evaluation team, a total of 48 programmes and projects were identified (see Annex 8 for detailed programmatic timeline since 2011). Most project activities took place in partnership with specific countries, although some work takes place through regional organisations, see the below figure for details.

Overall available resources of the office per strategic period ranged from approximately US\$ 4.5 million to US\$ 11.5 million, as indicated in the table below.

**Figure 2. Number of projects/programmes by country of the Caribbean MCO**

Source: Evaluation team mapping of project activities (2011-2021)

**Table 1. Planned versus available budget (US\$)**

	<b>BUDGET PLANNED</b>	<b>BUDGET AVAILABLE</b>
SRO Strategic Note 2011-2013	7,331,963	6,649,729
MCO Strategic Note 2014-2017	11,959,180	11,447,131
MCO Strategic Note 2018-2021	7,921,157	4,466,484
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27,212,300</b>	<b>22,563,344</b>

Sources: UN Women OneApp and Atlas (2011-2021); data reflects finances through 2020

## 2. EVALUATION APPROACH

This section presents a summary of the evaluation's approach. A more detailed explanation of the design, approaches, and methodology of the exercise can be consulted in the annexes.

### 2.1. Purpose, objectives, and scope

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service initiated an evaluation of the Caribbean MCO in 2019 to increase UN Women's level of accountability and learning in the region, as well as support decision-making during a period of change for the Caribbean MCO in the context of UN Development System reform, corporate change management and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its key objectives were to:

- synthesize the evidence collected to develop credible findings on the Caribbean MCO's strategic positioning and delivery of results against its integrated mandate.
- assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the Strategic Note.
- demonstrate where/how the Caribbean MCO can integrate a more intersectional approach to its work on gender equality, environments and marginalized voices.
- offer good practices, lessons learned, and reflections derived from the specific experiences of the Caribbean MCO
- develop conclusions on the contribution of the overall work of the Caribbean MCO to the countries it serves
- provide forward-looking and actionable recommendations to improve the overall work of the Caribbean MCO in alignment with change management, United Nations Development System (UNDS) Reform, COVID-19 response and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As part of the inception process, a Caribbean MCO Boundary Story<sup>19</sup> (see annex) was developed to determine what was to be included in the evaluation's scope. Considering additionally that the Caribbean MCO had not yet undergone a portfolio evaluation,<sup>20</sup> the Boundary Story allowed to determine the following key parameters of the scope:<sup>21</sup>

- Coverage of UN Women's work in the 22 countries and territories covered by the office;
- Inclusion of Caribbean MCO's work from 2011 onward to strengthen accountability and allow for the opportunity to assess sustainability and results;
- Assessment of both thematic work and the programmatic/operational strategies, including: 7 thematic areas, 9 programmatic strategies and 5 operational areas; and
- Assessment of intersecting dimensions of gender, environment, and marginalized voices to enhance the exercise's relevance to the Caribbean context.

The evaluation was expected to be useful to a range of internal and external stakeholders. Its findings provide an in-depth analysis of the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability of the Caribbean MCO's contribution to results in different areas, as well as insights into the efficiency and coherence with which these were pursued. The evaluation results are meant to feed into the following dimensions of use:<sup>22</sup> the Caribbean MCO's overall strategic planning and implementation; ACRO and UN Women headquarters oversight and strategic reflection; United Nations system in the Caribbean for supporting coherence; and national stakeholders (e.g., national governments, regional organizations, civil society organizations, etc.) from the 22 countries and territories covered by the Caribbean MCO.

<sup>19</sup> The Boundary Story is a narrative description of a system under evaluation defined as a collection of entities that are seen by someone as interacting together to do something.

<sup>20</sup> A mid-term review of the Caribbean MCO was conducted in 2015 but was not considered a full portfolio evaluation.

<sup>21</sup> See annex for Evaluation Boundary story and Inception Report, which provide details on the evaluability assessment, stakeholder analysis and vulnerability assessment that provided further scoping.

<sup>22</sup> A more in-depth description of potential users and use is available in the annexed Inception Report.

## 2.2. Design of the evaluation

The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach through a reconstructed theory of change from the Strategic Note as a way of identifying possible gaps and including what was not initially envisioned at the design of the most recent Caribbean MCO Strategic Note 2018-2021. The main analytical framework for the overall evaluation consisted of the standard evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, which describe the desired attributes of the system being assessed. The below key evaluation questions and guiding sub-questions also incorporated the Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender equality, Environments and Marginalized voices (ISE4GEMs) approach and into the evaluation criteria.

The evaluation adopted the ISE4GEMs approach to combine innovative systemic evaluation practice with intersectional analysis of these three key dimensions underpinning the SDGs, UN Women's work, and most importantly the Caribbean MCO. This approach explicitly considers the principle of leaving no one behind through incorporation of an analytical lens focused on marginalized voices, including through the incorporation of the ISE4GEMs lens into evaluation questions and sub-questions.<sup>23</sup> In this manner, the gender and human rights evaluation criterion was integrated through the ISE4GEMs approach in a cross-cutting manner throughout the below evaluation criteria and corresponding questions.

**Table 2. Key evaluation questions by criterion**

<p><b>RELEVANCE: Is the Caribbean MCO doing the right things?</b></p> <p>1. To what extent has the Caribbean MCO deployed both a relevant sub-regional and a multi-country approach?</p> <p>2. Recognizing UN Women's commitment to leave no one behind and sustainable development, to what extent has the Caribbean MCO addressed the dimensions of gender equality, environments, and marginalized voices, individually and collectively from an intersectional lens?</p>
<p><b>COHERENCE: How well does the Caribbean MCO fit?</b></p> <p>3. To what extent is the work of the Caribbean MCO coherent with internal and external overlapping and nested systems?<sup>24</sup></p>
<p><b>EFFECTIVENESS: Is the Caribbean MCO achieving its objectives?</b></p>
<p><b>SUSTAINABILITY: Will the benefits achieved by the Caribbean MCO last?</b></p> <p>4. What are the key cumulative results achieved by the Caribbean MCO since its inception in 2011?</p> <p>5. Has there been a contribution to sustainable development results and/or has resilience improved?</p> <p>6. How have programmatic strategies been selected and which strategies been the most effective and efficient for achieving results?</p>
<p><b>EFFICIENCY: How well are the Caribbean MCO's resources being used?</b></p> <p>7. Have operational strategies been deployed effectively to achieve a balance between results and resources?</p>

## 2.3. Data collection and analysis

The evaluation was conducted in line with the UN Women evaluation policy and standards and the United Nations Evaluation Group norms, standards, and ethical guidelines. The exercise used a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the evaluation questions.

The evaluation implemented ethical safeguards and measures to ensure that the evaluation process conformed with ethical standards. A vulnerability assessment undertaken during the inception phase to try and identify ethical considerations for specific stakeholder groups.

Interviews were guided by a protocol for ensuring informed and voluntary consent, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm to participants before proceeding. Although the methods used were almost exclusively desk or remote-based given the COVID-19 pandemic context, efforts were made to be as inclusive and participatory as possible in line with the ISE4GEMs approach. The mix of approaches allowed for more participation among national and regional level stakeholders and helped to address gaps in data to allow for more diverse perspectives to be captured.<sup>25</sup> See annex for detailed description of methodology including data collection tools employed.

<sup>23</sup> Stephens, A., Lewis, E.D. and Reddy, S.M. 2018. "Inclusive Systemic Evaluation (ISE4GEMs): A New Approach for the SDG Era". New York: UN Women; <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/9/ise4gems-a-new-approach-for-the-sdg-era>

<sup>24</sup> Different systems interact with each other when they overlap (e.g. two agencies/systems work together on a joint programme) and also when they are nested together (e.g. the Caribbean MCO system is nested within broader UN Women system).

<sup>25</sup> For example, survey responses helped to address a gap in interview data from CSOs.

## KEY DATA COLLECTION METHODS



**DESK REVIEW** of a sample of 133 documents coded using NVivo\* including programme and project documentation, annual reporting, relevant past evaluations, and relevant literature.



**KEY INFORMANT AND GROUP INTERVIEWS** collected from a purposeful sample of 123 stakeholders who were interviewed remotely and whose notes developed and coded using NVivo\*.



**SURVEY OF 182 STAKEHOLDERS** through an online questionnaire, with high response rates from key targeted groups including UN Women staff (18 per cent or 32 respondents), UN agencies (16 per cent or 31 respondents), civil society organizations (28 per cent or 55 respondents), government (18 per cent or 34 respondents), and other stakeholder groups (17 per cent or 30 respondents); 82 per cent identified as women, 16 per cent as men, 1 per cent as non-binary, and 1 per cent of respondents preferred not to say.



**FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES** information extracted from UN Women online platforms including its enterprise resource management system Atlas and internal system OneApp.



**WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS** collected using Google Analytics and YouTube Analytics incorporated into the analysis. **OBSERVATION** of relevant meetings, conferences, trainings, and launches in both online and presental settings

\* NVivo is a qualitative coding software.

## 2.4. Limitations

The evaluation faced constraints, including its launch at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic that required a shift in the initially planned methodology and design due to travel restrictions, border closures, full or partial lockdowns, and social distancing measures imposed by governments in the Caribbean and the countries in which the evaluation team members reside. This presented limitations in terms of the data collection methods that were feasible and ethical to deploy, as well as uncertainty around the time and effort required for a shift to remote data collection methods. Within this context, some key limitations emerged:

- Gaps in documentation and financial data given the wide scope of the evaluation, particularly between 2011 and 2013. Some data gaps were more systemic and related to what data was collected and documented. For example, financial data to assess travel costs to specific countries/territories could not be fully verified, undermining the ability to conduct a cost-benefit analysis. This challenge was mitigated to the extent possible through triangulation of other data sources.
- The shift to remote qualitative data collection limited the range, variety and inclusiveness of the data collected, increased timelines and level of effort and did not allow for observation of environmental factors. Some stakeholders were not easily reachable and may have experienced access issues. This gap was partly addressed through surveys that included respondents who were rights-holders, self-identified as belonging to a marginalized group, and located in all 22 countries and territories covered by the Caribbean MCO.

- The impact criterion was initially planned for evaluation in the inception phase for mapping long-term results of the office since 2011, however the quality of data collected by the evaluation team did not lend to this level of depth. The report does comment on areas of impact under the effectiveness criterion where relevant.
- Delays in finalizing the evaluation process, affected in part by the COVID-19 pandemic, decreased the timeliness of the data collected and analysed. As a result, this decreased the potential for relevance and utility of the final evaluation report for the key stakeholders. Given that data collection was undertaken in 2020, it is important to mention that results of some of the projects mentioned that were recently starting in time of data collection are not captured, such as the Spotlight Initiative in the region and ENGenDER project.

## 2.5. Governance and quality assurance

The evaluation was managed and conducted the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service and an independent evaluation team. UN Women evaluations establish mechanisms to ensure high-quality evaluation processes and products as outlined in the UN Women Evaluation Policy and Handbook. The evaluation was subject to quality review by the Director of UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services, the Chief of the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service, and the Evaluation Reference Group, which is composed of representatives of the from civil society, academia, government, regional organizations, and partner United Nations entities who were engaged in reviewing and providing feedback to a set of preliminary findings to support the accuracy and validity of the analysis which has informed this final report (see annex).



Photo: UN Women Caribbean Multi-Country Office

## 3. FINDINGS

This section presents an assessment of the UN Women Caribbean MCO programme organized by evaluation criteria, while recognizing the close interrelationship between these areas of measurement.

### 3.1. Relevance and coherence

To what extent has the Caribbean MCO deployed both a relevant sub-regional and a multi-country approach?

#### FINDING 1.

### UN Women's overall thematic portfolio was found to be relevant to the priorities of the Caribbean region for supporting gender equality and women's empowerment.

The overall scope of work of UN Women in the Caribbean in terms of thematic areas selected were found to be relevant to the regional needs and the priorities of stakeholders. Most stakeholders understood the Caribbean MCO's role and niche. All eight thematic areas pursued by the office were considered relevant by over 60 per cent of stakeholders surveyed (see table below), and data across stakeholder types indicated that five areas stood out as most relevant in descending order: Elimination of Violence against Women; Strengthening Norms; Data and Statistics; Women's Economic Empowerment; and Women's Leadership and Political Participation. In identifying which themes should be a priority for the UN Women Caribbean MCO, stakeholders largely aligned with these five themes (see figure below).<sup>26</sup>

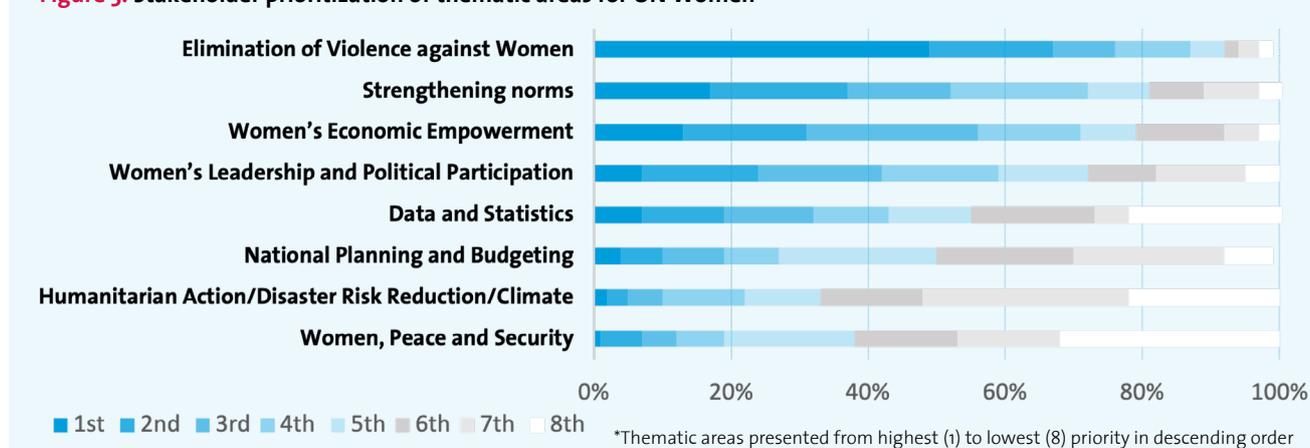
While its work in the Humanitarian Action/Disaster Risk Reduction/Climate area was considered slightly less relevant given in part a lower comparative advantage of the organization, qualitative survey results and interviews also suggested that UN Women's relevant expertise could deepen its engagement in this area in other ways, as discussed in the below finding related to UN Women's COVID-19 response. Results for prioritization and relevance of this and other thematic areas – notably National Planning and Budgeting, and Women, Peace, and Security – equally reflected their lower level of inclusion into the office's overall portfolio.

**TABLE 3. Stakeholder feedback on relevance of Caribbean MCO work by thematic area<sup>27</sup>**

THEMATIC AREA	STRONGLY AGREE/AGREE	DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE
Elimination of Violence against Women	90%	0%
Strengthening Norms	84%	2%
Data and Statistics	82%	2%
Women's Economic Empowerment	80%	2%
Women's Leadership and Political Participation	74%	2%
Humanitarian Action/Disaster Risk Reduction/Climate	67%	3%
National Planning and Budgeting	62%	4%
Women, Peace, and Security	61%	5%

Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=130)

**Figure 3. Stakeholder prioritization of thematic areas for UN Women<sup>28\*</sup>**



Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=130)

<sup>26</sup> Survey respondents identifying to have little or no engagement with the office also aligned with this prioritization of issues for the region, except for National Planning and Budgeting falling in the top 5 themes, as opposed to Data and Statistics.

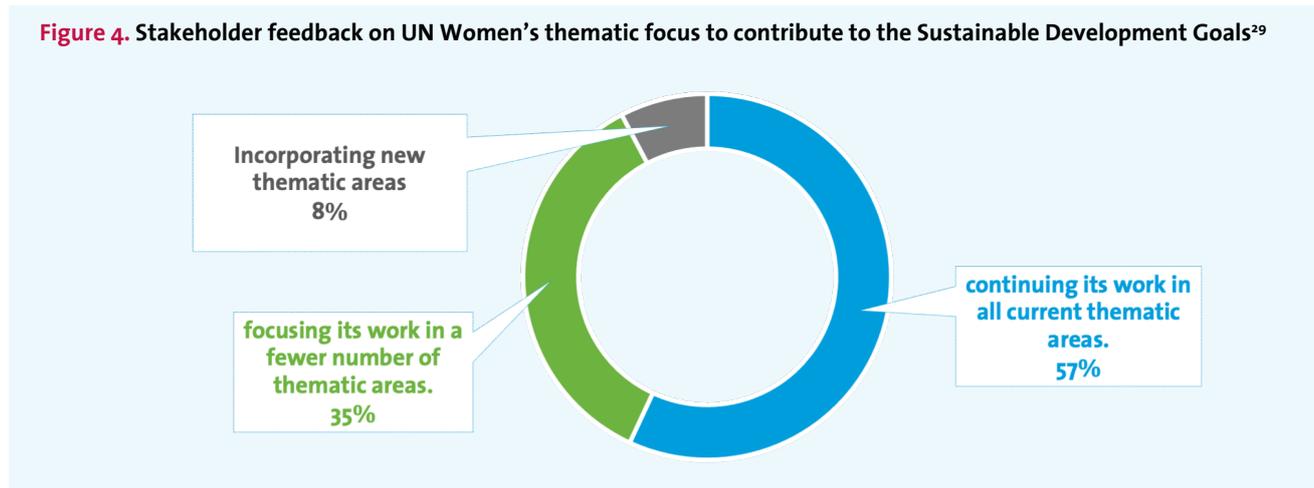
<sup>27</sup> Survey question: In your opinion, would you agree or disagree that the Caribbean MCO's work has been relevant in the following thematic areas?

<sup>28</sup> Survey question: "Please rank the following thematic areas based on what you consider should be the highest to lowest priority for the UN Women Caribbean MCO."

Despite the clear relevance and prioritization of the five thematic areas, when asked how the Caribbean MCO could best contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, most stakeholders (57 per cent) surveyed found that it was important for the office to continue working in all thematic areas to build on and increase the sustainability of results already achieved (see figure below). While a limited number of stakeholders suggested that the Caribbean MCO incorporate new areas within its workplan (e.g., racial justice) to further strengthen relevance, a

wider range would like to see the office maintain flexibility and some operational space to be able to absorb unforeseen but important areas of work such as responding to COVID-19 and migrant or refugee crisis situations. Many internal and external stakeholders also commented on the office being stretched too thin and that decisions about areas of work to be pursued also needed to consider the capacity of the Caribbean MCO to implement these in a significant way.

**Figure 4. Stakeholder feedback on UN Women’s thematic focus to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>29</sup>**



Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=130)

<sup>29</sup> Survey question: “The UN Women Caribbean MCO could best contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by: Incorporating new thematic areas; Continuing its work in all current thematic areas; Focusing its work in a fewer number of thematic areas.”

**FINDING 2.****UN Women has been effective at deploying a “sub-regional” approach in the Caribbean that has not yet been complemented by a consistent “multi-country” approach.**

UN Women effectively implemented its work over the period at the sub-regional level in the Caribbean, which in theory was expected to provide support to the 22 individual countries and territories covered in the region, at least indirectly. Survey results have partly supported this assumption as 55 per cent of stakeholders strongly agreed/agreed that the Caribbean MCO’s support at the regional level was appropriate and useful for individual countries. Evidence also suggests that such an approach was pursued across thematic areas and programmatic strategies and that this work was greatly facilitated by collaboration with sub-regional organizations, particularly for normative work together with CARICOM, OECS, CDB, CDEMA, CCJ, ParlAmericas and the University of West Indies.<sup>30</sup>

Most stakeholders (55 per cent) also strongly agreed/agreed that the Caribbean MCO provided appropriate level of tailored support to individual countries. The office was able to undertake more tailored work mainly by identifying several countries for inclusion in programmatic frameworks and through the provision of direct technical assistance to national stakeholders on request. Some stakeholders underlined opportunities for deepening the “sub-regional” approach, including through:

- development of regional normative frameworks that can guide country-level work
- data and statistics work such as prevalence surveys and other knowledge generation initiatives, which can have a significant regional dimension and then trickle down to countries
- capacity development where a common understanding on gender equality and women’s empowerment issues across the region is needed
- work on migration, climate change, the environment and other areas well suited to addressing cross-border dynamics and leveraging efficiencies<sup>31</sup>
- work addressing OECS Member State needs where regional work is already prevalent and policy-binding mechanisms exist

Interviews and qualitative survey data also indicated that many stakeholders noted that the “sub-regional” approach – where the office provides more generalized common support to many countries – had limitations in translating to results. More consistent follow-up and investment by the Caribbean MCO through a “multi-country” approach – where the office provides tailored support to individual countries to support national implementation – was seen as an important complement of its sub-regional work and a key factor that would allow the office to enable strong results and impact.

For example, this was raised as one of the issues decreasing effectiveness of the office’s Women’s Leadership and Political Participation work.<sup>32</sup> The call for more implementation at the country-level is not unique to UN Women but is echoed in the wider MCO Review and implementation plan for all United Nations entities in the region. Some stakeholders were looking for UN Women decisions at the corporate level to determine what the UN Women’s offer will be in the region, and if it will be sufficient to meet the challenges for gender equality in the region, while at the same time acknowledging that agencies such as UN Women cannot fully tailor work to every country in the region.

In this context, UN Women focused most of its specific country level work since 2011 in the region in five countries: Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Grenada, and Antigua and Barbuda. It was able to reach many more countries through a range of strategies and thematic areas. There were only three countries/territories in which the Caribbean MCO did not engage at the country-level in any area.<sup>33</sup> Elimination of Violence against Women was the theme most implemented at the country level, followed by Humanitarian Action/Disaster Risk Reduction/Climate work. Of the programmatic strategies deployed at country-level, capacity development and knowledge generation were the most popular, pursued in the more than half of the countries.

<sup>30</sup> COVID-19 response included as part of reviewing the coverage of countries.

<sup>31</sup> For example, support to financing for gender equality in the context of climate change from the Green Climate Fund, whose minimum amounts may be too large for many countries in the region to absorb but can be applied for through regional organizations.

<sup>32</sup> This was found the 2015 MTR and in interview data.

<sup>33</sup> Interviews also indicated that support to Belize over the last two Strategic Note periods was limited.

The primary inhibiting factor for UN Women to enhance implementation at the national level were funding and staff presence. While core funding is often used to support regional work, more consistent and targeted work at country-level is dependent on the ability to raise non-core resources such as was the case for the Win-Win project in Jamaica and the Spotlight Initiative programmes, which both brought funding for implementation and introduced staffing on the ground.

National partners were also not always in a position to take up implementation without more specific and continuing support by the Caribbean MCO, through technical and/or financial assistance. Overall, the challenge was seen as identifying country-level approaches that were suited to its level of capacity and presence. One effective strategy was piloting in one country and then replicating in others such as with the Partnerships for Peace where the Caribbean MCO identified a partner on the ground who could then also provide support for implementation in new countries through south-south exchange.

**Table 4. Mapping of UN Women’s programming strategies and thematic areas by country/territory**

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES <sup>34</sup>	STRATEGIES				THEMATIC AREAS							TOTAL	
	Social Norms	Capacity Development	Knowledge Generation	Advocacy	Violence against Women	Economic empowerment	Intergovernmental / Normative	Leadership & Participation	Humanitarian Action/ Disaster/Climate	Data and Statistics	Covid-19 Response		
Anguilla					X		X	X					3
Antigua and Barbuda	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			9
Aruba													0
Bahamas		X	X		X				X				4
Barbados	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X			8
Belize	X	X	X		X			X	X				6
Bermuda					X								1
British Virgin Islands		X			X								2
Cayman Islands													0
Curaçao													0
Dominica		X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		8
Grenada	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			9
Guyana		X	X	X	X				X	X			6
Jamaica	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			10
Montserrat									X				1
St. Kitts and Nevis			X		X	X		X	X				5
Saint Lucia	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		10
St. Vincent and the Grenadines			X		X				X		X		4
Sint Maarten		X											1
Suriname		X	X						X	X			4
Trinidad and Tobago	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		11
Turks and Caicos					X				X		X		3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>		

Source: Evaluation team based on review of documentation

<sup>34</sup> A sub-regional approach was pursued in all themes and strategies.

Recognizing UN Women's commitment to leave no one behind and sustainable development, to what extent has the Caribbean MCO addressed the dimensions of gender equality, environments, and marginalized voices, individually and collectively from an intersectional lens?

### FINDING 3.

#### The UN Women Caribbean MCO has shifted from a targeted to a more generalized approach to addressing intersectionality.

The office has consistently addressed intersectionality during the period under review and has made this explicit within its strategic frameworks and in programming documents. There is a longer history of work to address marginalized and vulnerable groups within its work, but there has been increasing focus on this with the advent of the SDGs and principle to leave no one behind. There has also been an increasing focus on addressing gender and environmental issues following the devastating 2017-2018 hurricane season in the region. When gender and environmental issues are being addressed, attention is normally also paid to marginalized groups, but not always the other way around.

Survey results generally aligned with this positive assessment of the office's strategic inclusion of an intersectional lens. 67 per cent of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that the Caribbean MCO adopted an intersectional approach regarding gender, equality and marginalized group dimensions; 81 per cent and 79 per cent of respondents who that the office had a clear vision and strategy for addressing gender equality and for addressing women's empowerment, respectively. In addition, 64 per cent and 59 per cent found that the office had a clear vision and strategy for addressing the inclusion of marginalized groups in the context of leave no one behind, and for addressing gender-related environment and climate vulnerabilities, respectively.

The Caribbean MCO strongly focused on women belonging to marginalized groups by integrating specific groups into the way that projects targeted. This was evidenced between 2011 and 2016, female headed households and those with children were an intrinsic focus of social protection work. Sex workers were included in the UNTF 2013-2016 Jamaica AIDS Support for Life project and in early (2011) research work in Barbados and Trinidad for the 'Gender, Sexual Culture and HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean' work. Women living with HIV/AIDS were the target group for work on governance and national planning such work in support of the Caribbean Coalition on HIV/AIDS (until 2013) and the TIDES programme (2010-2016). Domestic workers were also targeted through work with the ILO on Convention 189 from 2013-2015, and this work also acknowledged the particular vulnerabilities of migrant domestic workers (such as those from Guyana).

More recent work since 2017 shifted to other target groups, such as persons living with a disability, indigenous persons, migrants, youth, LGBTQI, and the rural poor.<sup>35</sup>

Despite clear efforts over to acknowledge marginalized women in internal planning documents who might need specific targeting within programmes – such as the elderly, people living with disabilities, LGBTQI or sex workers – there was limited evidence that this translated into relevant programmes reaching these groups and addressing their interests. In part, this can be attributed to funding timelines as several large projects were still at early stages with results not yet evident such as the Building Effective Resilience programme (targeting the rural poor including women farmers and women in fisheries) and EnGender (which targets Guyanese migrants in Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuelan migrants in Guyana). Planning for the Spotlight country programmes has also included a focus on LNOB (persons with disability; rural poor; women living with HIV; youth groups in Jamaica and Guyana) and in some cases plans for good intersectionality analysis (Guyana), but results were not available at the time of analysis. The project document for the Grenada Spotlight was particularly strong in this approach with an intersectionality framework and methods for measuring each group.

The latter period under evaluation saw higher levels of awareness and analysis of marginalized groups, as well as a distinct shift away from the targeted approach to a more generalized data-focused approach to addressing marginalized groups. Policymakers and programme implementers have highlighted data as an obstacle to identifying the needs of marginalized groups, and UN Women's work in this area – including on Women's Health Surveys, the Gender Equality Index, among others – helped to address this key gap to better address the needs of such groups. However, there was less clear evidence that marginalized groups were actually consistently reached and benefited from UN Women's contribution when using this approach.

<sup>35</sup> This was evidenced by the Foundations Programme, which aimed to benefit young people and the JURIST programme which included a consultation process that sought to include marginalized groups, including indigenous communities.

In this respect, UN Women's work in the Caribbean faced distinct challenges in more deeply embedding and operationalising an intersectionality approach. These challenges range from contextual, strategic, technical and institutional:

- Types of marginalisation are varied in the Caribbean region where prevalence and manifestations differ between countries. For example, the marginalization of indigenous groups, while not relevant in all countries, is highly relevant in Belize, Guyana, and Suriname. This theme was addressed less, apart from consultations carried out as part of the JURIST project.
- Stakeholders signalled that the Caribbean MCO could adapt strategies to increase inclusion by working more with grassroots CSOs, but this may require investment in partnership building and some country presence.
- While the data-focused approach fills a key gap highlighted by national stakeholders, particularly policymakers and programme implementers, the use of such data needs to be tracked to determine if this leads to more inclusive policies and programme implementation that benefit the identified groups.
- Working intersectionally requires measuring multiple variables such as increased resilience, gender index and social inclusion in relation to each other, which is complex and considering existing challenges with monitoring and evaluation processes, will require attention and building capacity.

Addressing intersectionality systematically also remains an area for improvement for many United Nations agencies. For example, separate reporting streams for the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) and United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy means that these are not analytically combined. Reporting separately on all types of marginalization creates a challenging workload and existing capacities for undertaking intersectional approaches are limited. In the Caribbean, where a backlash against promotion of equality for women represents a real challenge, a stronger focus and elaboration of intersectional disadvantage and an insistent focus on marginalized groups could clarify the need for urgent action in support of marginalized women. There was evidence of existing capacity within the office to leader on such issues if prioritizing this work.

To what extent is the work of the Caribbean MCO coherent with internal and external overlapping and nested systems?

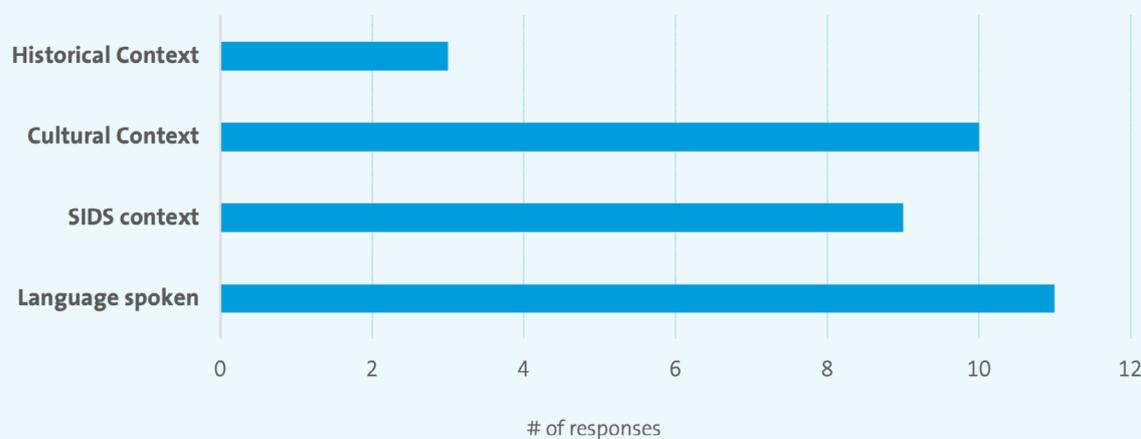
#### FINDING 4.

**The UN Women Caribbean MCO's Strategic Note had strong internal coherence that enabled leveraging across thematic areas to strengthen results in the context of limited resources, where synergy within UN Women across the wider Americas and Caribbean region faced challenges. External coherence with United Nations partners was positive based particularly on a high proportion of joint work.**

The Caribbean MCO structure supported coherence between thematic areas of its Strategic Note and its limited country presence in the region. Internally, there was evidence of the office leveraging across thematic areas to strengthen results and maximize resources with 53 per cent of stakeholders surveyed who found there were synergies among and between UN Women's thematic work. Nonetheless, internal coherence across the wider region demonstrated characteristics of an overlapping system given strong differences in language,

geographically distinct SIDS development issues, and cultural context between ACRO and Caribbean MCO (see figure below). This translated into challenges in the model of support between offices. Over the evaluation period, efforts were deployed to make improvements, including through cross-regional learning and agenda-building. Overall, coherence with UN Women headquarters was considered stronger while varying based on thematic areas.

**Figure 5. Internal feedback on biggest challenges to internal coherence within Americas and Caribbean<sup>36</sup>**



Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=34)

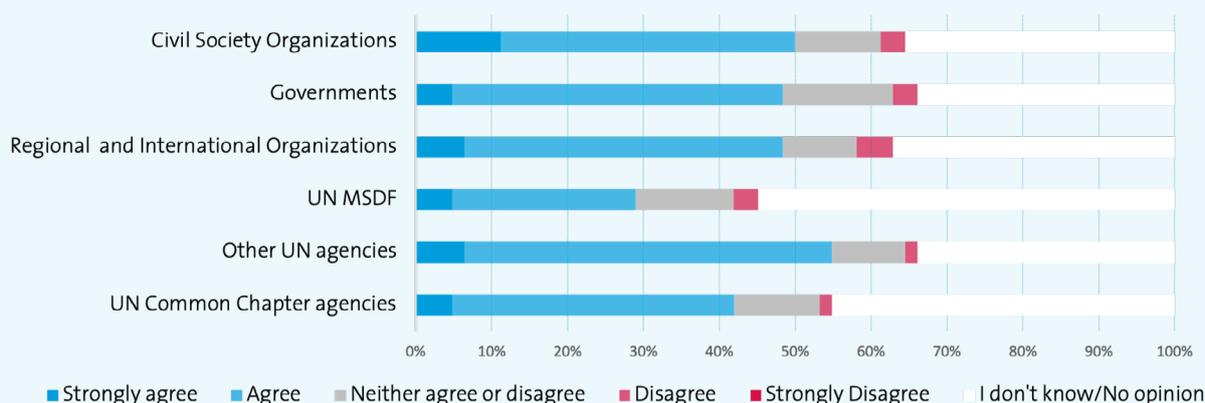
As part of the United Nations Development System in the Caribbean, UN Women has responded within the spirit of the United Nations Reform to work more jointly and increase its coordination on gender equality and women's empowerment issues. The number of joint programmes increased significantly during the period of evaluation. Cumulatively, the Caribbean MCO engaged in operational coordination with approximately nine United Nations partners through joint programming since 2017,<sup>37</sup> and 11 joint programmes/initiatives as of 2020 that constituted the bulk of its portfolio across a range of thematic areas.

Complementarity between UN Women's strategy and work was also assessed positively by stakeholders in the Caribbean, including both CSOs and governments in addition to United Nations partners and other international organizations, as shown in the figure below.

<sup>36</sup> Survey question: "In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges to coherence between ACRO and the Caribbean MCO? Please select all that apply."

<sup>37</sup> UNICEF, UNDP, UNOCHA, ILO, WFP, ECLAC, OHCHR, PAHO, and FAO. See annexed programmatic timeline for mapping of specific programmes.

**Figure 6. Stakeholder feedback on complementarity between UN Women Caribbean MCO’s strategy and programme with the work of key partner groups<sup>38</sup>**



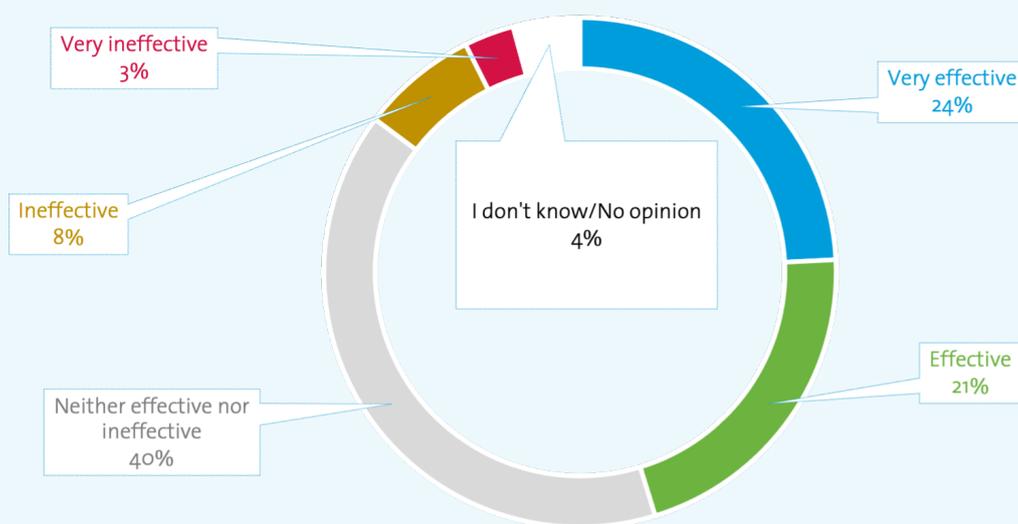
Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=62)

On the other hand, the successful trend in increasing programmatic collaboration with United Nations partners also brought distinct operational challenges and did not translate into strong survey results regarding UN Women’s coordination role. While 61 per cent of those surveyed were very satisfied/satisfied with the office as a joint partner, only 45 per cent found UN Women to be very effective/effective in its coordination role (see figure below). Interviews also indicated concerns around UN Women’s ability to lead large joint programmes while servicing 5 UNCTs effectively due to size, level of resources, and limited country presence.

Further clarity was needed on UN Women’s coordination role and what this entails for both the Caribbean MCO, UNCTs and other UN agencies.

At the same time, this situation brought potential opportunities to leverage other agencies and expand its reach to more countries. The office could for example increase its engagement in the normative space with other partners. This includes encouraging countries in the region to report against the commitments made in the SAMOA Pathway by liaising more with the SIDS Unit within UN DESA, which works to monitor the commitments made in the SAMOA Pathway.

**Figure 7. Stakeholder feedback on effectiveness of UN Women’s coordination work<sup>39</sup>**



Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=95)

<sup>38</sup> Survey question: “The Strategic Note and Work Programme of the UN Women Caribbean MCO has considered and complements the work of...”

<sup>39</sup> Survey question: “How would you rate the effectiveness of the Caribbean MCO in coordinating and promoting accountability on gender equality and women’s empowerment at the UNCT/UNST level?”

## 3.2. Effectiveness

What are the key cumulative results achieved by the Caribbean MCO since its inception in 2011? How have programmatic strategies been selected and which strategies been the most effective and efficient for achieving results?

### FINDING 5.

#### UN Women's work to address violence against women was a highly effective contribution to advancing gender equality in the Caribbean region.

The UN Women Caribbean MCO's work towards Ending Violence against Women was identified by stakeholders as the number one priority to address for advancing gender equality in the region. Stakeholders largely identified the high prevalence of violence against women in the region to be both a violation of the human rights of women and girls, as well as a barrier to advancing gender equality objectives in other areas. The COVID-19 pandemic context was observed to have exacerbated violence against women in the region, and consequently further raised the urgency and relevance of this work.

Over the years of implementation since 2011, the Caribbean MCO's work on Ending Violence against Women has been inextricably linked with other work plan areas. In many ways, it can almost be seen as a cross-cutting issue for the office in this respect as almost all other thematic areas had a focus on addressing violence to some extent (e.g., access to justice, data and statistics, Disaster Risk Reduction, COVID-19 response, governance, social norms, etc.). While this is understood as a natural response to the prevalence of the issue and systemic nature of the problem, it was also facilitated by adaptive management strategies taken by the office in the context of funding fluctuations and staff shortages.

The office's earliest engagement to address violence against women were related to strengthening norms through support for the development of national action plans (e.g. Strengthening State Accountability), increasing capacity for delivery of essential services related to access to justice (e.g. JURIST), and prevention work that included violence intervention (e.g., Partnerships for Peace) and addressing social norms and working with men and boys (e.g. Social Mobilization, CARIMAN, UNITE campaign, etc.).

Under the Strategic Note 2014-2017, there was a decrease in funding and dedicated capacity within the Caribbean MCO to address the issue that was accompanied by a shift to more emphasis placed on work to strengthen norms<sup>40</sup> and on prevention, with a focus on social norm change. Under the 2018-2021 Strategic Note, the office's work in the area expanded significantly with the addition of data and statistics work (e.g., prevalence surveys) and the launch of the Spotlight Initiative.

In this respect, the Caribbean MCO has also deployed many strategies to implement this work, that have together helped to drive results (see below table). In the area of data and statistics, social mobilization and awareness work was considered effective in addressing harmful norms and preventing violence, in addition to educational projects targeting young people such as the Foundations Programme.

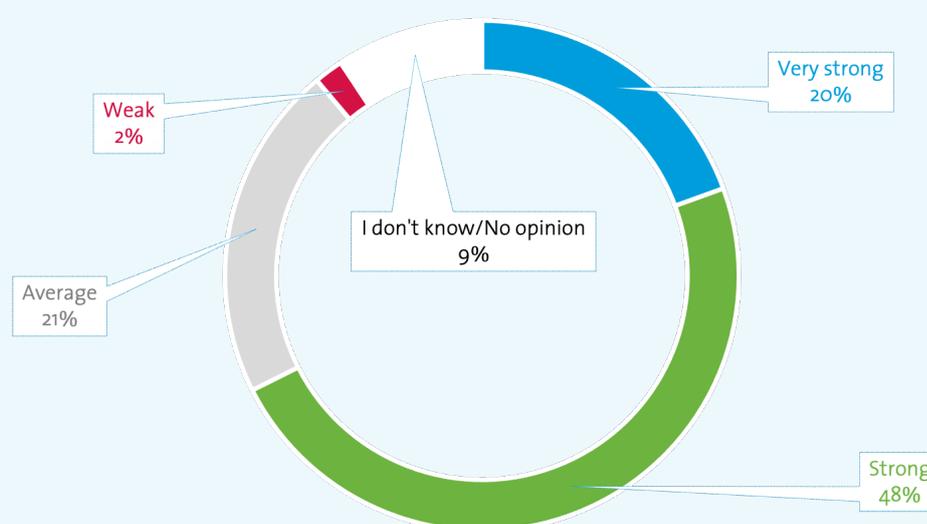
The Caribbean MCO's experience in the thematic area was widely acknowledged and appreciated, including its leadership role. 68 per cent of surveyed stakeholders found the Caribbean MCO had been effective in delivering results and 63 per cent considered these results to be sustainable or had the potential to be sustainable. Most stakeholders also found that results were very strong / strong (68 per cent). At the same time, both internal and external stakeholders aligned with the need to increase its prevention work. For example, the experience of the Partnerships for Peace programme helped identify the need for more prevention work, which led to launching the Foundations Programme, which was being integrated into Spotlight Initiatives. With Foundations Programme being incorporated within Spotlight a good start, more can be done to support long-term behaviour change through communications and advocacy.

<sup>40</sup> Some of the normative work in the region was taken up by TF EAW during this period.

**Table 5. Selected results in violence against women work of MCO Caribbean by area/programme**

Focus Area / programme	Indicative results
<b>National Action Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical and financial support for development of National Strategic Action Plan to eliminate Gender-Based Violence, which began through the State Accountability Programme and then incorporated under a broader normative support outcome area (e.g., Jamaica, St. Vincent and Grenadines, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, etc.).</li> <li>• In Trinidad and Tobago, the Domestic Violence Act was amended following stakeholder consultations to strengthen the protection offered and reduce impunity to perpetrators.</li> <li>• In St. Lucia, support to the Department of Gender Relations to establish a partnership with the police, an assessment (with UNFPA) to identify gaps in GBV services to be addressed by a new package of services, and support to development of a GBV referral pathway.</li> </ul>
<b>Data and statistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Caribbean MCO was instrumental in spearheading the development of prevalence surveys in five countries in the region that brought vital data and statistics on the GBV for advocacy and policy. Prevalence surveys in five countries. The success of the initial prevalence surveys is largely credited with those countries being selected for Spotlight Initiative programmes.</li> <li>• Launch of the Caribbean Women Count Data Hub that provides a visual way for duty bearers and rights holders to access data on violence against women and girls in the region. The Hub launch was as a result of a partnership with the Caribbean Development Bank and CARICOM.</li> <li>• The Caribbean Women Count Violence against Women Portal, which was developed and launched in 2020, the national Domestic Violence Registries, Online Crime Statistics.<sup>41</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Disaster Risk Reduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Irma Response: This gender-sensitive approach integrated triage, case management and throughput, as well as capacity building for the development and delivery of therapeutic services to the affected populations and those affected by gender-based violence, including: six public service announcements focused on gender-based violence; four public service announcements focusing on mental health and psychosocial support; and a theatrical production to address post-disaster mental trauma staged in Antigua and Barbuda and the Turks and Caicos.</li> </ul>
<b>COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Shelter Management guidelines for Women and Children Survivors of Family Violence within the Caribbean, in conjunction with the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO).</li> <li>• UN Women produced the report “Caribbean Experiences With Collecting Data on Violence Against Women and Girls” as a resource for best practices on future surveys.</li> <li>• UN Women also supported the COVID-19 Human and Economic Assessment of Impact (HEAT) Series in eight countries within Barbados and the OECS and participated in the Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plans (SERPs).</li> </ul>

Source: Evaluation team based on document review

**Figure 8. Stakeholder feedback on UN Women Caribbean MCO results achieved in elimination of violence against women thematic area<sup>42</sup>**

Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=108)

<sup>41</sup> <https://caribbeanwomenscount.unwomen.org/><sup>42</sup> Survey question: “To the best of your knowledge, how would you rate the results achieved by the Caribbean MCO in the following areas?”

While unable to evaluate the Spotlight Initiative at the time of this exercise, some stakeholders across all types noted at the time of data collection the high expectations that the Spotlight Initiative has created for the Caribbean MCO and the concurrent reputational risk if the initiative was not seen as successful. Both internal and external stakeholders shared concerns that the additional work generated for joint programmes may stretch the office beyond its capacity to deliver. Related to the above, the limited human and financial resources available for Elimination of Violence against Women work was a challenge before the Spotlight Initiative brought with it more funding and capacity, and uncertainty of financial sustainability following the end of the Spotlight programmes remained.

At the time of data collection, some areas were identified where the Caribbean MCO could strengthen and expand its work, including:

- Specifically targeting of marginalized women and girls (e.g., homeless women, women in the informal sector, women with disabilities, etc.), despite the more discrete focus of the Spotlight Initiative on incorporating the ‘leave no one behind’ principle.
- Monitoring and evaluating the work on Elimination of Violence against Women and improving results reporting to capture related work across all thematic areas given that it is so often linked to other areas.
- Although the Caribbean MCO was much recognized for its work and launched an Elimination of Violence against Women data hub, there is still scope to improve the visibility of its work by strengthening its knowledge management and maintaining a consistent communications strategy that will keep its work in discussion.

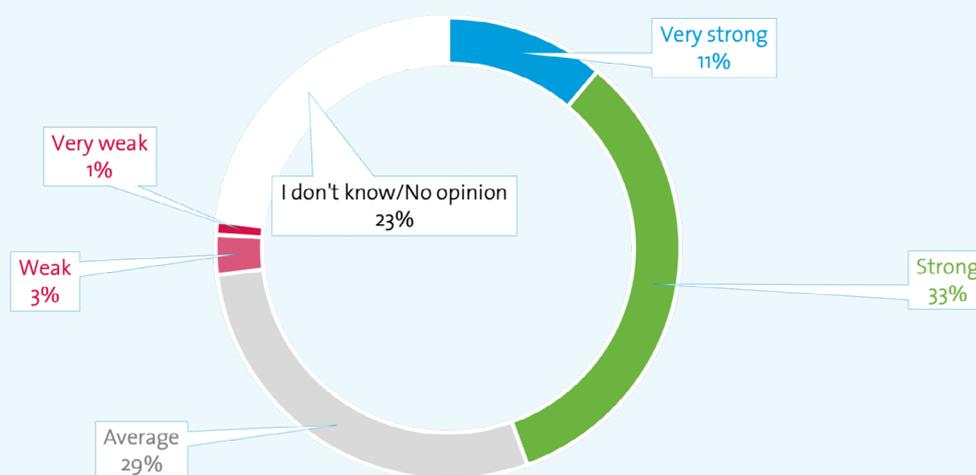
## FINDING 6.

**The Caribbean MCO has been effective at contributing to specific processes to advance international and regional commitments on gender equality through a “sub-regional” approach. This approach has however not shown significant results in embedding these norms further at the country level.**

The Caribbean MCO’s normative support to countries in the region included results evident at different levels. At the output level, individuals were supported to attend meetings. At the intermediate to longer term outcome level: regional approaches and responses to international agreements were developed; and national legislation has been advanced. The Caribbean MCO has provided normative support to all 22 countries in the region during the period under review, more often through a sub-regional approach.

Stakeholders surveyed found that the Caribbean MCO’s work to strengthen norms was only second to Elimination of Violence against Women in terms of prioritization. All four respondent groups included normative achievements as among the top three most effective area for results achieved by MCO since 2011; a total of 44 per cent on average across all respondents found normative results to be very strong/strong, as indicated in the below figure.

**Figure 9. Stakeholder feedback on UN Women Caribbean MCO results achieved in normative area<sup>43</sup>**



Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=108)

<sup>43</sup> Survey question: “To the best of your knowledge, how would you rate the results achieved by the Caribbean MCO in the following areas?”

The integration of normative work into operations has been fertile ground for progress and has more recently been embedded in the Spotlight Programme.

This approach has often involved working jointly with United Nations agencies at national policy and legislation level to advance normative commitments such as with UNDP and UNICEF on social protection; with ILO for legislation on domestic workers; and with UNDP, UNICEF, PAHO/WHO and UNFPA in the context of the Spotlight Programme. Collaboration with other agencies has also enabled direct contributions to normative agendas, such as with UNDP to implement aspects of the Sendai Framework.

UN Women's technical support to and convening of National Gender Machineries and Parliamentarians, complemented by capacity building in the form of workshops and trainings, were important strategies in advancing normative work. With such Gender Machineries, Antigua and Barbuda, as well as Trinidad and Tobago received specific support for preparing for their CEDAW Constructive Dialogues; Anguilla was also supported with a consultant to review how existing legislation aligned with CEDAW; Jamaican parliamentarians have received support for SDG implementation and monitoring.

**Table 6. Selected results in global norms work of MCO Caribbean by area/programme**

Focus Area / programme	INDICATIVE RESULTS
<b>Integration of gender equality in international commitments</b>	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (A/RES/69/15). UN Women has been noted as contributing to the text on gender equality and women's empowerment within the resolution.
<b>Advance understanding of and reporting on international agreements</b>	<p>Extending CEDAW to Anguilla (2016), technical support to several countries for CEDAW reporting e.g., Antigua and Barbuda 2018, practice sessions for reporting in 2016 and support to Trinidad and Tobago and Antigua and Barbuda for preparing for CEDAW Constructive Dialogues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing financial support for attendance at CSW 63 to several countries (2018) and working to integrate CSW objectives across the region to produce a common position and regional position paper prior to the forum and developing a regional approach for Beijing +25</li> <li>• Consultations and guidelines for national reports on Beijing PfA.</li> <li>• Contributing to the ratification of Convention 189 concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers</li> </ul>
<b>National Action Plans (NAPs), legislation and policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• technical support/integrated policy advice for a roadmap for SDG implementation in St. Lucia and to establish a CARICOM Regional Strategy for Gender Equality</li> <li>• working with UNICEF to develop and adopts child and gender responsive social protection model law for OECS</li> <li>• Support to gender responsive National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions for implementation of Sendai Framework (e.g., Jamaica and Eastern Caribbean)</li> </ul>
<b>Tools and protocols supporting implementation of plan, legislation and policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols and Model Court on Elimination of Violence against Women, training for the judiciary that included sensitization to CEDAW, and development of Caribbean specific CEDAW Legislative Indicators all under the JURIST project</li> <li>• Consultations with parliamentarians in 2016 that resulted in developing a structure for implementing CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations in one country.</li> <li>• Integrated policy advice and GRB overview provided for SDGs through workshops with UNDP, e.g., Jamaica 2018</li> </ul>

Source: Evaluation team based on document review

The Caribbean MCO faced challenges in extending its normative support to 22 countries with its limited resourcing and presence. Its approach was largely regional, despite a number of country-specific initiatives, given that resourcing was not sufficient to consistently meet national demand for support. Among the office's effective approaches in this area, the use of remote convening of National Gender Machineries created spaces for opportunities for knowledge exchange, capacity building, networking and country-to-country support (see box below).

The strategy facilitated a cascading translation of international commitments to first a regional level and then country level implementation. Resource constraints nevertheless also meant that the Caribbean MCO participated only at a limited level in some key processes, such as the United Nations Interagency Coordination Group on SIDS, and in the continued reporting on the SAMOA Pathway. These were gaps which may assume deeper significance in the context of increasing attention to issues of climate change and its effects in SIDS.

**BOX 1:****Good practice related to remote convening of National Gender Machineries**

The initiation of monthly remote meetings for National Gender Machineries has since 2020 attempted to address the challenge of extending support at country level in a context of limited resources. These meetings draw on both technical support and peer to peer learning approaches and are very favourably regarded by those who have participated.

There is emerging evidence that these meetings have provided the context for cross fertilization and mutual support across country governments – particularly important in contexts in which National Gender Machineries are often very small departments in small island governments with a single or few staff. Stakeholders report that these meetings have helped to mitigate some of the isolation they experience as gender specialists in small island states, and that the networking opportunities have facilitated new ways of working together.

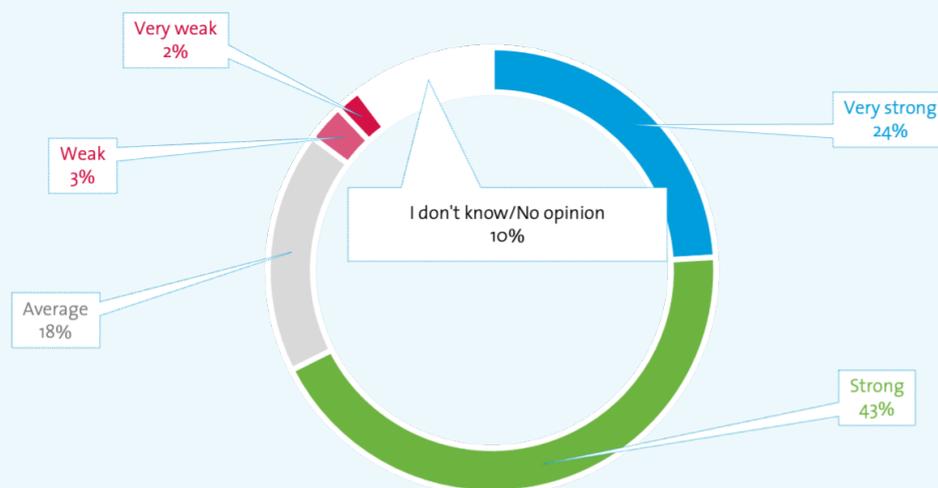
Interviews revealed some examples of the knowledge exchange developed through these meetings having specific impact on country level developments and even of inter-country support on specific issues being developed bilaterally because of these meetings. More specifically, knowledge about regional processes such as the Caribbean Development Bank's Gender Equality Policies or sexual harassment legislation has helped other countries apply these principles or plan how to make advances in their own countries. In some cases, this has been supported through specific relationships, such as between Jamaica and Bahamas on the development of a sexual harassment bill.

**FINDING 7.**

**The Caribbean MCO has delivered catalytic results related to the production of relevant data and statistics in a short period of time. These results would likely have more impact if followed up with capacity building on how to analyse data and advocate for its use.**

In 2018, the Caribbean MCO launched the first ever violence against women prevalence surveys in the Caribbean, providing the region with concrete comparable data – both quantitative and qualitative – on a wide range of issues surrounding GBV in the region. The production and publication of these surveys consolidated partnerships between important donors in the region, namely the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, as well as the working relationship between UN Women and National Statistical Offices.

Significantly in both instances, the respective Governments were significantly invested in taking ownership of the report and committing to utilize the data to develop evidence-based responses. The effectiveness of the work undertaken in this area has been confirmed also by the survey results in which 67 percent of respondents rated the results of this work as either “strong” or “very strong”. This was markedly higher than other thematic areas and accordingly showed a very strong perceived value on average among partners.

**Figure 10. Stakeholder feedback on UN Women Caribbean MCO results achieved in data and statistics thematic area<sup>44</sup>**

Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=108)

Based on the successful experience with the prevalence studies, some stakeholders from governments and regional organizations in the region expressed interest in the Caribbean MCO's support to address other important data gaps, for instance related to gender equality and climate change and intersectional data capturing marginalized and vulnerable groups. Several key related results are outlined in the following table in this thematic area.

The growing area of effective work in prevalence surveys required more dedicated capacity and statistical expertise to meet demands and oversee quality assurance. A lack of technical, human resources and financial capacity among National Statistics Offices to produce data tables was noted during stakeholder interviews. The Caribbean MCO provided valuable support in building out these capacities among countries that undertook the prevalence surveys, but some National Gender Machineries and statistics offices noted they would have liked more support for data analysis to be able to present to policy makers in a meaningful way.

The Caribbean MCO has already identified data and statistical analysis expertise as an area of capacity need for the office and is addressing it through human resources. In addition, the office has hired a consultancy team to review all the prevalence datasets in response to an issue around data anonymization in SIDS contexts following feedback from ECLAC. ECLAC also noted that the Caribbean MCO was quite effective in working with national governments and stakeholders, especially on surveys, particularly relative to the IDB who led on 2 of the 5 prevalence surveys but relied heavily on external consultants and were thus less directly engaged with national counterparts. The Caribbean MCO will also be undertaking training on this topic through the Spotlight Initiative. Another emerging issue in this theme include the need for a monitoring and evaluation plan that captures long-term impact and sustainable results along with the strengthening of an integrated approach by, for example, more explicitly linking the data and statistics work with gender-responsive budgeting and governance programming.

<sup>44</sup> Survey question: "To the best of your knowledge, how would you rate the results achieved by the Caribbean MCO in the following areas?"

**Table 7. Selected results in data and statistics work of MCO Caribbean by area/programme**

Focus Area / programme	INDICATIVE RESULTS
<b>Prevalence study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical assistance, coordination and/or guidance to 5 national prevalence surveys on GBV (led Jamaica, Grenada and Guyana; supported Suriname and T&amp;T)</li> </ul>
<b>Carisecure Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Guyana, a toolkit, which includes indicators and protocols for the establishment of a consistent and standardized approach to data collection, measurement, disaggregation and analysis across crime and security agencies was fully endorsed by the Cabinet and preparations have been completed for the piloting of the data collection forms at a selected number of police stations.</li> <li>• In collaboration with UN Women, IDB, USAID, Bureau of Statistics and University of Guyana, a survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Guyana has been completed and the final report has been presented. This survey provides baseline data on the prevalence of violence among women locally and makes available for the first time in Guyana, comprehensive data to inform targeted violence prevention and mitigation strategies for women.</li> </ul>
<b>CARICOM Gender Equality Indicators (GEI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four countries, Dominica, Jamaica, Grenada and Suriname, have agreed to pilot the GEI. In 2016, Dominica, with support from UN Women produced its first ever compendium of gender equality indicators which include those in the GEI.</li> <li>• Through the application of GEI, UN Women has been able to provide three CARICOM states, Dominica, Grenada and Jamaica, with the tools to overcome their data deficit and better prepare them to be able to use the data in their broader development planning and reporting.</li> <li>• The Caribbean MCO provided technical training to the National Statistics Offices and financial resources so that they could implement the GEI and develop reporting. The office addressed the principle of leaving No One Behind by first assisting member states in amassing the skills to identify which women have been left behind.</li> </ul>
<b>Women's economic empowerment area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Analysis of Labour Force Data and Policy Frameworks conducted in 6 countries (Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad &amp; Tobago)</li> <li>• In 2017, the Caribbean MCO provided mobile handheld devices to the partners participating in the social protection programme in Antigua and Barbuda to collect data relevant to social protection. The office not only sourced the tablets but also provided the necessary training for the respondents.</li> </ul>

Source: Evaluation team based on document review

**FINDING 8.**

**The Caribbean MCO achieved tangible results for women’s economic empowerment, including for marginalized groups. However, resource constraints weakened the continuity of some promising work and translated into a lost opportunity to enhance results achieved, increase sustainability, and maintain focus on marginalized groups.**

The Caribbean MCO’s work on Women’s Economic Empowerment has shifted over the years in terms of priority areas but focused on support to specific groups of women (domestic workers, women entrepreneurs, women farmers) as well as broader issues such as engaging the private sector, social protection and the care economy. The 2018-21 Strategic Note intended to address Women’s Economic Empowerment through a focus on women entrepreneurs and women farmers. This was partly taken up from 2018, as the focus turned to the private sector and women entrepreneurs as had also been earlier envisaged. The Win-Win regional programme, which included Jamaica in its implementing countries, enabled this focus as it began implementation.

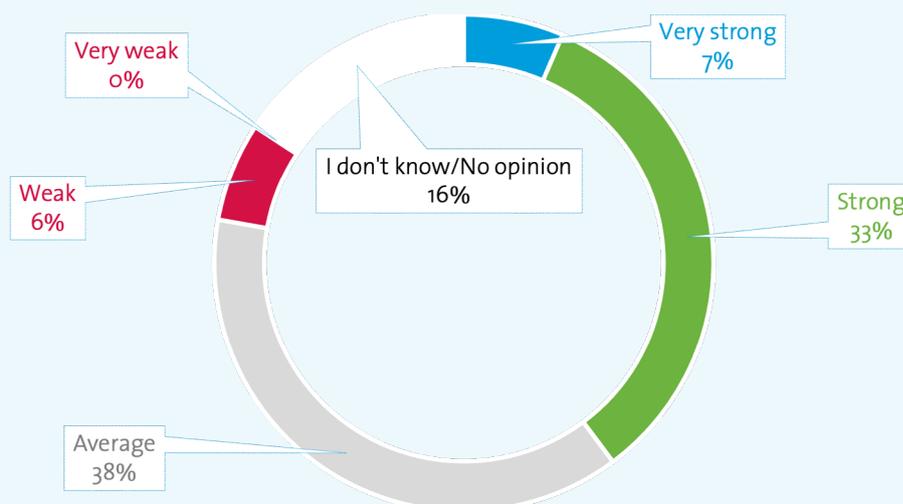
In addition to these expected focus areas, and increasingly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and building on the earlier work on social protection, progress has been made in some countries in drawing attention to unpaid care work (see below table). This has included a focus on gathering data on unpaid work Jamaica, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago via the data/statistics work on GEI and Multidimensional Poverty Indicators – a focus which has been driven not only by an objective to bring forward evidence in general, but also specifically to combat a notion widely held in the region that women in the Caribbean are better educated than men and have done well in terms of [public sector] jobs, so do not need additional targeting. Results therefore reflect a mixture of achievements, including those in which the Caribbean MCO played a strong or lead part, alongside those in which partner agencies took a lead role.

**Table 8. Selected results in women’s economic empowerment of MCO Caribbean by area/programme**

Focus Area / programme	INDICATIVE RESULTS
<b>Domestic Workers (2013-16) (with ILO)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on advocacy around ILO convention 189 on Domestic Workers in Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, and Jamaica. (Joint)</li> <li>• Jamaica ratified the convention in 2016. (Joint)</li> <li>• Barbados prepared a code of practice for employers of domestic workers; (joint)</li> <li>• Baseline studies on domestic workers produced in three countries (UN Women lead)</li> </ul>
<b>Social protection: (with UNICEF) Enhancing Equity 2013-16 Female Headed Households in Eastern Caribbean (2014-15) Gender and Child Responsive Social Protection (2017)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative and policy reform in Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, and St Lucia 2014;</li> <li>• GRB review around social protection, St Lucia;</li> <li>• Influencing of the Social Protection Bill in Antigua and Barbuda;</li> <li>• Commitment from the CDB to abandon sex-differentiated scales for poverty estimates;</li> <li>• technical working group on Social Protection in OECS established</li> </ul>
<b>Women entrepreneurs/ private sector: Win Win (2018-20)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the capacity of NWMs to convene private sector and other partners;</li> <li>• 39 private sector organisations in Jamaica signed up to Women’s Empowerment Principles.</li> </ul>
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress in gathering data on unpaid work Jamaica, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago via the data/statistics work on GEI and Multidimensional Poverty Indicators.</li> <li>• Grenada [and three further Eastern Caribbean countries] is piloting a survey to measure unpaid care work as a component of the Labour Force Survey and national census (2021).</li> <li>• Revitalizing the Share the Care campaign in the context of COVID-19.</li> </ul>

Source: Evaluation team based on document review

**Figure 11. Stakeholder feedback on UN Women Caribbean MCO results achieved in women's economic empowerment thematic area<sup>45</sup>**



Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=108)

Survey respondents perceived the Women's Economic Empowerment work to be a priority area by and large effective: 40 per cent of stakeholders surveyed rated Women's Economic Empowerment results as very strong or strong, 38 per cent average and 6 per cent rating these results as weak. Most (51 per cent) also saw these results as sustainable.

Given the perceived priority and relevance of the Women's Economic Empowerment area to both internal and external stakeholders, there was scope for further prioritization. The thematic area was highly relevant according to survey respondents (80 per cent strongly agreed or agreed), and a regional thematic evaluation found that UN Women interventions related to decent work and social protection – linked to domestic workers, rural women, and migrants – were highly relevant to the regional context and needs of women in situations of vulnerability.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, there was some consensus that Women's Economic Empowerment should be a priority for the Caribbean MCO based on survey respondents. This relevance and perceived priority were nonetheless not reflected by budget allocations, which placed the thematic area in the 3rd or 4th position across the last two Strategic Notes.

Note however that work in the Women's Economic Empowerment thematic area was also integrated into other areas due to decreased allocations over the period, including women living with HIV; female headship and childcare; and notably gendered labour segregation in work on data and statistics in the development of multi-dimensional poverty indicators in Jamaica, Guyana, and St Lucia. While this strengthened an overall integrated and efficient approach to the portfolio, it presented a challenge in terms of monitoring and collating specific results in this thematic area.

First, these activities were not primarily conceived of as implemented under Women's Economic Empowerment and therefore were not consistently seen as accruing to this area of work; second, where work has been implemented with core funds, an additional layer of monitoring, reporting and evaluation required for accountability to donors of non-core funds is missing. Developing a more consistent and strategic approach to monitoring the strands of an integrated portfolio will be important going forwards. Thus, where integrated approaches are taken to thematic areas, for efficiency or other reasons, particular care is needed to document and monitor the full range of types of results.

In the earlier period, work on domestic workers and social protection had clear and in-built focus on groups in situations of vulnerability. This included attention to migrant domestic workers in research conducted in Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana, and an explicit focus on female headed households, and especially those with children, as social categories included in advocacy for social protection policy eligibility criteria. More recently, the Win-Win project occupied the central position in the portfolio but had a less prominent focus on marginalized groups. However, where it was clearly possible to achieve this focus, it has made efforts to do so. For example, in the output concerned with women's entrepreneurship, there has been a focus on building recognition and a structure supporting rural women entrepreneurs in coffee production in Jamaica.

The context for work on Women's Economic Empowerment has seen a shift due to the COVID pandemic, particularly on social protection and unpaid care work, and related work on data and statistics work is an emerging area of relevance which can support a clear focus on the marginalized groups identified through it.

<sup>45</sup> Survey question: "To the best of your knowledge, how would you rate the results achieved by the Caribbean MCO in the following areas?"

<sup>46</sup> Regional Thematic Evaluation, UN Women's Economic Empowerment, 2020.

## FINDING 9

**UN Women’s work towards women’s leadership and governance was appreciated by stakeholders with evidence suggesting results achieved were not only valued but also sustainable. Stakeholder demand for broader engagement in this area remains strong, particularly in relation to gender-responsive budgeting, political participation, and social protection, although the Caribbean MCO has reduced focus on in this area more recently.**

In the Women’s Leadership and Governance area, the Caribbean MCO supported clear achievements in establishing national plans at country level for which the office provided technical and in some cases financial support, alongside general capacity building, especially for the National Gender Machineryes in countries where plans were being developed (see below table). This has been supported by focused capacity building on gender-responsive budgeting among parliamentarians and other stakeholders.

Women’s political participation has been the main focus of the thematic work, particularly in the earlier period, including through capacity building support, working with political parties, and parliamentary support. Direct support to enhance political participation has been reduced more recently, with a decision prior to the 2018-21 Strategic Note to shift this work to the normative area due to funding constraints partly driven by competition for funding in this area from CSOs and regional organisations. In addition, there was a perception that the work in women’s political participation did not seem to consistently produce results – although it is worth noting that since potential results of this work were not explicitly tracked by monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes, this decision was based on perceptions.

Instead, and alongside the shift to align this with normative work, the focus moved towards support for parliamentarians to deliver on normative commitments such as CEDAW and SDGs and Beijing PFA.

Both these workstreams have shown tangible results to which the Caribbean MCO has made contributions through technical support and capacity building (mainly for governance work), direct training (for GRB and women’s leadership work), and advocacy for women’s leadership. The Caribbean MCO also supported the establishment and strengthening of CiWIL (Caribbean Women in Leadership), which is an NGO established to monitor, strengthen, and increase women’s political participation and leadership in the region through advocacy, networking, research and capacity building initiatives, which was a partner in associated results.

For the women’s leadership work, there is emerging evidence of impact level, sustainable results in the form of women in political leadership positions who were trained by the office at least six years ago. CiWIL has to some extent continued this type of support in women’s leadership, so it is likely that these achievements were connected to the inputs made previously by office.

Later work in both gender-responsive planning and budgeting has had a less concentrated nature. In Anguilla, the development of a National Gender Policy is currently beginning to be undertaken, and the Spotlight programmes for Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago include a focus on implementing the National Action Plans on Gender-based Violence. In 2018, a gender-responsive budgeting guide was developed for parliamentarians which included Caribbean-specific post-disaster case studies. The work in this area in particular appears to have a solid reputation and continues to attract requests for deeper work, such as from Guyana and from ParlAmericans for Caribbean members. Gender-responsive budgeting training in Trinidad and Tobago has attracted positive feedback; and materials developed for this are a sustainable resource. It is possible that more specific support related to budgeting could be explored as a strategic follow-up action to specific normative work.

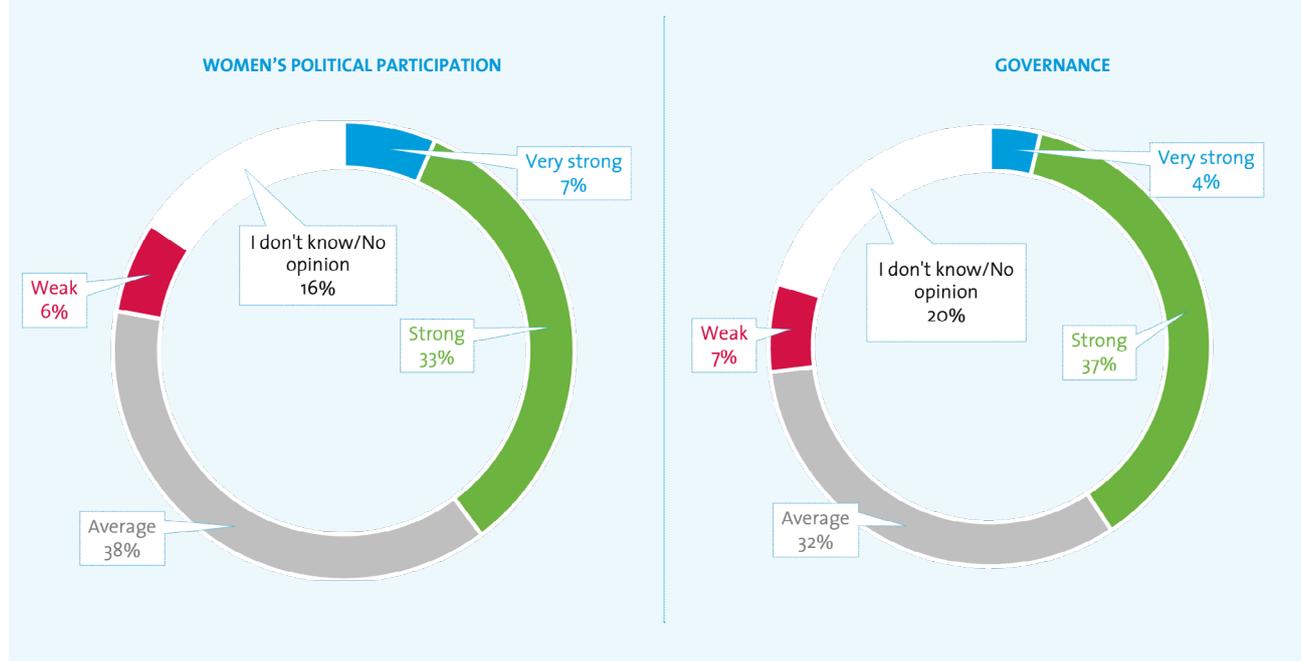
Nevertheless, the decline in activity in governance and gender-responsive budgeting aligns with survey perceptions of governance work as being a relatively lower priority, with 72 per cent of respondents ranking it at priority 5 or below. This lower ranking is also consistent with the situation that in general governance and national planning and particularly the outcomes or impact of gender-responsive budgeting work in particular has not been well tracked beyond some reference in annual reports. On average, survey respondents also valued the office’s performance in these areas lower (see figure below). However, results in women’s leadership and governance were not routinely tracked, which hampered assessment and communication. This absence was partly due to a relative monitoring, reporting and evaluation gap for core funded activities, which do not attract the additional layer of monitoring and reporting generally required by donors of non-core funds on a project basis (see related discussion in the efficiency section).

**Table 9. Selected results in women’s leadership and governance of MCO Caribbean by area/programme**

Focus area / Programme	INDICATIVE RESULTS
<b>Governance and national planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan developed in Grenada 2014</li> <li>• National Action Plan on GBV established in Jamaica (2014)</li> <li>• National Gender Action Plan developed in Trinidad and Tobago 2015</li> <li>• National Social Protection Strategy and Plan of Action established in St Kitts and Nevis 2013 – 2017</li> <li>• Training of about 50 Gender Focal Points for gender mainstreaming – Anguilla.</li> </ul>
<b>GRB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Protection Expenditure Review (SPER) and Social Budget Analysis conducted in three countries (with UNICEF in joint programme on Social Protection Floor)</li> <li>• GRB and Gender Aware Beneficiary Assessment (GABA) of the Public Assistance Programme – St Lucia – 2016 call for gender sensitivity in Budget Call circular.</li> <li>• GRB workshop and materials developed Trinidad and Tobago, with potential for loselyationy to other countries.</li> <li>• GRB in Parliamentary gender seminars 2016 and manual created for GRB for Parliamentarians.</li> </ul>
<b>WPP Women In Politics (WIP) The Way Out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jamaica</b> 51 per cent Coalition established to build women as political constituency.</li> <li>• This in turn resulted in joint party steering committee on women’s leadership in <b>Jamaica</b></li> <li>• Support to contribute to implementation of National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) Jamaica through The Way Out (2010-13) focus on women’s political and economic empowerment.</li> <li>• Support to establishment of CiWIL (Caribbean Women In Leadership) as strategy for sustainability of leadership work.</li> <li>• <b>Belize</b> – 1 of 2 women in cabinet is graduate of WPP training; 2 women mayors in 2015 were graduates; first 3 women in village councils were women.</li> <li>• <b>Dominica</b> – 2 of 3 women elected 2014 were MCO training graduates</li> <li>• <b>Anguilla</b> – one of two permanent secretaries trained as part of 2016 training is now Permanent Secretary of Gender Affairs.</li> <li>• Jamaica – 36 women elected in 2020 elections.</li> </ul>

Source: Evaluation team based on document review

**Stakeholder feedback on UN Women Caribbean MCO results achieved in governance and women’s political participation thematic areas<sup>47</sup>**



Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel(n=108)

<sup>47</sup> Survey question: “To the best of your knowledge, how would you rate the results achieved by the Caribbean MCO in the following areas?”

**FINDING 10.****UN Women’s comparative advantage across the Caribbean MCO geographic area was evident in supporting disaster risk reduction in the Caribbean as well as broader climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, rather than in direct humanitarian action or response.**

The Caribbean region is acknowledged to be one of the most vulnerable globally to the effects of climate change, given it is mainly comprised of SIDS. When a major disaster affects the region, all United Nations agencies are called on to provide support, including UN Women. The strong commitment to supporting country needs, the importance of advocating for a gender-responsive response and recovery, and the reputational risk of not engaging with support has meant that the Caribbean MCO had to identify ways to contribute even when capacity for delivering humanitarian action and response was limited in comparison to other United Nations agencies with well-developed humanitarian systems. Over the period under review, the evaluation found that the Caribbean MCO approach evolved based on lessons learned from its practical experience to better define its comparative advantage and value added within this space.

The increasing vulnerability of the region to climate-related natural disaster and the growing understanding of the importance of addressing the humanitarian-development-peace have also made this work more central to the Caribbean MCO’s work programme.<sup>48</sup>

The Caribbean MCO direct engagement in Humanitarian Action/Disaster Risk Reduction under its earlier strategic frameworks was undertaken in a more ad hoc manner. The work in this thematic area shifted from providing more ad hoc support in times of crises, to seeking opportunities to have a more strategic and sustainable approach that focused on DRR and the normative space. The Caribbean MCO has had limited but illustrative experience in emergency/disaster response and post-disaster recovery following Hurricane Irma and Maria in 2017. With the pressure for all agencies in the United Nations system to be seen as contributing when there is a crisis in the region, UN Women pursued small interventions that have had varied levels of success.

**Table 10. Selected results in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change of MCO Caribbean by area/programme**

Focus area / Programme	INDICATIVE RESULTS
<b>Women farmers</b>	A rapid assessment of small holder women farmers in Dominica was conducted that found that the damage to women’s farms in the area was catastrophic with 76 per cent reporting major losses with crops, equipment, tools and infrastructure destroyed. The Caribbean MCO then worked with the Bureau of Gender Affairs to provide seeds, farm tools, and equipment to at least 50 women farmers who were affected at the start of the 2018 planting season. While the intervention was limited due to resources available, UN Women has followed up in the form of support for a seed bank that would build resilience in future disasters.
<b>Disaster response</b>	In partnership with government departments and international agencies (e.g., UNICEF, IOM, PAHO/WHO and UNFPA), UN Women supported the mapping of social services, identifying critical gaps, duplication and fragmentation in disaster response mechanisms. This assessment relayed into the design, configuration and roll out of the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), using a community-based approach. This gender-sensitive approach integrated triage, case management and throughput, as well as capacity building for the development and delivery of therapeutic services to the affected populations and those affected by GBV. The project developed six public service announcements (PSAs) focused on GBV, four PSAs focusing on MHPSS and a theatrical production to address post-disaster mental trauma staged in Antigua and Barbuda and the Turks and Caicos.

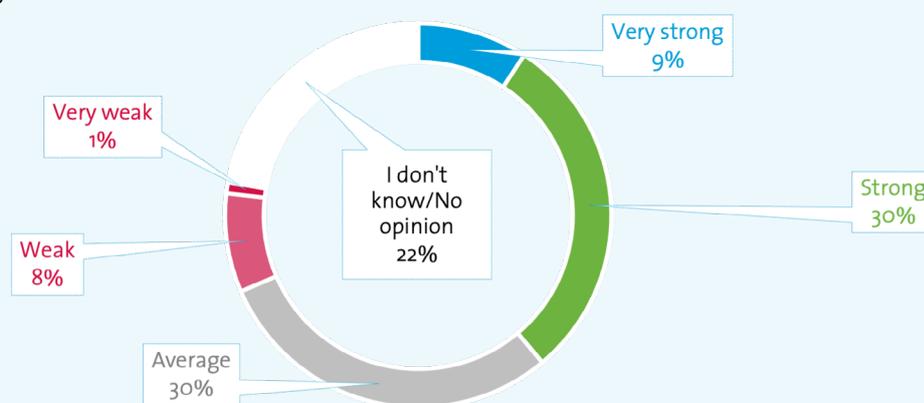
Source: Evaluation team based on document review

<sup>48</sup> Hurricane Irma and Maria in 2017; (<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-what-does-it-mean-multi-mandated-organizations>)

Experience with global appeals for disaster relief funding demonstrated that UN Women corporate internal processes were fit for purpose to enable the quick funding required to support timely immediate action requested by stakeholders. The experience of the hurricane Irma response demonstrated that the Caribbean MCO was more effective in conducting needs assessments and gathering data on women's needs and priorities, while it struggled sometimes to meet the immediate needs it had identified. For example, a little over US \$3K was raised through a global appeal to purchase and distribute dignity and hygiene kits for displaced women in Antigua and Barbuda and Turks and Caicos.

The limited funds raised still took three months to be posted and received by the Caribbean MCO, which meant that the kits did not arrive at the time of most need and were partly used for ongoing support to shelters, rather than for immediate humanitarian assistance as was the intent. Psychosocial support services were also delayed. The Caribbean MCO did provide technical support to the National Gender Machinery in one country geared towards longer-term humanitarian and development programming, that would include psycho-social support and strengthening of referral pathways. Indeed, only 39 per cent of survey respondents strongly agreed/agreed that this work achieved the results, as shown in the figure below, and compared to other thematic areas a higher proportion found average or weaker performance.

**Figure 13. Stakeholder feedback on UN Women Caribbean MCO results achieved in humanitarian action / disaster risk reduction / climate<sup>49</sup>**



Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=108)

With this understanding, there was an implicit shift to focus on resilience and mitigation approach where it could bring its normative and programming experience to greater benefit. This is reflected with the inclusion of Disaster Risk Reduction for the first time as a specific outcome area in the Caribbean MCO's Strategic Note (2018-2021),<sup>50</sup> with the work mainly approached through strengthening normative frameworks and institutional systems for preparedness and resilience to support national and regional actors to address future crises. Building on the previous work, three joint programmes are currently being implemented that have brought more funding and stronger partnerships to build on the previous work:

- Beginning in 2018, the Caribbean MCO collaborated with IISD and UNDP to support governments in implementing aspects of the Sendai Framework through capacity building initiatives, specifically around gender responsive National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions.
- The Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean (EnGenDER), in partnership with UNDP and CDEMA, which provides technical support and capacity development in nine countries for developing policies, plans and programmes. It builds on some of the normative work done (e.g., National Adaptation Plan in Jamaica) and has also made adaptations to respond to COVID-19 response needs.
- Building Effective Resilience for Human Security: Gender equality and Women's Empowerment in Strengthened Agriculture (including fisheries) Sector which places the well-being and livelihoods of women farmers and women in fisheries within the context of human security in the face of climate change.

<sup>49</sup> Survey question: "To the best of your knowledge, how would you rate the results achieved by the Caribbean MCO in the following areas?"

<sup>50</sup> Outcome 4.1: Caribbean women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable individual and community resilience and benefit equally from the development of gender responsive disaster risk reduction policies and disaster preparedness and responses. (MCO Strategic Plan 2018-2021)

**FINDING 11.****UN Women's proactive and multi-dimensional support responding to COVID-19 in the Caribbean region contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment issues receiving a higher profile within overall response efforts.**

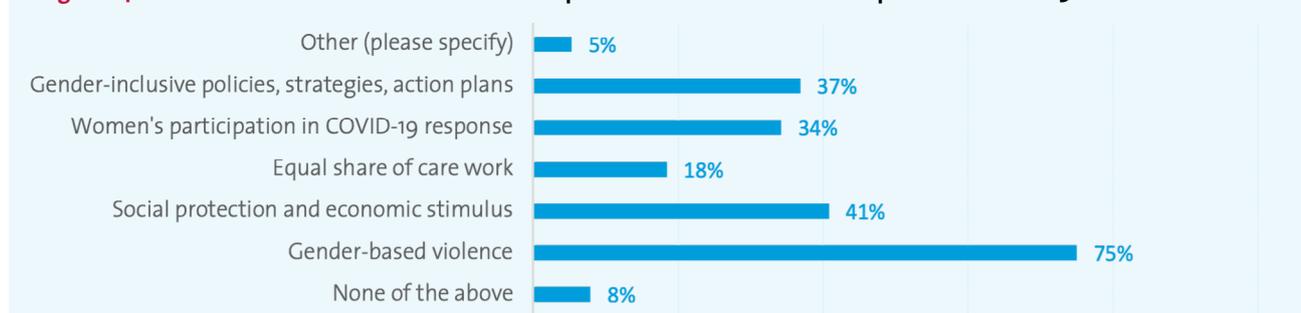
The Caribbean MCO responded quickly to provide relevant information and services to its national and regional partners in coordination with overall United Nations system response efforts in the region. External partnerships were a key ingredient in the Caribbean MCO's response efforts, and staff indicated significant engagement with other United Nations agencies in the region on response efforts. Stakeholders indicated that the Caribbean MCO's engagements positively influenced the prioritization of gender equality and women's empowerment issues within both national and United Nations system response efforts. 65 per cent of respondents reported to have had either significant engagement or some engagement with the Caribbean MCO in relation to COVID-19 response.<sup>51</sup> Interview and qualitative survey data praised the office's response to COVID-19 in the region particularly noting their ability to respond quickly and proactively to the emerging crises and advocate for a recognition of the gendered effects of the pandemic (e.g., increase in GBV, rising social protection needs, etc.) within COVID-19 response efforts. This was understood as a useful contribution to mitigating the extent of negative outcomes and enabled by key support from ACRO and Headquarters.<sup>52</sup>

A significantly higher proportion of survey respondents (75 per cent) found the Caribbean MCO's engagement on GBV issues to be the most relevant area of support on COVID-19 response, as indicated in the below figure. The office advocated and raised awareness around the increased risk of GBV during the pandemic and sought to address country needs. This included a recognition of the layered crises of COVID-19 and the hurricane season exacerbating GBV risk at home and in shelters.

Other relevant work took place across thematic areas including governance, including ensuring that gender was embedded in COVID-19 response policies. In the Women's Economic Empowerment areas, the office advocated for understanding the evolving social protection needs and the growing care burden under the pandemic, revitalizing the Share the Care campaign. Some illustrative results across various areas included:

- Supporting GBV shelters in the region (e.g., Turks and Caicos, Trinidad and Tobago) with donation of Personal Protective Equipment such as masks, as well as communications and psychosocial assistance.
- Catalyzing the establishment of a domestic violence hotline in St. Vincent's and the Grenadines, which was in the pipeline, but was then understood as a more urgent priority due to the pandemic context.
- Support for a consultancy to research specific impacts of the pandemic in Trinidad and Tobago for women and girls.
- Pivoting to support women farmers in Dominica with their immediate need to access new market opportunities for crops when the pandemic affected access to normal markets, including working with young women entrepreneurs to help them engage with online platforms to increase their digital sales.
- Reprogramming funding from the EnGender programme addressing DRR to address the COVID-19 response in St. Lucia.
- A revitalization of the Share the Care campaign aiming to address to the care burden.

**Figure 14. Stakeholder feedback on relevance of topics in the Caribbean MCO response to COVID-19\***



Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=86)

\* The "other" mainly related predominantly to evidence generation on COVID-19 impacts on women and girls

<sup>51</sup> Evaluation survey results based on 86 responses: UN Women staff (15), UN agencies (15), Other stakeholders (56).

<sup>52</sup> For example, the office was guided by talking points developed by HQ and they were able to utilize regional publications to bring issues forward and propose solutions, e.g., the Latin America and the Caribbean Rapid Gender Analysis, the State of Women & COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The office's overall communications and knowledge approach equally facilitated its timely response to COVID-19. Webinars and virtual meetings with National Gender Machineries was cited as an important forum for sharing and exchanging information on COVID-19 response, including knowledge products and tools. Additionally, the office improved its use of digital platforms and developed a Digital Communication Campaign Strategy in coordination with National Gender Machineries to improve outreach given COVID-19 restrictions and impacts.

The office also developed and disseminated at least five COVID-relevant publications, such as research products, guidance, and tools. These were rated among the most relevant across all publications produced by the Caribbean MCO despite the relatively compressed time-frame in which they were produced and disseminated. Other stakeholders noted that the office's data and statistics work was a key input to joint publications such as the Human and Economic Impact Assessments (HEAT) of COVID-19 impacts for 8 countries in the Eastern Caribbean led by UNDP, included with other publications in the below table.

**Table 11. Stakeholder feedback on usefulness of key publications**

COVID-19-related publications	% responding most useful*
Guidance For GBV Shelters in the Context of COVID-19	22%
COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean: How to Incorporate Women and Gender Equality in the Management of the Crisis Response	18%
COVID-19 and Implications for Inclusive Economic Empowerment in CARICOM: Policy and Programme Considerations	15%
Gender-Transformative Hurricane Resilience During the COVID-19 Crisis	11%
COVID-19 and Working Parents – An Action Brief	9%
Other <sup>53</sup>	7%

Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=86 responses)  
\*19 per cent of stakeholders did not find any of the COVID-19 publications useful.

The Caribbean MCO also proactively addressed the specific needs of vulnerable and/or marginalized populations during COVID-19 through awareness raising. For example, *COVID-19 and Implications for Inclusive Economic Empowerment in CARICOM: Policy and Programme Considerations* specifically addressed the social protection needs of elderly women, women living with disabilities, women living with intimate partner violence. Another publication was specifically targeted to working parents, identified as a vulnerable population within the crises.

Stakeholders indicated that there was more scope for addressing the needs of vulnerable populations such as LGBTQI+ populations who were reported to suffer when having to social distance or cohabitate with people who were not accepting of their gender identify; some also indicated the need for more support for migrant women subject to GBV to enable them to access hotlines during COVID-19. Overall, some stakeholders indicated that the Caribbean MCO could strengthen its engagement with CSOs as part of the COVID-19 response to connect more directly with women impacted by the pandemic.

<sup>53</sup> Including: "Brief on violence against women and girl's data collection during COVID-19"; "Brief on essential services provision for survivors of violence against women and girls"; "Prevalence Survey and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Eastern Caribbean Countries"

**FINDING 12.****UN Women has increasingly used advocacy as a pillar of its strategy in the region by leveraging innovative approaches and its strong convening power, most notably in the areas of Elimination of Violence against Women and Women's Economic Empowerment.**

During the period under review, the Caribbean MCO progressively enhanced its advocacy strategy in the region more generally through three key pathways: (a) specific advocacy-focused projects such as HeforShe campaign and Social Mobilization to End GBV; (b) implementation strategies in other projects such as the Win-Win and JURIST projects; and (c) financial support to other stakeholder advocacy activities such as marches and campaigns. Advocacy approaches evolved from the first strategic framework period (2011-13) targeting capacity building for advocates related mostly to HIV prevention, and then was mainstreamed more broadly with the introduction of innovative approaches such as “theatre in education” methodologies, informal dialogues in non-traditional spaces like barbershops, hair salons, and community cultural events and festivals, especially in the case of engagement with grassroots organizations and rights holders. The office also increased the utilization of its strong convening power for advocacy purposes over time, which was effectively consolidated by senior management.

In terms of thematic areas, the majority of advocacy efforts was directed to the Elimination of Violence against Women programming, especially on raising awareness on GBV and on behaviour change. The Caribbean MCO put great effort into enhancing the role of UN Women as the one promoting women's rights and a free from violence society, according to its mandate. Two main advocacy projects were implemented in the area: HeforShe (2016) campaign and Social Mobilization to end GBV (2014-2018). Both projects aimed at changing social norms and behaviours in order to promote a different vision of gender roles in society. In the context of HeforShe, a Caribbean specific Masculinities and Preventing Violence against Women and Girls Advocates Training module was developed, and 27 persons were invited to serve as Gender Advocates, including 10 men. Additionally, a social media campaign was developed for HeforShe in the Caribbean, involving male persons of interest and artists in the region.

The strategy of engaging male artists appeared to promote increasing interest in advocating for gender equality. In Grenada, artist Roger Williams, who participated in the UN Women training for Artists Advocates, requested to be included as Gender Advocate in the Social Mobilization to end GBV project, supported by UN Women and implemented by the Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic (LACC). In Jamaica Owen Blakka Ellis has highlighted HeforShe in his work and in his play “He Said She Said”.

In addition, WeChange, who attended the HeforShe training, requested to partner with UN Women for a multi-media interactive International Women's Day event, which addressed some of the issues around gender and legacy raised during the training. Advocacy on Elimination of Violence against Women has continued within the Foundation program, under the form of raising awareness actions, and the JURIST project, in which advocacy tools have been developed and shared as dissemination outputs.

The other area in which the Caribbean MCO has undertaken advocacy actions is Women's Economic Empowerment. In the second strategic framework of the office, UN Women supported the strengthening of women's civil society policy dialogue capacity on social protection, by increasing awareness on gender and social protection and supporting advocacy efforts. In the context of the “Making Social protection gender responsive Eastern Caribbean” project, the office focused its advocacy efforts on two key goals: ensuring that adjustment-driven reform measures do not disproportionately affect women; and widening the boundaries of mainstream thinking by making women's needs visible. Building alliances, leveraging technical expertise and gaining access to key policy spaces were the strategies used to achieve these goals. Under the Win-Win program, awareness and action-oriented dialogue among critical stakeholders were created and a campaign to advocate and raise awareness for the prevention of sexual harassment was designed and implemented.

The Caribbean MCO has played an important role in financially supporting advocacy actions implemented by local partners, for instance during the 16 Days of Activism. Additional advocacy efforts were requested by interviewed CSOs based in part on the perception that the office had been working extensively with governmental partners and could therefore work as a bridge between the two stakeholder groups to increase attention on relevant issues. The Caribbean MCO has indeed enhanced its relationship with the National Gender Machinery through the monthly meetings; such relationships can be used for advocacy purposes and for connecting institutions with grassroots organizations, with the Caribbean MCO acting as mediator, while making sure to balance gender equality advocacy priorities of both rights holders and duty-bearers.

A more institutionalized approach may further increase the effectiveness of advocacy actions undertaken, including a clear advocacy strategy mapping planned and completed activities. Follow-up advocacy work after projects would promote effectiveness, sustainability and visibility of high-priority Caribbean MCO's intervention.

In this respect, there was also evidence suggesting UN Women's plans and contributions were not always known to a wider range of stakeholders. Stronger communication around its strategy and programme in user-friendly ways would make UN Women's work both more visible but could also play a role in strengthening its strategic focus, with external stakeholders more clearly linking UN Women to specific types of work at which they excel.

### FINDING 13.

## The Caribbean MCO has engaged in promoting positive masculinities to address social norms that lead to gender inequalities, but it has not yet found an effective way to confront the broader counter-narrative it faces in working towards women's empowerment.

Since 2011, the Caribbean MCO has been working to challenge the discriminatory social and cultural norms that have created unequal gender power relations by engaging with men and boys. This work has mainly been focused on promoting positive masculinities in the context of its broader work on GBV prevention through capacity building, advocacy and partnership/convening. The theory being that to change behaviours, one needs to begin with changing perceptions of what it means to be a "man" and replace toxic ideas of masculinity with positive ones. Social norms were also notably addressed as part of the strategy for addressing women's responsibilities for unpaid care work. The evaluation found nine different initiatives that specifically integrated social norms change work across seven countries since 2011.<sup>54</sup> These increasingly focused on working with youth, beginning with boys to university students, and specifically targeting those most socially alienated.

Overall, the office has been able to achieve some output level results in this area, and indications of outcome level results, with some key results outlined below:<sup>55</sup>

- **Partners for Peace/The Man-to-Man Programme**, (operating since 2011 and prior to that under UNIFEM since 2005) completed 26 programme cycles with 460 men participating from Grenada and Belize with the work replicated in other countries in the region (i.e., St. Lucia, BVI and Barbados).<sup>56</sup> Men who completed the 16-week programme reported an increase in their understanding of the gendered dynamics of violence and indicated they were willing to take greater responsibility for their actions;
- In 2012, the **Strengthening Prevention Approaches for Ending GBV** was piloted in Antigua with secondary school boys to support them to break

down barriers through active participation and self-reflection on long held beliefs about men and women and their origins;

- Work began with University of West Indies (Mona campus) in 2016 to create a rigorous institutional response to **safety and sexual health on and off campus** by confronting the ways in which society define masculinity and femininity, and the prevailing sexual norms impacting vulnerability to HIV. The Caribbean MCO conducted a situational analysis in 2017 with faculty, staff and students on the campus which led to the development of a Strategic Plan for Safety and Sexual Health.
- Through the **Foundations Programme**, a multifaceted toolkit was developed to build competencies among young people to engage in 'thinking through' concepts such as gender, gender hierarchies and constructions of masculinity, femininity, sexuality and its impact on relationships with themselves and others. Two Training of Trainers workshops were held in Trinidad and Tobago for 48 participants, including members of the Police Service, Ministries and Faith-Based Organizations to deliver the curriculum to youth between the ages of 14 – 24 years.
- Advocacy around social norms was undertaken both through "HeforShe" campaign and also through the engagement of famous male comedians and artists in the region, who acted as catalysts to **raise awareness** of different forms of masculinities to new audiences.<sup>57</sup> In 2020, there was also a collaboration with the Caribbean Male Action Network (CARIMAN) and Total180 (a male lifestyle brand) to launch a 4-part series to revive UN Women's "**Share the Care**" campaign which was reported to engage approximately 100 individuals to promote positive gender dynamics in the context of COVID-19.

<sup>54</sup> Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago

<sup>55</sup> Some of the programmes/projects have been discussed under other findings and therefore not repeated here.

<sup>56</sup> The number of beneficiaries of the training in St. Lucia, BVI, and Barbados is not available.

<sup>57</sup> The artist and trained gender advocate Roger Williams supported the engagement of Caribbean artists in the Social Mobilization Programme in Grenada (2014 – 2016). Comedian Dutty Berry created a one-minute video vlog about gender equality that was distributed to his audience of over 392,000 fans. Jamaican comedian, actor and writer Owen Blakka Ellis highlighted the HeforShe campaign in his work, through his play "He Said She Said".

Nevertheless, according to survey results, the Caribbean MCO's work to engage men and boys for social norm change was considered the least effective of all programmatic strategies: only 25 per cent of survey respondents considered this work to be effective; 10 per cent ineffective/very ineffective; and another 26 per cent felt they did not have enough information to have an opinion, indicating a potential visibility issue. Stakeholder interviews shed light on some of the challenges faced in conducting this work, including:

- A persistent **counter-narrative** that interprets efforts to empower women and girls, as either unnecessary given progress made in some areas (e.g., education) or as marginalizing men and boys. This makes engaging in work with men and boys a trickier prospect that can create reputational risks. For example, discussing progress made on women's empowerment in any area needs to be couched within a broader discourse or context of the structural inequalities that overwhelmingly still disempower women despite some positive indicators. Another example is UN Women's support for the initial creation of CARIMAN (including resources) which was met with criticism from some stakeholders who perceived that the group initially adopted this counter-narrative of male marginalization rather than focusing on tackling gender identities in line with UN Women's other work in this area (e.g., Foundations Programme).
- **Global campaigns that do not translate in context:** The office also received some backlash from partners in the region when attempting to promote the HeforShe campaign. Some stakeholders in the women's movement felt the campaign was being conducted within the context of patriarchy, rather than dismantling it. Others interpreted it as a campaign to support transgender and/or LGBTQI rights, rather than more broadly encouraging men to support gender equality. Although LGBTQI rights are considered marginalized in the region, there is stronger support in some countries which needs to translate into a tailored implementation and finding the right balance between women's rights overall and intersectional issues can be challenging.
- **Tracking results:** The timeline for social norm change to occur (and be observed) is long-term, making progress difficult to detect without robust and consistent monitoring over time. As one stakeholder observed, the Partnerships for Peace programme would have done well to have been accompanied by a longitudinal study that could have tracked real progress on social norms over time. However, even more follow-up on the impacts of the trainings would have supported a better understanding of the results.
- **Sustainability:** The lack of resources available to national partners and/or UN women to continue or maintain work such as the Partners for Peace Programme hinders the ability to maximize the potential of the work done to achieve more transformational long-term results that would have broader impact.

### 3.3. Efficiency

Have operational strategies been deployed effectively to achieve a balance between results and resources?

#### FINDING 14.

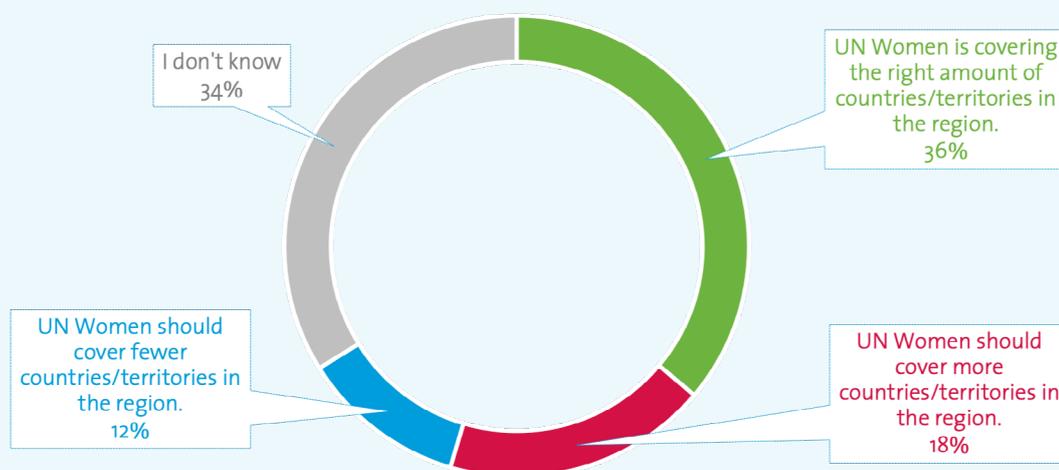
**Human and financial resource allocations in the Caribbean MCO have not always been sufficient or aligned with the stakeholder perceptions of the most relevant areas of work or effective strategies to achieve them. Recent increases in resources and changes to the organizational strategy provided an opportunity to bring the office more alignment towards sustainable operations.**

Annual reporting indicated that human resource levels were not sufficient to implement the Strategic Note 2018-2021 and meet the demands of stakeholders. Given ongoing United Nations reform process, UN Women's change management process, and resource limitations, the Caribbean MCO did not make needed changes to strengthen the office's team, as indicated in the Strategic Note itself. However, there was acknowledgement that personnel were under strain from the demands and the limited physical presence in only a small proportion of countries and territories served. Such concern was already shared in the 2012-2013 Strategic Note, when the strengthening of the sub-regional office was recommended to allow more timely response to governmental requests and increase support to partners. Changes were requested to enable:

- more programmatic coverage at country level to meet government demands through forthcoming Country Implementation Plans as both a resident and non-resident agency;
- engagement with joint programmes, which represents an opportunity to increase the office presence in countries;
- implementation of the coordination mandate; and
- availability of specialized expertise at the office level, or through ACRO and/or the UN Development Coordination Office Regional Platform.

Coordination demands on the office were heavy. The Caribbean MCO covered 22 countries and territories in the region, which required engagement with 6 separate UNCTs. When stakeholders were surveyed as to their perception of the relevance of this coverage, 36 per cent felt it was the right level of coverage, 18 per cent would like to see the office expand coverage to other countries/territories, and only 12 per cent were interested to see the office reduce the number of countries/territories it covered (see figure below). At the same time, relevance of the work was considered to be challenged when UN Women stretched itself too thin across many themes and the number of countries covered.

**Figure 15. Stakeholder feedback regarding the geographic coverage of 22 countries and territories in the region by UN Women Caribbean MCO<sup>58</sup>**



Source: Surveys of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=130)

<sup>58</sup> Survey question: "The UN Women Caribbean MCO covers 22 countries and territories in the region. In your opinion, given UN Reform in the region..."

There were also some concerns expressed by stakeholders that the office stretched itself too thin in terms of budget and staffing. This has been partly mitigated with new staffing and funds in 2020 that allowed for some expansion of presence, but the question remained if this was enough to provide adequate support to some countries given that some personnel positions are linked to projects such as Spotlight, and there is concern on how the office can sustain the work after the end of such projects.

The Caribbean MCO experienced significant growth in financial resources from 2011 to 2021 due to improved resource mobilization efforts, increasing attention paid to SIDS context due to the Caribbean MCO Review, and increasing number of joint initiatives under UN Reform efforts. However, this growth has not always been even or predictable. This has affected planning from a human resources perspective and the ability to ensure that staffing size and composition meets what is required for delivery and to increase relevance to stakeholder demands.

The designation of the office as a medium size office in the grow/invest/fund category under the change management process provided an opportunity to course correct for improved sustainability.

Indeed, external funding increased over the three strategic frameworks (see table below). During the 2011-2013 period, the Caribbean MCO received funding from 18 external sources (7 United Nations partners, 5 governments and 1 governmental agency, 2 foundations, 3 international organization) for a total delivery of about US\$ 1 million. From 2014 to 2017, 12 donors funded the work of the Caribbean MCO (4 United Nations partners, 4 governments, 2 foundations and 2 Caribbean organizations) for a total spending of US\$ 1.2 million. During the 2018-2021 Strategic Note period, there was an increase in non-core resources spent. As of 2019, 11 external donors had contributed to implementation of the Caribbean MCO's workplan: 3 UN agencies, 2 governments and 1 governmental agency, 2 Caribbean organizations, 1 international organization, 1 joint programme and 1 business confederation.

**Table 12. List of external donors by Strategic Note period by contribution in US\$, 2011-2021<sup>59</sup>**

Donor	2011-2013	2014-2017	2018-2021	TOTAL
Inter-American Development Bank	104,082			104,082
Caribbean Development Bank		5,185	122,753	127,938
UNDEF	152,990			152,990
Government of Grenada		41,211	150,699	191,910
UNOCHA		48,954	182,256	231,210
Government of Sweden		151,095	137,356	288,451
Caribbean Court of Justice		162,064	133,157	295,221
European Commission	358,611		30,003	388,614
UNDP	133,942	42,425	243,730	420,097
UNAIDS	4,951	495,951	299,656	800,558

Given the limited physical presence of the Caribbean MCO in the region, a significant level of the Caribbean MCO's resources were allocated to cover travel expenses, until the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Almost US\$ 3 million was spent on local and international travel (including daily subsistence allowance) from 2011 to 2020. With increasing demands for more country presence and support (e.g., for Spotlight Initiative countries) and attention to the environmental effects of travel, the office will need to find an optimum and efficient balance between presence and travel. Partial travel data allowed for some tracing of 68 percent of total travel expenses in 2019, which confirmed that 84 percent of that amount was for travel to the 21 countries served, with travel expenses highest for the following five countries: Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, and Grenada.<sup>60</sup>

A more reliable and comprehensive tracking of travel expenses by country in the region over time would enable cost-effectiveness analysis to be factored in as part of the equation for decision-making on efficient country presence. The shifting culture around acceptability of remote working and online meetings brought about by COVID-19 pandemic, more attention to the work/life balance of staff and environmental impact of travel provides opportunities for establishing more efficient and environmentally friendly alternatives to travel.

<sup>59</sup> Donors contributing less than \$100,000 filtered out, including: Gov of Australia; Gov of Norway; UNICEF; Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (Turkonfed); Australia DFAT; PAHO; Gov of Iceland; UNFPA; JP WHO/DFID; WHO; Commonwealth Secretariat; Gov of Canada; Gov of UK; CIDA; Maria Holder Memorial Fund; TIDES Foundation; Gov of Spain

<sup>60</sup> While the financial data could not be considered fully complete, of the \$191,429 (68 per cent of total expenditures for that year) possible to trace, 84 per cent was for travel to countries in the region.

### 3.4. Sustainability

Has there been a contribution to sustainable development results and/or has resilience improved?

#### FINDING 15.

**The UN Women Caribbean MCO consistently integrated a capacity development focus into its programming that was valued by stakeholders, but this often lacked an inclusive lens.**

UN Women implemented capacity development approaches – including capacity building, training, workshops, technical assistance, development of curriculum and south-south exchanges – as a major strategy that enhanced sustainability of its work. Implemented in 13 countries in the context of 20 different programmes/projects spanning all thematic areas, capacity development initiatives included a wide range of stakeholders from small women entrepreneurs to National Gender Machineries.

As evidenced by the integration of various capacity development modalities into programme areas (see table below), its cross-cutting nature translated into a significant component of the office's approach to embedding sustainability in its programme. The majority of the interviewed and surveyed stakeholders also indicated positive feedback in UN Women's capacity development work. In particular, capacity building was recognized as the most effective strategy to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the Caribbean; almost 70 per cent of survey respondents considered it as a very effective/effective strategy.

**Table 13. Capacity development approaches in key programme/thematic areas**

AREA	APPROACH
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Capacity development strongly featured in HIV/AIDS programming during the first two strategic frameworks (2011-2017) and priorities of the office with the aim to empower and promote leadership skills for women living with HIV and youth through the HIV Coalition project.
<b>Normative</b>	UN Women focused on technical assistance and capacity strengthening in the normative area focused on parliamentarians and National Gender Machineries. Such work supported national policies and action plans, CEDAW reporting, and gender national planning.
<b>Data and statistics</b>	The office provided technical training to the National Statistics Offices in the framework of the CARICOM Gender Equality Indicators implementation and reporting which strengthened national capacities to monitor gender and the SDGs.
<b>Women's Economic Empowerment</b>	Capacity building efforts focused mainly on strengthening social protection policies and building entrepreneurship skills through the Win-Win project.
<b>Elimination of Violence against Women</b>	Capacity development has been a consistent priority reflecting the urgency of the issue particularly on enhancing prevention of violence and social norms change such as in the Partnership for Peace programme, Foundations Programme, and the prevalence surveys.

Source: Evaluation team based on document review

Most technical support that UN Women has provided was mainly directed to National Gender Machineries in the normative area. Extensive work has been undertaken in this regard, including monthly meetings with National Gender Machineries to strengthen capacity to mobilize and prepare for Beijing reporting. Interviews with National Gender Machineries revealed that these meetings have been very fruitful and unanimously appreciated, leading to strengthening relationships with UN Women.

This was an important result considering that UN Women does not have a physical presence in the vast majority of countries and territories in the Caribbean and indicated that such consistent exchange could potentially compensate the lack of presence.

While some capacity development activities targeted specific marginalized groups – such as women living with HIV/AIDS – a specific strategy to include groups in situations of vulnerability as part of capacity development activities was not in place. A more intentional inclusive approach would align with United Nations priorities such as leaving no one behind and SDG implementation.<sup>61</sup> Limited evidence emerged regarding effective capacity development of CSOs. Despite the strong relationship of UN Women with grassroots organizations, interviews indicated that both the Caribbean MCO and relevant partners recognized that weaker CSO operational capacities posed a major challenge to sustainably implement gender equality programming in the region. In this respect, the lack of CSO project planning and implementation capacity posed limits on UN Women's intervention in the region.

CSO partners also indicated that programmatic collaboration with UN Women posed difficulty – including the capacity to administrate funds and navigate bureaucratic systems – and expressed a need for capacity building.

At the same time, many were not fully equipped to implement MCO Caribbean projects, including requisite instruments and preparation. This was particularly felt in the context of the Spotlight Initiative, given significant resources and consequent work and effort that the project brought. Such a structural barrier, which affected the ability of CSOs to mobilize resources, negatively impacted the effectiveness of their interventions and its sustainability. To overcome this, there is a need to better equip CSOs, enhancing their chance to collaborate with UN Women in a more fruitful manner. To this end, online learning initiatives might be an interesting and, according to data, well received options to provide trainings to a definitely wider audience, such as the one of CSOs compared to National Gender Machineryes. COVID-19 has opened the road to this type of learning which could be enhanced and improved in order to target high numbers of stakeholders with limited deployment of financial resources (i.e., travel and accommodation).

## FINDING 16.

### There was evidence of sustainable results, but strengthened approaches to monitoring, follow-up, and resource mobilization are required to enhance sustainability.

Most stakeholders considered that results of UN Women work would be sustainable to a significant or large extent, although there were distinct levels of performance across areas (see below figure).

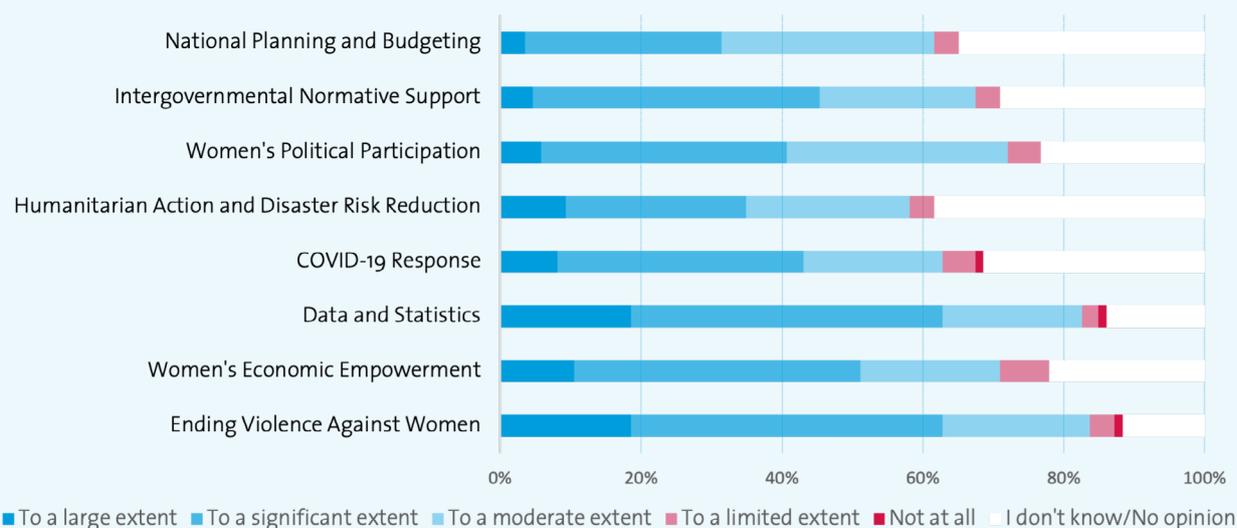
There was evidence of the Caribbean MCO's ability for adaptive management to increase the resilience and sustainability of results, but this would be greatly strengthened with improved monitoring and evaluation efforts.

In this respect, the tracking of medium and long-term results of capacity development work was undermined by the lack of a robust monitoring and evaluation strategy. Despite short term results appearing to be well reported, the office did not have an approach for tracking results at the higher level that could show outcomes and impact. In addition, tracking of human and financial resources specifically dedicated to capacity development activities was not systematic, given that usually these activities are implemented as part of broader programmes.

A better tracking of such resources would have allowed for a thorough cost-effectiveness analysis and ultimately support decision-making.

Accordingly, existing gaps in monitoring and evaluation have made a full accounting of the sustainability of results achieved more challenging for the office to report for communications, learning and decision-making. At the same time, there was an expectation of new demands to support SDG monitoring, show impact, and engage in assessing cross-cutting and complex issues. This suggested that a more sophisticated monitoring and evaluation approach would be needed for internal use and would also serve as an area for capacity-building of partners to enhance national ownership and sustainability.

<sup>61</sup> An inclusive approach or lens is defined here as applying a discrete set of criteria to the programming cycle - including project strategic planning and management dimensions - that allows for reaching a diverse set of stakeholder groups in UN Women's mandate, in particular those at risk of being left behind.

**Figure 16. Stakeholder feedback regarding the sustainability of results per area<sup>62</sup>**

Source: Survey of UN Women stakeholders and personnel (n=86)

Stakeholder feedback indicated that the office's work to strengthen institutions and build national ownership was key to enhancing its sustainability.

In fact, over 60 per cent of survey respondents believed that strengthened engagement with national partners – including governments and CSOs – was the best way to increase sustainability. This indicates that more country-specific work may be needed, to sustain results achieved from regional approaches. Partnerships with regional universities and research institutes is one possible avenue to pursue.

Over 70 per cent of stakeholders surveyed from all categories strongly agreed/agreed that environmental sustainability is an integral part of the concept of sustainability.

Programmatically, work on disaster risk reduction and mitigation, building resilience are also sustainability strategies that can prevent results or gains from being eroded. Considerations of habitability and environmental risk assessments as part of programme design and implementation are another avenue.

In general, there is evidence of the sustainability of the Caribbean MCO's contributions, but an assessment of this would require a different approach to monitoring, follow-up and for resource mobilization after an intervention or initiative is completed. That said, stakeholders were clear in their perception that Elimination of Violence against Women work was the most likely to be sustainable and there is evidence to support this.

<sup>62</sup> Survey question: "In your opinion, to what extent are the UN Women Caribbean MCO's results achieved in the areas below (likely to be) sustainable?"

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED

This section provides generalizable lessons across the operational, coordination and normative areas of UN Women's mandate for potential application to other contexts.



To maximise outreach and advocacy, UN Women engaged in innovative activities through the use of cultural and non-traditional spaces such as barbershops, hair salons, and festivals. These approaches provide particular relevance in contexts in which traditional social norms create a backlash against gender equality efforts. Entering such informal spaces can allow UN Women to reach wider segments of a given population who demonstrate different social and cultural characteristics, thereby expanding audiences and strengthening a potential multiplier effect.



UN Women's joint and coordinated effort with partners in response to COVID-19 in the Caribbean, particularly with the wider United Nations system, was an effective manner to address the unpredictable and disruptive events. In similar contexts of disaster risk as the Caribbean, adopting strongly coordinated responses will allow for the provision of a more efficient and effective response to respond to extreme weather events and complex emergencies that draws upon partner strengths.



In the context of the Caribbean MCO's wide geographic coverage and relative limited funding, the pairing of its sub-regional approach with a country-level approach allowed for the office to pilot work in one country where a strong implementing partner could be identified and then involve such actors in replication efforts in other countries and territories. Such a strategy can generate south-south exchanges and help to leverage partner capacity and on the ground know-how in a manner that enhanced sustainability.



The marked shift to the digital space in the context of the global pandemic created an important opportunity for UN Women to gather stakeholders more efficiently across its vast geographic area of responsibility across 22 countries and territories to consolidate networks and its community of practice. As shown by the Caribbean MCO's facilitation of knowledge ex-changes with National Gender Machineries, such modalities could be replicated for other stakeholder groups such as CSOs and governmental offices, including segmenting these by thematic areas, for example National Statistical Offices for data and statistics but also by ground of marginalization.



The difficulty reported by CSO partners to comply with administrative and operational requirements of UN Women created barriers, especially with smaller organizations, that might undermine alliances and results. Despite each United Nations agency having distinct requirements, there may be scope for UN Women together with other United Nations partners to create a joint curriculum for enhancing CSO capacities in areas that respond to common challenges across partners.



Photo: UN Women/Kristina Godfrey

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides overall conclusions and recommendations based on the evaluation findings. The conclusions consider UN Women's organizational strategy and work through impact areas, systemic outcomes and mainstreaming of climate change. Presentation of preliminary findings and discussion on the way forward took place with the UN Women Caribbean MCO to inform the conclusions and recommendations. Recommendations are linked to corresponding conclusions and include key action items for consideration by both ACRO and the Caribbean MCO where relevant. The level of priority and timeline for implementation are also indicated below each recommendation.

As indicated in this report's limitations section, the significant gap between the period evaluated and the finalization of this report did not allow this exercise to capture important developments in the Caribbean MCO's portfolio beyond the evaluation period, including: an approximate doubling of its personnel component; an increase in the office's geographic presence in the region; and the office's response to the COVID-19 pandemic through 2022. Accordingly, the conclusions and recommendations are largely formulated based on the evidence available in this report and do not consider these recent developments.

**CONCLUSION 1.**

**The UN Women portfolio and response to emerging events and crises in the Caribbean region demonstrated its strong relevance. The “sub-regional” approach also allowed for its wide reach with relatively limited resources. There was potential to further strengthen intersectional and “multi-country” approaches as well as linkages to ACRO.**

*Based on Findings 1-4, 10*

Across thematic areas in terms of prioritization and focus, the overall UN Women Caribbean MCO portfolio was assessed as being relevant in its thematic orientation, and responsive to the region’s emerging priorities, for effectively supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment. There was consensus among stakeholders that its thematic portfolio – particularly initiatives for Ending Violence against Women, Strengthening Norms, Data and Statistics, and Women’s Economic Empowerment – were both relevant and high priority areas in which UN Women provided comparative advantage.

UN Women showed in its planning efforts a focus on marginalized groups, which evidenced a broad range of projects and programmes targeting sex workers; female-headed households; indigenous persons; women living with HIV; persons living with a disability; migrants; LGBTQI+; and the rural poor. Work led by UN Women to fill the data gap often inhibiting an intersectional lens in policymaking was also noteworthy, including on surveys and the Gender Equality Index. The Spotlight Initiative adopted a particularly strong framework and methods for measuring its work among different priority groups. The Caribbean MCO nonetheless faced challenges in operationalizing an intersectionality approach more broadly as well as translating the targeting of such groups to significant impact.

Moreover, the office’s reach to 20 of 22 countries and territories over the period under evaluation indicated a significant effort to respond to the needs of the expansive geographic area of responsibility across the Caribbean. In response to emerging priorities such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the office was effective in producing relevant knowledge products in close collaboration with United Nations partners and relevant stakeholders. Building on such positive results moving forward for an effective joint response to complex emergencies and crises in the region is particularly important for UN Women given its recent addition as a full member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

While UN Women’s “sub-regional” approach allowed the office to provide more generalized common support to more countries to implement its triple mandate, the “multi-country” approach also provided further opportunity for strengthening. The “sub-regional” approach faced limitations in meeting the needs of countries, and there was a need to communicate its rationale for geographic selection. In this sense, promising practices used by the office that could be further used included the piloting of work in one country where a strong implementing partner could be identified, then scaled to other countries/territories. Finally, there was significant scope to strengthen linkages between the Caribbean MCO and ACRO – which was challenged by linguistic, contextual, and geographic barriers – and constituted an area of internal consensus to address.

**RECOMMENDATION 1.**

**UN Women should articulate a clear approach to enhance internal coherence between the Caribbean MCO and ACRO.**

*Priority: Medium | Timeline: Short-term*

*Related actions for consideration by ACRO:*

- Enhance integration with the work of ACRO through a joint action plan that identifies:
  - Key knowledge areas for drawing lessons from across the region for application in both directions;
  - Interaction and potential visits by ACRO to the Caribbean region for a better understanding of the region by the ACRO technical officers;
  - Facilitation of opportunities for using a ‘network approach’ to link Caribbean-based personnel to ACRO work, as is already an established practice elsewhere in the wider region.
- Generate south-south exchanges to leverage partner capacity and on the ground know-how in a manner that enhances sustainability.

**CONCLUSION 2.**

**UN Women’s work to address violence against women in the Caribbean was assessed as relevant, effective, sustainable, and recognized as a key contribution based on its integrated and innovative approaches, including social norms. The Caribbean MCO’s comparative advantage was also evident in its work on disaster risk reduction/recovery and climate mitigation/adaptation, while facing challenges in translating regional work on norms and governance to concrete results at the country level.**

*Based on Findings 5-13*

UN Women’s work on Ending Violence against Women was considered to have been effective in addressing the issue in the region. Indeed, the Caribbean MCO portfolio integrated the thematic area through the deployment of various strategies that helped to drive results, such as: data and statistics; awareness and social mobilization; crisis response and disaster risk reduction. The use of non-traditional and cultural spaces allowed for targeting harmful social norms and enhanced the potential of advocacy and outreach of the office.

The comparative advantage of the office was demonstrated in UN Women’s support regarding disaster risk reduction and broader climate issues in the Caribbean. The office adapted its approach based on lessons learned of the period to better define its niche within this important and quickly changing space. UN Women could further build on its track record of supporting the identification of women’s needs, as evidenced by the rapid assessment of small holder women farmers in Dominica and mapping of social services.

This was complemented by support for gender-based violence national planning and service support in countries like Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, and Jamaica across its normative mandate. UN Women’s normative work made some gains in the Caribbean at the outcome level in supporting development of international agreements and advancing national legislation. The Caribbean MCO also leveraged its convening role effectively to facilitate exchanges among National Gender Mechanisms. Nonetheless, it faced challenges in extending its normative support to the country level with its limited resourcing and could not participate in other United Nations inter-agency forums on SIDS issues where advocacy for gender equality could have provided an important advocacy pathway.

**RECOMMENDATION 2.**

**Build on UN Women’s ample social norms experience in the Caribbean to further facilitate a shift in behaviours, and scale work on climate change as part of its ongoing Strategic Note implementation.**

*Priority: Medium | Timeline: Short-term |*

*Related actions for consideration by the Caribbean MCO:*

- Consider social norms more broadly as a cross-cutting issue to be addressed in all relevant thematic areas;
- Focus on social norms as an area across all of its work using training, communications, and outreach.
- Building on the climate outcome in the office’s ongoing Strategic Note, strengthen synergies across the portfolio to scale its offer for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

**CONCLUSION 3.**

**UN Women’s approaches for programmatic integration showed strong results across the Caribbean MCO portfolio, in particularly data and statistics. These positive results would be enhanced through more concerted monitoring and evaluation efforts.**

*Based on Findings 7-9, 14*

The UN Women Caribbean MCO demonstrated a consistent integration of programmatic strategies across its portfolio, including between thematic areas. The data and statistics area in particular was leveraged for effective advocacy efforts, including in the context of the pandemic. That said, monitoring and evaluation in the office was an area to be strengthened, in particular for core-funded activities that did not have donor-related stronger monitoring requirements. In fact, often the results of these core-funded activities were not captured despite the RBM systems in place in UN Women, therefore requiring a need to better integrate them into monitoring practices and reflect them in reporting.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.**

**Enhance its monitoring, reporting, and evaluation capacities both internally and through mainstreamed practices with partners.**

*Priority: High | Timeline: Short-term*

*Related actions for consideration by the Caribbean MCO:*

- Provide an in-depth onboarding for internal UN Women monitoring, reporting and evaluation staff for targeted support across the office’s portfolio.
- Build monitoring and evaluation capacity to track long-term results and work with national and regional institutions for ex-post tracking of results.
- Review and streamline the office’s strategic framework as part of a focused mid-term review process, taking into account new and emerging project results framework requirements.
- Enhance a streamlined monitoring approach that aligns to corporate requirements and UNSDCF processes (UN INFO).

**CONCLUSION 4.**

**UN Women mainstreamed capacity development approaches to enhance the sustainability of its work in a cross-cutting manner, notably with National Gender Machineries in the Caribbean. The Caribbean MCO also faced challenges with enabling CSO partners’ capacity development due in large part to organizational constraints. A more inclusive lens would drive greater sustainability of results.**

*Based on Findings 15-16*

UN Women’s work within the normative area to support National Gender Machineries was reported as an important contribution, and the Caribbean MCO demonstrated adaptive management to increase the resilience and sustainability of results. Follow-up and continuity of short-term results needed to be further strengthened to drive medium and long-term outcomes and impact. While financial resources have been a factor, inclusive criteria for engaging in initiatives would help to guide decisions on where and how to engage with actors in capacity building efforts, and the office would benefit from a more targeted overarching strategy. Additionally, given the office’s wide geographic area of responsibility, a focus on building capacities of national partners continues to provide an avenue for sustained results. In facing the challenge of staff turnover in National Gender Machineries and maintaining knowledge, UN Women will need to deploy novel sustainability strategies that target multi-stakeholder groups.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.**

**Enhance capacity building and knowledge management to support long-term work and sustainability.**

*Priority: Medium | Timeline: Medium-term*

*Related actions for consideration by the Caribbean MCO:*

- Build CSO capacity and inclusive engagement with groups representing those most marginalized.
- Focus on continuity of work with specific priority groups aligned with the office’s strategy, where possible bridging across different project cycles.
- Building on the new Strategic Note’s targeted strategic partnerships, articulate an office-wide partnership approach inclusive of multi-stakeholder forums for facilitating dialogue with and beyond National Gender Machineries.

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The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service is co-located with the Internal Audit Service under the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making, and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organization's mandate, including its normative, operational, and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments, and civil society organizations.

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DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND  
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CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN  
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PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS  
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UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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