

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AUTHORISED



CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

**COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT (CGA)
BELIZE**

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Caribbean Development Bank or its Board of Governors or the governments they represent.

**Prepared by:
Tamara Huggins
RAWWIDA BAKSH AND ASSOCIATES**

JANUARY 2016



COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

BELIZE

TAMARA HUGGINS
RAWWIDA BAKSH AND ASSOCIATES
JANUARY 2016

Monkey River

PRESENTED TO
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
WILDEY, ST. MICHAEL, BARBADOS

© 2016 Caribbean Development Bank

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Belize Country Gender Assessment (CGA) was commissioned by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), as part of an initiative to conduct and revise ten CGAs in the Bank's Borrowing Member Countries in 2013-2015, in implementation of its 2008 *Gender Equality Policy and Operational Strategy* (GEPOS). This strategic undertaking will not only inform CDB's support to the specific borrowing member countries, but also contribute to advancing gender equality in the Caribbean region.

We would like to extend special thanks to Mr. Elbert Ellis, Ms. Denise Noel DeBique, Dr. Carolina Ferracini and Dr. Maria Ziegler of the Caribbean Development Bank for their tremendous leadership and support to this project.

The Government of Belize provided immeasurable support to the research process, and we offer thanks in particular to Ms. Judith Alpuche, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation.

A number of professional staff from various Government ministries and departments, civil society organisations, private sector bodies, business owners, and private citizens provided statistical data, socio-economic analysis, qualitative information and personal accounts, for the preparation of this country gender assessment. The devotion of their time has been critical to the success of this undertaking and we are deeply grateful for their participation in a highly consultative process.

We wish to thank members of the Caribbean CGA expert team (Dr. Rawwida Baksh – Project Leader, Dr. Caroline Allen, Ms. Lebrechtta Nana Oye Hesse-Bayne, Ms. Aleah Ranjitsingh and Ms. Linnette Vassell), for professional and personal support and Ms. Asha Claxton for layout and formatting.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
LIST OF TABLES	iii
LIST OF DIAGRAMS	iv
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	v
1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
2.0 INTRODUCTION.....	7
3.0 METHODOLOGY	11
PART I.....	16
4.0 STATISTICAL GENDER PROFILE.....	16
5.0 COUNTRY GENDER PROFILE	21
5.1 GENDER AND THE ECONOMY	21
5.1.1 Gender, Agriculture and Fisheries and Marine Products.....	24
5.1.2 Gender and Secondary Industries – Manufacturing, Petroleum and Mining and Quarrying..	28
5.1.3 Gender and Tourism (Tertiary Industries)	29
5.1.4 Environmental Issues and Natural Disasters.....	33
5.1.5 Gender and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	34
5.2 GENDER AND EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK.....	37
5.2.1 Education and Training	37
5.2.2 Labour and Employment Opportunities	43
5.2.3 Social Protection of the Elderly Population.....	45
5.3 GENDER, CULTURE AND SOCIALISATION.....	46
5.3.1 Gender-Based Violence.....	47
5.3.2 Gender and Politics, Leadership and Decision-making.....	49
PART II.....	51
6.0 NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY	51
6.1 LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY	51
6.1.1 International and Regional Commitments	51
6.1.2 National and Legal Framework and the Enforcement of Rights.....	52
6.2 THE NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERY	54
6.2.1 Capacity of the Gender Machinery: Women’s Desk and National Women’s Commission ...	54
6.2.2 Capacity for Gender Mainstreaming	55
6.3 NATIONAL GENDER POLICY	56
6.4 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN THE BMCs.....	57
PART III.....	58
7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	58
7.1 CONCLUSION	58
7.2 COMPILED RECOMMENDATIONS	59
REFERENCES.....	69

LIST OF TABLES

T1:	PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER ISSUES IN BELIZE (2010).....	8
T2:	KEY STATISTICAL INDICATORS.....	18
T3:	GDP BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND SEX-DISAGGREGATED PARTICIPATION (2013)	22
T4:	BELIZE ANNUAL TOURIST ARRIVALS (TOTAL)	30
T5:	GDP IN TERTIARY INDUSTRIES – SEX DISAGGREGATED PARTICIPATION (2013/2015).....	30
T6:	SEX-DISAGGREGATED DFC BUSINESS LOAN APPROVALS 2009-2011	36
T7:	PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATE BY SEX	37
T8:	SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATE BY SEX	38
T9:	ENROLMENT IN VOCATIONAL/ TECHNICAL EDUCATION BY DISTRICT AND SEX (2004-2013).....	40
T10:	TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT BY SEX AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION (2005-2013)....	41
T11:	NUMBER OF TEACHERS BY LEVEL AND SEX (2008-2009)	42
T12:	SEX REPRESENTATION OF PRINCIPALS IN SCHOOLS (2011)	42
T13:	EMPLOYMENT BY INCOME BRACKETS AND SEX.....	43
T14:	SUMMARY OF GENDER INEQUITABLE LAWS.....	52
T15:	RECOMMENDATIONS MATRIX.....	63

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

D1:	OPPORTUNITIES, CAPABILITIES, SECURITY AND EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK	12
D2:	ASSETS MODEL	13
D3:	MIND, SOCIETY, BEHAVIOUR FRAMEWORK	13
D4:	ECONOMIC SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK	14

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BZE	BELIZE DOLLARS
Beltraide	BELIZE TRADE AND INVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT SERVICE
BMC	BORROWING MEMBER COUNTRY
CDB	CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
CSO	CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION
CARICOM	CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY
CIWIL	CARIBBEAN INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
CEDAW	CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
CGA	COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT
CPA	COUNTRY POVERTY ASSESSMENT
DFC	DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COOPERATION
EPZ	EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE
FDI	FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT
GAD	GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT
GIC	GENDER INTEGRATION COMMITTEE
GBV	GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
GDP	GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT
GoBZ	GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE
HDI	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX
HIV AIDS	HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS / ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME
IHDI	INEQUALITY ADJUSTED HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATOR
IOM	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION
MSM	MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN
MSME	MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
MTDS	MEDIUM TERM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
NAFPP	NATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION POLICY
NGP	NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

NWC	NATIONAL WOMEN’S COMMISSION
SAGIB	SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER ISSUES IN BELIZE
SP	STRATEGIC PLAN
SIB	STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE
TBTT	TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE
TVET	TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
UNICEF	UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN’S FUND
UNFPA	UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
UNDP	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
UN Women	UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
US	UNITED STATES (DOLLARS)
WAD	WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT
WID	WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT
WIN	WOMEN’S ISSUES NETWORK
WTO	WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This *Belize CGA* is an update of the 2011 assessment commissioned by CDB, which has been prepared based on public policy documents, available statistics, and interviews and focus group discussions with technical experts in Belize, to assist in the planning, development and implementation of gender-responsive interventions to promote poverty reduction and economic growth.
2. This *CGA* explores traditional systems and structures rooted in patriarchy and male dominance, as the core of persisting gender inequalities in Belize, which limit the capacity to promote a transformative gender equality agenda in the country. These patriarchal notions of social organisation systematise and institutionalise a gender hierarchy with various manifestations that cut across race, ethnicity, culture and age.
3. In 2010, the National Women’s Commission prepared a comprehensive *Situational Analysis of Gender Issues in Belize (SAGIB)*, which provides critical insights into the core manifestations of gender inequality which the Commission seeks to address through its *National Gender Policy (2013)*: health; education and skills training; wealth and employment generation; violence producing conditions; and power and decision-making. However, adopting the National Gender Policy and addressing these issues are subject to challenges posed by organisations upholding a strong socially-reinforced hierarchy, predicated on male dominance and traditional social norms. This *CGA* therefore seeks to explore how deeply- rooted prevailing ideas and practices are linked to broader economic realities, thereby challenging the advancement of gender equitable outcomes and the effective mainstreaming of gender in development processes. Thus far, as the *CGA* underscores, the systemic socio-cultural, economic and political disadvantages faced by women and men have not significantly informed the development process in the country.
4. The *CGA* presents a statistical profile, outlining some of the core indicators on gender equality across household, family and economic areas:
 - i. The *2010 National Census* estimated the total resident population of Belize at 324,528 persons, with 1,957 of those living in institutions, and 118 living on the street. The majority of Belizeans live in rural areas, with the exception of those living in the Belize (69,041) and Cayo (54,197) districts. The household population was recorded at 322,453. 161,227 of those recorded in the 2010 Census were male (50%) and 161,226 female (50%), indicating an absolute sex parity. An overall population growth of 3.4% was noted from the 2000 Census record (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2010).
 - ii. The *2013 Labour Force Survey* recorded the labour force at 148,736, or 46.1% of the total population. Four out of every five men of working age (84,511 men in total) were included in the labour force, compared to only one in two women of working age (48,869 women in total), revealing a distinctive sex-segregation in the formal labour market. Moreover, the unemployment rate for females far exceeds that of males, at 20.4% and 6.7% respectively.
 - iii. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Development Index (HDI)* ranks Belize 84th among 187 countries, with a value of 0.732.
 - iv. Of the population surveyed for the *2010 Country Poverty Assessment (CPA)*, 70% of males declared that they were the head of household, while 30% of females declared that they were the head. This percentage composition was consistent across all consumption quintiles. Of the 79,492 households in Belize, 27.6 percent (21,939) were headed by females, compared to 24.0 percent in the 2000 Census. Of the 207,205 persons 15 years of age surveyed in 2010, 119,265 declared never having been married, 75,849 being legally married, 3,199 being divorced. As the survey did not provide statistics on common-law, visiting partner, married but not in union relationships, the *CGA* assumes that a number of non-marital and other types of unions are also present.

- v. The maternal mortality rate is relatively high compared to other BMCs, at 45 deaths to 100,000 live births.
 - vi. The completion of primary schooling is low in Belize, at a total of 43%. The percentage of males who complete primary schooling is lower than that of females, at 38% and 48% respectively, despite a high enrolment rate of both males and females, at 92.5% for males, and 92.4% for females.
5. The *CGA* found a positive outlook for Belize's economy, although the challenges of the 2008 global economic crisis were noted. Despite slower growth than in the 2002-2007 period, in 2010 real GDP grew by 2.9%, in 2011 by 2.1%, in 2012 by 3.8%, and in 2013 by 1.5%. Although there was a decline in the growth rate in 2014, the country exceeded CDB targets for the medium term as established in the CSP – which required the maintenance of 2-3% of GDP – by achieving a deficit of 1.7%. As a result of the financial crisis, the decline in the country's capital and financial accounts during 2009 and 2010, reflecting significant reductions in foreign direct investments (FDI) and weakened expansion of domestic credit. Further, Belize continues to be an import-heavy country, with imported goods increasing annually.
 6. Belize's economy is driven principally by primary agricultural production (sugar, citrus, bananas and marine products); tourism, as the most important foreign exchange earner; manufacturing (led by crude oil production which has increased significantly since 2005); and international business services. All primary and tertiary industries have enjoyed increases, while secondary industries have yet to be restored to pre-2008 levels. The *CGA* found that the growth and sustainability of Belize's economy is heavily dependent on male labour. Unique to CDB's Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs), Belize has a significantly sex-segregated and male-dominated labour force, exemplified in part by male participation in the primary industries outnumbering female participation by nearly 19 to 1. The male to female employment ratio diminishes from primary, to secondary, to tertiary industries, at 3.9 to 1 in secondary industries, and 1.2 to 1 in tertiary industries respectively. The *CGA* revealed that male earnings follow the trend of their participation in the formal labour force, with greater earnings than that of females. Belize ranked 103rd out of 136 countries in the female to male ratio of estimated earned income, with female (annual) average income estimated at \$4,475 and male (annual) estimated average income at \$10,317, for a ratio of 0.46:1.
 7. The *CGA* findings supported CDB's assessment that Belize's commendable economic gains have not translated into commensurate social gains. Despite the country's steady GDP growth over the past five years, the *2010 CPA* showed an average increase in poverty from 33.5% in 2002 to 41.3% in 2010. Poverty is manifested by region and ethnic group, with the Mayans represented amongst the poorest. The *2010 CPA* identifies 16% of the population as critically poor (indigent), 41% as living in poverty, and another 14% as vulnerable to poverty, thus indicating that over 56% of the population was living in or vulnerable to poverty. The percentage of persons living in poverty is also higher in rural than urban areas. Moreover, Belize encounters on-going inequitable income distribution across all productive sectors, revealed through the Gini Coefficient which increased from 0.4 in 2002 to 0.42 in 2010.
 8. Policy priorities point to targeted growth in primary industries (namely Fisheries and Agriculture). However, the sector employs a large segment of the working poor: 53% of the employed, indigent rural population work in Agriculture and Fisheries; 37% of the employed, poor rural population work in this sector; and 38% of the employed, rural population are concentrated in this sector. Ninety three point three percent of those employed in this sector are male, and 6.7% female, thus indicating that both benefits and challenges within the sector impact on male labourers more significantly than female labourers. Challenges include stagnation as a productive growth sector for Belize, environmental issues, and the erosion in preferential markets for Belizean products and goods, stemming from trade liberalisation across economies in the global South. The *CGA* found however, that the participation of women in the sector may be underestimated, thus creating further gender-based challenges: with males traditionally ordained as leaders, women's experience of establishing ownership of land and productive resources is precarious.

9. Secondary industries account for the second highest industry share of GDP in Belize. With the inclusion of mining and quarrying, 15,508 males and 3,930 females are employed in the sector, comprising a total of 19,438, which represents 14.4% of the labour force. Males accounts for 79.7% of the sector. While environmental challenges to the expansion of commercial petroleum production have resulted in development and expansion challenges for the sector, the half-decade of extensive economic growth has been highly sex-segregated both in ownership and labour.
10. Tourism is increasingly significant to the Belizean economy, and the industry employs one in seven persons. Economic growth in the sector was an estimated 2.9% of GDP in 2010, fuelled by higher output of tourism services, increased wholesale and retail trade, and high performance in other sectors. The tertiary industries continued to enjoy gains in 2011, 2012 and 2013, as the only sectoral area which did not encounter any GDP declines over the 4-year period. The industries relating to the tourist sector provide for the closest semblance of parity in male and female labour force participation. The 2005 employment figures place male participation at 55% of all employment in tertiary industries, with females at 45%. However, despite the effective integration of women in the tourism sector compared to the primary and secondary sectors, male and female labour is highly sex-segregated.
11. Declines were experienced, however, since 2008, due to reduced hotel bookings and arrivals, leading to serial lay-offs of part time jobs. The National Women's Commission estimates that approximately 60% of female labour is concentrated in services, shop sales, clerical duties and elementary occupations, further revealing the significance of the tourism sector to their labour, and underscoring the nature of female employment opportunities. Females are highly concentrated in domestic services-related jobs such as cleaning, housekeeping and other poorly paid service jobs, including hair-braiding and souvenir selling. Male employment is most prevalent in areas including: resort ownership and management; building and grounds maintenance; and tour guiding, including tax driving. There is therefore a noted representation of men across all income earning levels of the sector, pointing to varying experiences and outcomes related to economic growth and downturns. Geographical location plays a determining role in the sex participation in tourism. The remote and rural resorts and hotels tend to have more male employees, supporting the understanding that rural women are more likely to be home-makers. The growth in cruise yachting in Belize has generated new and emerging employment areas, through the need for guides to help yachts avoid local reefs, favouring the employment of males within the fisheries sector. Commercial sex work is linked to the tourism sector and transactional sexual activity is known to take place in hotels and motels. This form of engagement in sex tourism is principally performed by women, while managed by men.
12. The CGA found that the self-employed account for 30.6% of the total number of employed persons in the country, with an estimated generation of over 70% of private sector employment and income. Local economic and trade agencies suggest that the MSME sector has yet to realise its full potential, with a failure rate as high as 80% among new entrants. While there are no nation-wide sex-disaggregated statistics on MSMEs, anecdotal evidence points to male domination. Moreover, the CGA found gender differences in both the sectors of focus and growth among male- and female-owned MSMEs. Men and women men also experience differential access to loans and credit, and many female-led MSMEs operate in the informal economy.
13. The CGA found that a number of institutions provide loans to women, and a number of micro-credit schemes support female-led enterprises. The Development Finance Corporation issued more micro-loans to women in 2009-2011, accounting for 52.5% of all micro-loans. However, it is critical to note that the loans issued to women were in areas of production with significantly lower returns, and were also issued for smaller monetary amounts. Moreover, female-led products were developed in areas of interest or knowledge, rather than to meet local, regional or international demands, with reportedly very few MSMEs tapping into international markets. There were, however, two examples of successful female-led MSMEs, focused on agro-processing, which were viewed as role models to further encourage female participation in entrepreneurship.

14. The *CGA* found extensive gender issues in the education sector in Belize, affecting both boys and girls, with significant potential impacts upon their economic viability and life chances, and national development outcomes. Approximately 92% of eligible children attend primary school, with a mere 48% completion rate for girls, and 38% completion rate for boys. At the secondary level, only 40% of all eligible secondary aged students across the country are in school. The Corozal district has the highest completion rate for both girls and boys, at 82.7% and 70.0% respectively. The *CGA* found that there is considerable pressure on boys to help support their families from an early age. Girls are also often needed to help at home to enable their parents to go out to work, or need to work themselves. Approximately 37% of men and women in Belize have never attended school.
15. At all levels there are more privately-funded than publicly-funded schools, with a higher enrolment in private institutions than public institutions. This reveals that households are principally shouldering the direct costs of education. The associated costs particularly disenfranchise the indigent and poor population.
16. A number of deeply embedded gender issues are evident within the education system:
 - i. The limited participation and completion of schooling of males, has not translated into an overall absence in the labour market. For example, despite their lower educational participation and completion rates, males out-number females in the formal labour market;
 - ii. The rise in male youth crime has exacerbated rate of incarceration of young men;
 - iii. As of 2010, an average of 1,400-1,500 teenage mother births was recorded per year. Although there is a policy that allows girls to stay in school if pregnant, this policy is neither well known nor enforced;
 - iv. In the district of Toledo, girls' attendance at high school is influenced by Mayan cultural beliefs that do not place a high value on girls' education, with parents expecting that their daughters will marry fairly young, that their husbands will provide for them financially and therefore that they do not need an education to support themselves and their families. This pattern, however, is showing signs of change, and girls' high school participation in this region is beginning to increase. Overall completion rates at the secondary level are much higher than at the primary school level.
17. Gender disparities in the school curriculum are also evident, reinforcing traditional male and female social roles, and impacting upon the career choices of boys/men and girls/women. Boys and male youth are more likely to attend TVET courses, preferring short programmes with quick completion times. Course selection in TVET is highly gendered, with both sexes tending to choose fields that are closely linked to traditional fields of work for men and women, e.g., boys predominate in the trades and girls in the service fields. The gender skew is further pronounced in male/female enrolment by discipline at the university level. The University of Belize exhibits a preponderance of women in the faculties of Education and Arts, Management and Social Sciences, Nursing and Allied Health, with men predominating in the Faculty of Science and Technology.
18. The education institution is also highly sex segregated, with a noted higher participation of females in the sector, and delineated male and female responsibilities for leadership, teaching and instruction. There is an overwhelming preponderance of female teachers at the primary school level (73.3%), while a small majority of these schools are headed by male principals (56%). At the secondary school level, 53.5% of teachers are female, while 65 % of principals are male.
19. The Ministry of Education developed an Education sector strategy in late 2011, financed by CDB. However, this strategy did not include a gender analysis of male/female educational participation or performance, or put forward strategies for the equitable advancement of education among boys/men and girls/women in Belize.

20. The greater participation of females in education is not translating into increased economic opportunities for women. Unemployment statistics for 2014 reveal that 67.2% of the unemployed are women, whose rate of unemployment rate is over three times the unemployment rate of men. Income statistics from 2007 show that roughly the same percentage of men and women occupy similar income brackets, except at the lowest and highest income levels. At the lowest level, 29.6% of women earn less than BZE\$600 compared to 22.3% of men; and at the highest level, more men (4.2%) occupy the highest income bracket of BZE\$2,500 than women (2.7%). In addition, the levels of the average median and modal incomes were lower for women (BZE\$710 and \$908), than for men (BZE\$768 and \$990). There is a general perception that women face considerably more challenges in the workplace than men, including environments that are not family-sensitive, limiting women's effective ability to balance home care and workplace responsibilities, as well as sexual harassment.
21. The CGA found that challenges in Belize's labour market also impact upon its elderly population. Currently 84.3% of the older population do not earn any employment income, and 63.6% do not receive a pension or benefit. More women (55.2%) receive pensions than men (44.8%), and more women receive a Government pension than men, as men are more likely to get their pensions from overseas. Despite the female-favoured pension earnings, older men have marginally more employment income than women. Seventy five percent of participants in a survey for the National Council on Aging reported that their income is not sufficient to meet their needs, and 65.2% define themselves as 'poor' and indicated that they are always preoccupied about not having enough money to meet their livelihood needs.
22. The CGA found that the ethnic and cultural diversity of Belize's communities presented a potential for varied understandings and practices of the roles and responsibilities of men and women in society. However, patriarchy is deeply embedded in key and influential social institutions. The faith-based community has pushed for the reinforcement of patriarchal household organisation, rigid definitions of male and female social roles, limited sexual and reproductive health rights, and the restriction of rights to vulnerable populations, including sex workers and men who have sex with men (MSM). These groups have further called for the *National Gender Policy (2013)* to be repealed, and for General Elections to be called over its passing, based on assumptions that the policy advances ideologies inconsistent with the country's core values and belief systems. Despite the targeted attention to Afro-Creole male youth crime and violence, particularly within Belize City, female unemployment rates among Afro-Creoles are over twice that of males in the same community, and are not immediately connected to family structure issues or challenges.
23. The CGA found that gender-based violence (GBV) continues to be one of the gravest manifestations of gender inequality in Belize. Statistics from the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) show that 12.2% of the population thinks that a husband is justified to beat his wife. In Toledo, this belief is as high as 34.2% of the population. Over the six- year period from 2003 to 2009, over 1,200 incidents of domestic violence were reported annually, with 1,669 cases reported in 2009. The causal and consequential relationship between GBV and HIV is further noted in Belize, as 2.2 out of 10 HIV-positive women and 3.3 or out 10 women living in domestic violence reported that they required the permission of their partners to seek health treatment. Sex work continues to be illegal in Belize, and the overall recognition of the vulnerability of sex workers is limited in the country, as are the extension of safeguards against GBV.
24. Over the last decade, the GoBZ has strengthened GBV-related legislation with respect to penalty provisions, applicable ages (for girls), the relevance of evidence, and the scope of rape (including within marriage). However, hesitation to present evidence in court, and inadequate forensic evidence gathering techniques are examples of significant gaps to effectively meeting the needs of victims and survivors of GBV.
25. The CGA found persisting challenges in the role and participation of women in power, leadership and decision-making. Belize exhibits one of the lowest percentage of elected women members of Parliament in the Caribbean, at 3%. Stakeholders indicated that women who have contested elections have found that

it is very rough arena to enter and that their sexual histories become public fodder to be used against them by other politicians and the press, which represents a double standard as men's sexual histories, while mentioned, do not have the same impact with the voters as those of women.

26. Belize has made extensive commitments to international instruments and commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. However, the *CGA* found that the country continues to have a number of discriminatory provisions embedded in national legislation.
27. The National Gender Machinery comprises the Women's Department, and the National Women's Commission, which primarily extend services to women on gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and other social services, and participate in the formulation and analysis of policy, working to mainstream gender across all development sectors. Throughout various sectoral projects, there is evidence of gender sensitisation and gender mainstreaming taking place beyond the direction of the national gender machinery. The revised *National Gender Policy (2013)* outlines the cooperative, partnering responsibilities for mainstreaming gender across all sectors and development areas in Belize. The *CGA* found however, that Government personnel from key ministries indicated that there is a common perception that gender refers primarily to women, and a mixed understanding of what gender mainstreaming means.
28. The *CGA* concludes that available data and information underscore the necessity for the allocation and distribution of Government resources in a manner that serves to address poverty, while meeting development priorities to the benefit of men, women, boys and girls. Longstanding gender stereotypes, and traditional gender roles and responsibilities are seen in Health Care; Education and Training; Social Protection and Social Services; Agriculture and Rural Development; Private Sector and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development; Tourism Development; Infrastructure Development; the Institutional Framework for Economic and Social Development; Environmental Sustainability, Disaster Management and Climate Change; Justice and Security; Governance and Leadership Structures; and other key areas. As a result, critical and continuous engagement with gender equality issues is necessary to advancing key economic and social development strategies which ensure that the country's growth is balanced, harmonious and sustainable. The *CGA* presents a series of recommendations across the core areas of analysis to support the advancement of these aims.
29. To advance the recommendations put forward in the *CGA*, the GOBZ has prioritised the following: increasing access to education through the full implementation of the Education Sector Strategy; scaling up women's participation in the labour market; increasing women's participation in political decision-making; and addressing gender-based violence.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

30. Gender inequality is widely considered a cross-cutting issue and an important site of analysis of social, cultural, economic and political life, and is critical to understanding the economic and social factors driving Belize's economic growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development. Differences between men and women observed in economic, social and political life are not viewed as the result of sex (biology) but rather, the result of social relations that ascribe different roles, rights, responsibilities and obligations to males and females. Differing gender roles are largely understood as social constructs, whereby real and/or perceived differences between women and men are subject to processes of social valuing, resulting in classifications of social hierarchy.
31. The imperative of considering gender equality in development policy-making, planning and programming was put on the United Nations' agenda in the 1970s. The idea that equality between men and women is a human rights issue, a social justice issue, and an economic efficiency/growth issue has evolved over the last four decades through different approaches – Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), Gender and Development (GAD), and gender mainstreaming advanced by the UN, and 'gender equality as smart economics' promoted by the World Bank. The pursuit of gender equality is anchored in international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
32. The gender and development agenda promotes the view that equality between men/boys and women/girls have long-term socio-economic and developmental consequences, and is essential in the fight against poverty, and the achievement of economic growth and sustainable development. Ensuring that gender equality issues are fully considered in development policy-making, planning and programming decisions thus requires a clear understanding of why they are important and how women/girls and men/boys, by virtue of their social roles and responsibilities, participate in and experience society differently. The focus on gender equality must therefore address the different ways in which political, economic and social issues affect men and women, and ensure that the needs of both are considered and addressed.
33. The objectives of the CGA are to provide a comprehensive gender assessment of the social, economic and governance sectors in Belize to:
 - i. Critically analyse the national capacity for and constraints to gender mainstreaming in Government, the private sector and civil society (including legislation, policy, institutional structures and mechanisms, financial and human resources, knowledge and skills, etc.);
 - ii. Uncover the links between gender equality and the different socio-economic life chances of men and women, to enable CDB to provide support for a more gender-responsive programme on poverty reduction, economic growth and sustainable development in BMCs; and
 - iii. Identify the constraints, opportunities and risks for CDB to promote gender equality in its development programmes in its BMCs.

SITUATING GENDER INEQUALITY IN BELIZE

34. In 2010, the National Women's Commission prepared a comprehensive *Situational Analysis of Gender Issues in Belize (SAGIB)*. Through what was widely considered a highly consultative process, the SAGIB assessed the country's policy framework, supporting data and the perspectives of focus groups, to synergise information in a comprehensive document which informed the formulation of the *National Gender Policy (2013)*.
35. The SAGIB outlines key socially-focused gender issues affecting Belizeans in the context of the country's overall development aims, and articulates the attention required to address these areas. Gender inequality issues are seen to adversely affect the holistic development of women, men and children in Belize, and

impact upon sustainable development outcomes. The following issues were deemed to be of critical importance:

- i. Deficiencies in the health institutional framework, resulting in limited community-level access to health care and services, access to sexual and reproductive health services, and mental health services.
- ii. Persisting gender inequalities embedded in the education system, impacting on the life chances of males and females, including gender differences in the choice of programmes, and by extension, their productive access to the labour market. Boys' and girls' drop out from school for different reasons, which further affects their successful life chances.
- iii. Prevailing gender inequalities in the labour market, in which men and women participate differently in the formal and informal economy, including women receiving lower employment opportunities and rates of pay. Men and women benefit differentially in periods of economic growth, and they are impacted differentially by economic downturns.
- iv. The social welfare institution and its related programmes fail to take account of the varying participation of women and men in the economy, and therefore its safety net provisions fail to ensure equitable gender outcomes, particularly in supporting the most vulnerable women. Children are further adversely affected by the absence of gender sensitivity in social welfare, including child maintenance, which presents challenges for their development potential.
- v. Females in Belize hold less land titles than men (where statistics are unavailable to specifically outline land ownership), own less businesses (particularly in the formal economy), and access less loans. Women's lower access to productive resources underscores their limitations in ensuring adequate living standards, ensuring food security, and alleviating household poverty.
- vi. Women are predominantly victims/survivors of gender-based and sexual violence. The perpetrators of violent crimes, including crimes against women, are overwhelmingly men.
- vii. While women's representation is increasing, both at the national and community governance levels, e.g., in appointments to the Senate, women continue to experience limited participation and representation and in leadership and decision-making.

36. As a result of the identification of these key issues, the SAGIB outlines the following policy priorities and areas for programmatic reform:

T1: PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER ISSUES IN BELIZE (2010)

POLICY PRIORITIES	AREAS FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION
HEALTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Investing in primary health care programmes, and integrating sexual and reproductive health as a national development priority ✓ Expanding injury prevention and treatment services geared to the special needs of women, men and children ✓ Expanding preventive health education services ✓ Increasing access to health care for rural communities ✓ Increasing male access to primary health, and sexual and reproductive health services ✓ Delivering a comprehensive mental health package of services at the local level
EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Eliminating gender-based discrimination at all levels of the education system

POLICY PRIORITIES	AREAS FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Building opportunities for lifelong learning that is holistic, gender-responsive, integrated and geared towards sustainable national development ✓ Increasing support for ‘second chance’ programmes for boys and girls who drop out of school, and developing incentives for them to stay in school ✓ Using formal and informal education to transform gender relations in the family, community and society
WEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Eliminating discrimination against female and male workers, including workers in the informal sector ✓ Creating gender equity in labour force participation and employment ✓ Increasing women’s access to land, credit and business development ✓ Expanding social safety nets for vulnerable women, men and children ✓ Creating gender equity in child maintenance provisions ✓ Mainstreaming gender into disaster management programmes
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, CRIME AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establishing family support systems that transform gender relations, expand and strengthen child protection programmes ✓ Creating psycho-social support mechanisms and resources for survivors of gender-based violence ✓ Building institutional capacity to address gender-based violence, crime and social justice
POWER AND DECISION-MAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increasing women’s representation in decision-making positions ✓ Build institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming in all relevant policies, strategies and plans of action ✓ Implementing gender-responsive budgeting access the public sector and civil society organisations

37. The priorities provide critical insight to the deeply embedded nature of gender inequality in Belize. The various manifestations of gender inequality which cross-cut race/ethnicity, culture and age, allude to a systemic and institutionalised gender hierarchy that permeates all facets of social and economic life.
38. Patriarchal notions of social organisation are articulated across all the ethnic/culture groups in Belize. Among communities considered the most reclusive, are the most overt manifestations and examples of ‘traditional’ gender binaries, linked to a broader social acceptance of these ideas and practices. For example, the Mennonite community maintains delineated male and female roles for public and private (household) participation (Klippenstein, 1997). Meanwhile, the Government of Belize has made special agreements to protect ways of life unique to their religion and culture, including exemption from taxes and military service. This indicates, even ceremonially, an acceptance of known socio-cultural practices, through a hands-off approach. In the chiefly Mestizo/Spanish district of San Ignacio, women reported the following factors that impede their access to sexual and reproductive health services: religious beliefs, cultural norms, and male partners seeking control over women (Davidson, 2013). The *2010 National Census* recorded that 40% of the population identified with the Roman Catholic faith, with only 15.5%

of the population stating no religious affiliation – which indicates that religion is a significant source of influence on the socio-cultural sphere in Belize (Ministry of Education, 2014-2015). Roman Catholicism, along with a number of other conservative religious denominations, are noted for their institutionalisation of differing roles and responsibilities for women and men, particularly favouring male leadership at the highest levels.

39. Juxtaposing these realities to the challenges, the acceptance of the *National Gender Policy (2013)* by faith-based organisations, reveals a strong socially-reinforced hierarchy, predicating male dominance/superiority. As these notions continue to permeate various aspects of Belizean society, they have far-reaching impacts, as exemplified in the gender issues outlined above.
40. The *CGA* explores how these gender inequitable social practices impact on broader economic realities, and translate into challenges to ensuring legislative equality, equitable sustainable development outcomes, and advancing gender mainstreaming across all productive sectors.
41. This *Belize CGA* is an update of the 2011 assessment commissioned by CDB, which has been prepared based on public policy documents, available statistics, and interviews and focus group discussions with technical experts in Belize, to assist in the planning, development and implementation of gender-responsive interventions to promote poverty reduction and economic growth.
42. The *CGA* undertakes an in-depth gender analysis of the socio-cultural, economic and political disadvantages faced by women and men, as a basis for promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming as critical to inclusive and sustainable development. The *CGA* further aims to link the analysis to the existing national framework, in order to advance these efforts.
43. The Belize Country Gender Assessment comprises of three main parts:
 - Part I** Statistical data and context analysis, which provides a gender-based statistical profile and situational analysis of Belize;
 - Part II** Legal and institutional: which undertakes a gender assessment of Belize’s constitutional and legislative framework, as well as the country’s institutional framework and capacity for gender mainstreaming; and
 - Part III** Strategic entry points for CDB and other development partners, identifying gaps, risks and opportunities to address gender inequalities so as to advance gender justice and people-centred development.

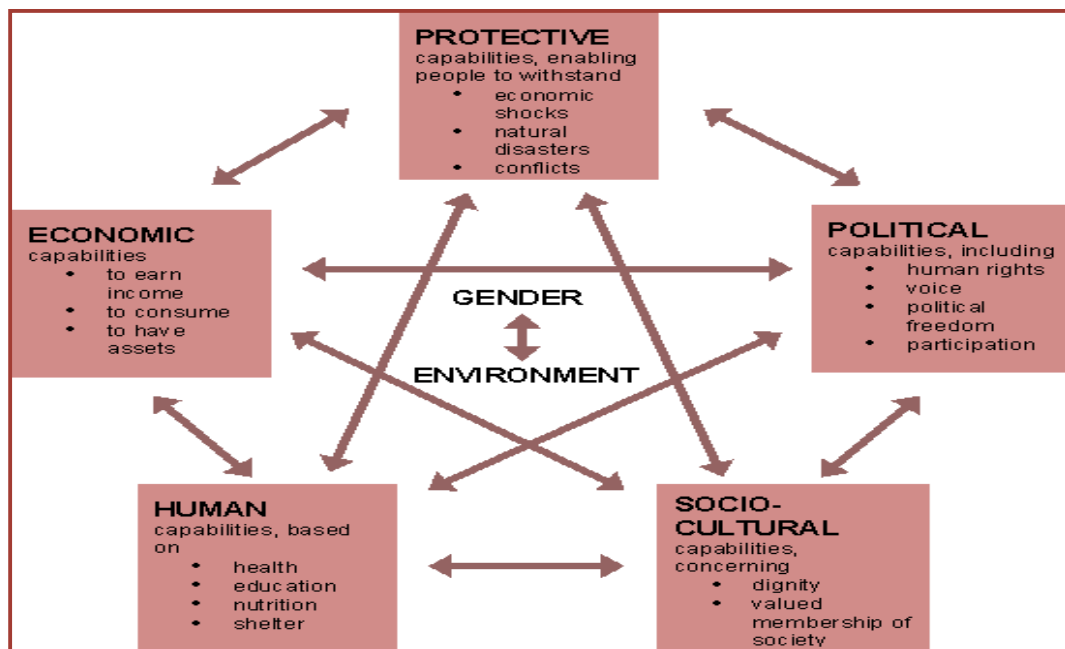
3.0 METHODOLOGY

44. The Belize *CGA* is informed by CDB's *Strategic Plan (SP)* for 2010-2014, which explicitly focuses on dismantling gender disparities and other inequities to reduce poverty through sustainable economic growth, and strengthening the resilience of Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs) to external shocks (Caribbean Development Bank, 2010). The SP further recognises that gender equality is a cross-cutting theme to all of its targeted sectors of intervention.
45. CDB's *Gender Policy and Operational Strategy* guide its allocation of resources to advance gender equality outcomes in BMCs, and establish a framework for development cooperation and partnership to address the gender issues identified in the *CGA*. This document consequently guided the proposed strategies and recommendations for Belize.
46. The key areas of focus in the Country Gender Profile section of the *CGA* were based on a review of the *Country Strategy Paper for Belize (2011-2015)*, and current and pipeline CDB projects, thus connecting the areas explored to Government of Belize and CDB priorities.
47. The following sectors/areas were prioritised for the situational analysis in the Belize Country Gender Assessment (*CGA*):
 - i. Gender and the Economy, with a focus on: Gender and Agriculture and Fisheries, Gender and Secondary Industries (Manufacturing, Petroleum and Mining and Quarrying); Gender and Tourism (Tertiary Industries); and Gender and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises;
 - ii. Gender and Education, Training and Work; and
 - iii. Gender, Culture and Socialisation, with a focus on: Gender-based Violence; and Gender in Politics, Leadership and Decision-making.
48. A Draft *Country Gender Assessment* was prepared in 2011 by Kartini International. This report was reviewed in preparation of this updated assessment. All shared findings between the assessments have been incorporated and duly cited in the present *CGA*.
49. The *CGA* Consultant approached the gathering of primary data and information along the noted social, economic and governance sectors through a review of internationally and regionally published data sources, and semi-structured interviews during a field mission conducted from 14-19 September 2014. The *CGA* is further informed by: national reports; policy documents; and legislation published electronically (see the List of References). The *Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS)* for 2010-2013, and 2014 *Estimate of Recurrent Revenue, Expenditure and Capital* and *Budget Address* provided a comprehensive overview of the strategic economic direction for the current fiscal year. The field mission revealed a strong collection and dissemination mechanism for economic data, with related social indicators, centralised through the Statistical Institute of Belize. Data related to ownership of productive resources, such as land ownership and tenure and ownership of MSMEs would have provided critical insight into the status of women and men along critical economic indicators, however this information was not available and/or sex-disaggregated.
50. Involvement of local stakeholders in Belize served to orient the research, particularly the National Gender Machinery; the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation, led by Ms. Judith Alpuche, who participated integrally in identifying Gender Focal Points and interview subjects; and the National Women's Commission and Women's Desk, whose assistance and contributions were facilitated by acting Executive Director of the Commission, Ms. Pulcheria Teul.

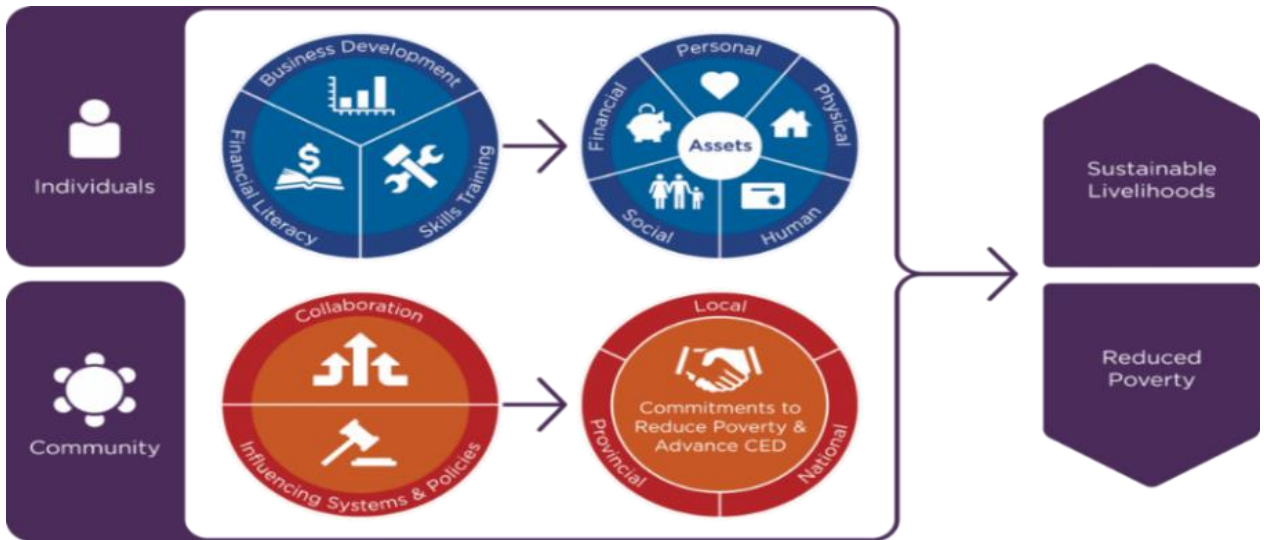
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

51. The four main dimensions of poverty encapsulated by the World Bank (2001) – opportunities, capabilities, security and empowerment – provide the main framework for this study. This framework incorporates the ‘entitlements/capabilities’, ‘social exclusion’, and ‘rights-based’ approaches utilised within the Caribbean context, which enable theorising of the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty identified in the World Bank framework.
52. The *CGA* also applies a combined Assets Model which looks at five categories of ‘assets’ which an individual man or woman requires in order to be a fulfilled, productive and self-supporting member of society: personal, social, physical, financial and human assets, and which further understand that building individual capacity requires particular inputs and changes in policy that in turn supports one’s participation and contribution to overall (community) economic development (CED). The World Bank’s 2015 *World Development Report* provides new insights on the important interplay between individual thoughts, social influences, and mental and social history on decision-making, and the importance of recognising these dynamics in efforts to transform individual capacities and formulate development policies. This newly emerging Mind, Society, Behaviour Framework is explored in the *CGA*, particularly engaging with how psychological and social influences impact on the transformation of the personal, household, community and nation.
53. In addition, the Economic Systems Framework analyses the interplay between economic development and gender equality at the levels of households (including intra-household decision-making, and access to resources), formal institutions (e.g., legal, education, banking/credit systems and informal institutions (which include gendered belief systems, values and attitudes), and markets, which is depicted below.

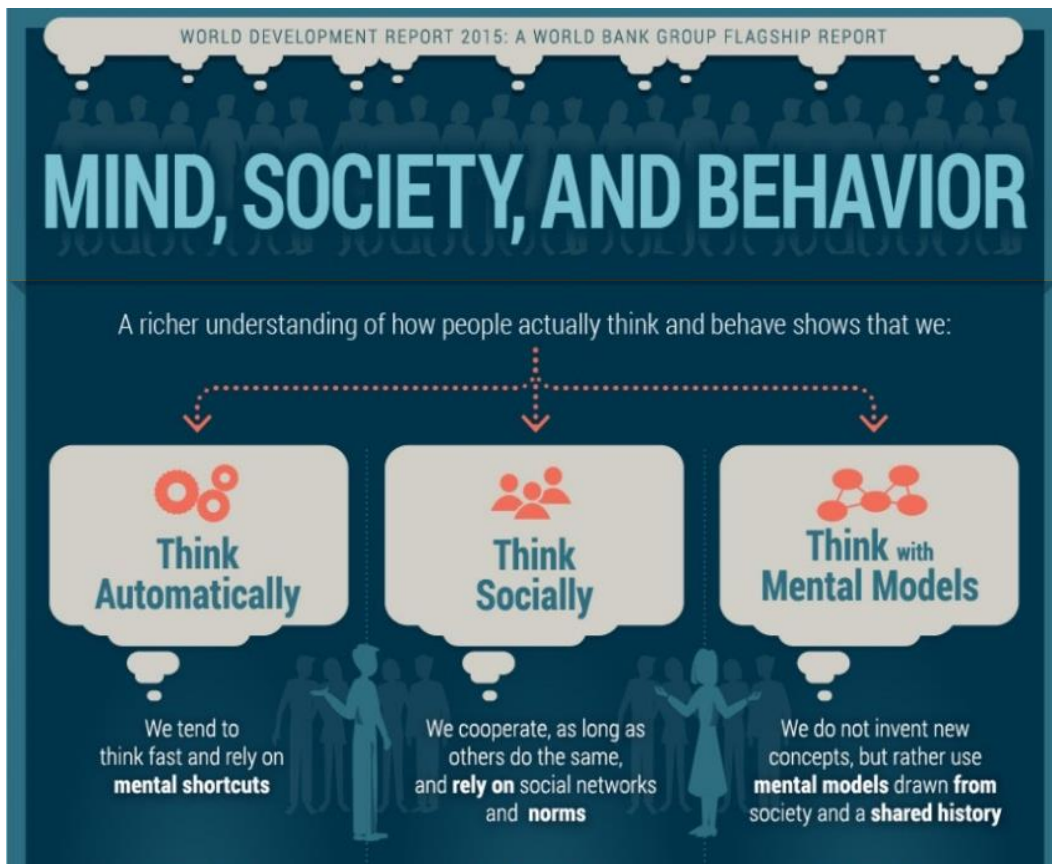
D1: OPPORTUNITIES, CAPABILITIES, SECURITY AND EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK



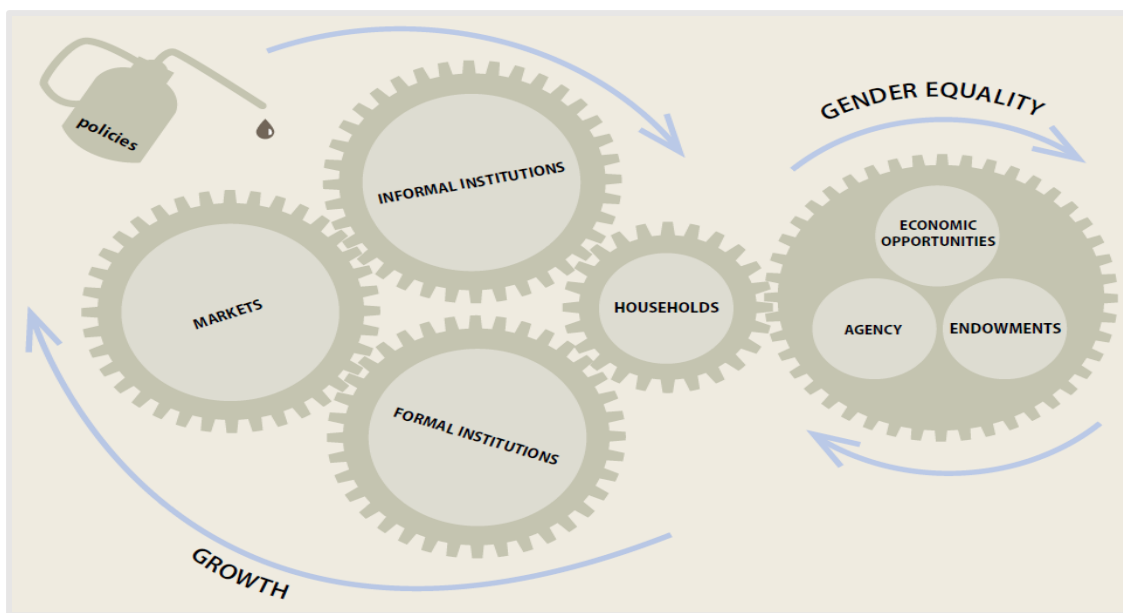
D2: ASSETS MODEL



D3: MIND, SOCIETY, BEHAVIOUR FRAMEWORK



D4: ECONOMIC SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK



54. The *CGA* adds to these frameworks the understanding that in the Caribbean, males and females are not homogeneous groups, and other factors such as race/ethnicity/colour, socio-economic status, age, urban/rural location, (dis)ability, etc., deeply affect gendered experiences and outcomes.
55. Mirrored across the *CGAs* is the understanding that men and women experience poverty in different ways. The Caribbean region includes a high proportion of female-headed households in which women struggle to support children on their own, often impeded by low levels of education and skills, high levels of unemployment and under-employment, and a resulting economic, social and personal insecurity. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to find some type of employment, but many suffer a gender role ‘identity crisis’, due to their inability to function in the traditional male role of breadwinner, or fulfil the socially-established models of male roles and responsibilities. These forms of social organization are understood to construct and normalize male dominance, while reinforcing oppression in all aspects of society.
56. The *CGA* links gender inequality to patriarchy, and explores how patriarchal systems and structures disadvantage, marginalize and adversely impact upon the lives of both women and men. Men are recognized as playing a crucial role in the social disempowerment of women, particularly through interpersonal relations. However, they are also recognized as being adversely impacted by gender inequality (and patriarchy in the broader instance).

GLOSSARY

57. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) provides the definitions of gender and equality below, in an effort to advance adequate understanding of key concepts and terms, and their application to development programming.
58. **Gender:** refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender

determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnicity and age.

59. **Gender equality:** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that men's and women's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.
60. **Gender mainstreaming:** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. Gender mainstreaming entails bringing the perceptions, experience, knowledge and interests of women as well as men to bear on policy-making, planning and decision-making. Mainstreaming should situate gender equality issues at the centre of analyses and policy decisions, medium-term plans, programme budgets, and institutional structures and processes. This requires explicit, systematic attention.

PART I

4.0 STATISTICAL GENDER PROFILE

61. The statistical gender profile (see Table 2 below) sets out core sex-disaggregated statistics and indicators in areas including population, income, poverty, social development, sexual and reproductive health, leadership and decision-making, and gender-based violence. The data in Table 2 indicate the following:
62. The last National Census was conducted in 2010, and estimated the total resident population of Belize as 324,528 persons, with 1,957 of those living in institutions, and 118 found to be living on the street. The majority of Belizeans were found to be living in rural areas, with the exception of those living in the Belize City and Cayo districts. The household population was recorded at 322,453.
63. Of the total persons 322,453 persons recorded in the household population, there was parity among males and females, as 161,227 were male (50%) and 161,226 female (50%), a decline from 101.2 males for every 100 females recorded in 2000. An overall population growth of 30.4% was noted from the same Census record (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2010).
64. The *2013 Labour Force Survey* indicated the labour force at 148,736, or 46.1% of the total population (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2013). The labour force participation rate presented in the *2010 Country Poverty Assessment (CPA)* remains relatively unchanged, which indicated the working population aged 14-64 at 68%; the LFS calculated the participation rate at 64.6%. Four out of every five men of working age participated in the labour force, compared to only one in two women of working age, revealing a distinctive sex-segregation in productive labour. As a result, 84,511 men participated in the labour force (63.7% of total labour force), compared to 48,869 women (36.3% of total labour force).
65. The *Inequality Adjusted Human Development Indicator (IHDI)*, as published by United Nations Development Programme in its 2013 and 2011 Human Development Reports, calculates the actual level of human development and accounts for inequality. The relevant data are missing for Belize, and thus both of these reports do not include a rank for the country. UNDP's *Human Development Index (HDI)* however ranks Belize 84th among 187 countries, with a value of 0.732.
66. In Belize, more men consider themselves to be heads of household than women, and subsequently more women consider themselves to be the spouses or partners of male heads of household. Of the population of persons surveyed for the *2010 CPA*, 70% of male males declared that they were the head of household, while 30% of females declared that they were the head. This percentage composition was consistent across all consumption quintiles. The differential declaration of head of household status by women and men is attributed to the country's patriarchal social organisation, and the traditional consideration of male order in leadership and decision-making.
67. The *CPA* further indicates that of the 79,492 households in Belize, 27.6 percent (21,939) were headed by females, compared to 24.0 percent identified in the 2000 Census. Women's burden of care is greater in these instances, as many female heads are solely responsible for care, with no partner or robust family safety net. Combined with limited and unequal labour market opportunities, women's vulnerability to poverty is significantly greater due to their propensity as single parent heads of households (UN Women, 2014). The *CPA* further indicates that among these households, more than a third (29,061) consists of five or more persons, revealing a high dependency ratio.

68. The vast majority of the population in Belize aged 15 and over has never been married. Of the 207,205 persons surveyed in 2010, 119,265 declared never having been married, 75,849 declared being legally married, and 3,199 being divorced. The survey did not, however, enquire or make allocation for common-law, visiting partner, married but not in union relationships, thus assuming that a number of non-marital and other types of unions are common. Only 13 persons did not state their marital and union status. The distinction of 'other types of unions' has important legal/legislative implications, for example, property rights provisions for couples who have lived together continuously for extended periods of time, pension rights, child maintenance and spousal support, and other support mechanisms available at the dissolution of the relationship.
69. According to Belize's Electoral and Boundaries Department, in 2012, 178,054 persons were registered as electors and eligible to vote in the 7 March 2012 General and Local Elections. The number of voters who participated in these elections was 130,303 or 73.18% of those eligible. These numbers were not disaggregated by sex. The result of the General Elections was the selection of 30 men and 1 woman, or 97% and 3% respectively.
70. Other key indicators related to gender equality presented in Table 2 below are analysed in the Executive Summary and Country Gender Profile sections.

T2: KEY STATISTICAL INDICATORS

INDICATORS	M	F	TOTAL	SOURCES
Total population	179,451 (50%)	179,448 (50%)	358,899	Estimate, SIB 2014
Population 0-14 years old	16,118	15,817	31,934	Estimate, SIB 2014
Population 15-24 years old	17,996	18,286	36,282	Estimate, SIB 2014
Population 65 years and over	1,939	1,842	3,781	Estimate, SIB 2014
Gross National Income (GNI) per capita			\$7,870	World Bank 2013
Gini coefficient			0.42	CPA 2010
Human development index (HDI)			0.732 (Ranked 84 out of 187 countries)	UNDP 2013
Gender inequality index (GII)			0.435	UNDP 2013
Gender Gap Index			0.645 (Ranked 107 out of 136 countries)	World Economic Forum 2013
Poverty: the 'indigence line'			\$3,587.00	UNDP 2013

INDICATORS	M	F	TOTAL	SOURCES
			(\$10.00 BZD/day)	
Percentage/ Number of male or female-headed households	57,533 (72.4%)	21,939 (27.6%) 60% (of these households have no men of working age in household)	79,492	Census 2010 CPA 2010
Population with Income Below Poverty Line			10.4%-indigent 20.6%- poor not indigent 12.9% - vulnerable	CPA 2010
Life Expectancy at Birth			73.7	World Bank 2012
Fertility Rate		2.72		World Bank 2012
Maternal Mortality Rate		45 deaths / 100,00 live births		World Bank 2013
Literacy Rate			79.7% 75.1%	SIB 2010 CPA 2010
% of total school completion	Primary – 70.8% Secondary – 56.6%	Primary – 78.4% Secondary – 65.1%	Primary – 74.5% Secondary – 61.1%	SIB 2015 (2014 data)
Enrolment in Primary Schools	35,042	32,665	67,707 (Net ratio 86.3%)	SIB 2015 (2014 data)

INDICATORS	M	F	TOTAL	SOURCES
Enrolment in Secondary Schools	10,293	11,351	21,644 (Net ratio 52.1%)	SIB 2015
Enrolment in Tertiary Education	TVET 458 Junior College 1,635 University 1,647	TVET 119 Junior College 2,270 University 3,010	TVET 577 Junior College 3,905 University 4,657	SIB 2015
Labour Force Participation	84,511 (63.7% of total labour force)	48,869 (36.3% of total labour force)	134,521	SIB 2014
Un-employment Rate	6.7%	20.4%	12.7%	SIB 2014
Number of males/ females in Parliament	Elected: 30 Appointed: 7	Elected: 2 Appointed: 5	Total Elected: 32 Appointed: 13	(IPU, 2015)
Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Statistics	Child Protective Services Referral: 43%	Child Protective Services Referral: 58%	Rape: 38 Carnal Knowledge: 112 Indecent Assault: 31 Attempted Rape: 7 (2007, NWC)	

5.0 COUNTRY GENDER PROFILE

5.1 GENDER AND THE ECONOMY

71. The Belizean economy has enjoyed stable growth performance over the past decade, while meeting established targets to reduce debt-GDP ratios and increase inputs in the past 5 years. The country effectively achieved real GDP growth from 2010 to 2014, albeit modestly, mitigating the overall impact of the 2008 global economic crisis on economic growth.
72. Following the financial crisis, the decline in capital and financial accounts during 2009 and 2010 reflected significant reductions in foreign direct investments (FDI) and weakened expansion in domestic credit (Caribbean Development Bank, 2011). Despite slower growth than in the 2002-2007 period, real GDP grew by 2.9% in 2010, with 2.1% growth in 2011, 3.8% growth in 2012, and 1.5% growth in 2013 (CDB, 2011; World Bank, 2015). Although a declining growth rate was experienced in 2014, the country maintained its overall surplus, exceeding CDB targets for the medium term as established in the *CSP*. Belize enjoyed a surplus of 4%, about the required maintenance of a surplus of 2-3% of GDP, and achieved a deficit of 1.7% (Barrow, 2014).
73. Belize is an import-heavy country, with imported goods increasing successively on an annual basis. During February 2015, Belize imported goods valued at a total of BZE\$172.9 million, rising by BZE \$31.6 million or 22.4 percent from the BZE\$141.2 million imported in February 2014. Imports increased across most major categories of goods, with machinery and transport equipment accounting for the greatest increase. Domestic export earnings for February 2015 were valued at BZE\$50.1 million, down by BZE\$3.2 million or 6 percent in comparison to the same month in 2014. While agricultural exports increased over the comparative period, marine and crude oil petroleum exports reduced (SIB, 2015).
74. As the *CSP* notes, Belize's economy is principally driven by primary agricultural production (sugar, citrus, bananas and marine product), tourism (the most important foreign exchange earner), manufacturing (led by crude oil production, which has increased significantly since 2005), and international business services (CDB, 2011). All primary and tertiary industries have enjoyed increases, while secondary industries have yet to be restored to pre-2008 levels.
75. As the below table indicates, across all primary, secondary and tertiary industries, the growth and sustainability of Belize's economy is heavily dependent on male labour. Unique to the CDB's borrowing-member countries (BMCs), Belize has a significantly sex-segregated and male-dominated labour force, exemplified in part by male participation in primary industries, outnumbering female participation by nearly 19 to 1. The male to female employment ratio declines from primary, to secondary, to tertiary industries, at 3.9 to 1 in secondary industries, and 1.2 to 1 in tertiary industries respectively. This reveals, importantly, that within industries that are greater contributors to GDP, female employment is closer to being on par with male employment.

T3: GDP BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND SEX-DISAGGREGATED PARTICIPATION (2013)

INDUSTRY	BZ \$ MILLION (2008)	BZ \$ MILLION (2012)	BZ \$ MILLION (2013)	TOTAL MALE EMPLOYMENT (1000S) (2005)	TOTAL FEMALE EMPLOYMENT (1000S) (2005)
Agriculture and forestry	222.4	249.8	246.6	17.136	0.907
Growing of crops; horticulture	173.2	202.0	196.6		
Livestock farming	36.5	42.6	44.8		
Forestry and logging	12.7	5.3	5.2		
Fishing	89.6	99.3	122.2	1.575	0.431
Mining and quarrying	12.4	13.0	12.2	0.196	0.015
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES (TOTAL)	324.4	362.1	381.0	18.907 (93.3%)	1.353 (6.7%)
Manufacturing	254.5	269.5	217.3	6.793	3.571
Manuf. of food products and beverages	124.9	139.6	128.7		
Man. of textiles, clothing and footwear	0.2	0.0	0.2		
Other manufacturing (incl. petroleum)	129.5	129.9	88.4		
Electricity and water supply	96.3	115.8	127.4	0.870	0.172
Construction	79.0	60.0	62.5	7.679	0.172
SECONDARY INDUSTRIES (TOTAL)	429.9	445.2	407.2	15.342 (79.6%)	3.915 (20.4%)
Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	344.0	399.8	422.3	11.039	7.422
Hotels and restaurants	87.2	91.5	99.4		
Transport, and communication	248.1	273.4	285.7		
Transport and storage	79.7	78.0	83.2	5.726	1.004
Post and telecommunications	168.4	195.5	202.5		
Financial intermediation	223.4	273.1	255.2	0.630	0.964
Real estate, renting and business services	160.0	152.9	156.5	1.528	0.585
Community, social and personal services	130.3	139.3	141.6	2.265	1.807
General government services	206.8	234.6	228.3	7.748	8.797
TERTIARY INDUSTRIES (TOTAL)	1,399.8	1,564.7	1,589.1	32.476 (54.4%)	27.199 (45.6%)
Less: Financial services indirectly measured	126.6	142.8	142.3		
ALL INDUSTRIES AT BASIC PRICES	2,027.4	2,229.3	2,234.9		
Taxes less subsidies on products	325.9	366.8	400.8		
GDP AT MARKET PRICES	2,353.3	2,596.0	2,635.6		

76. While it is noted that across the high to lower performing sectors, male participation is higher than female participation, so too is the consistency of males earning higher wages. The World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2013* ranks Belize 103rd out of 136 countries in the female to male ratio of estimated earned income, with female (annual) average income estimated at \$4,475 and male (annual) estimated average income at \$10,317, for a ratio of 0.46 (World Economic Forum, 2013).
77. Current employment data from the Statistical Institute of Belize places the overall ratio of female to male labour force participation at 0.58. This is consistent with a 2013 assessment, which ranked Belize 106th out of 136 countries in labour force participation at a ratio of 0.60 (World Economic Forum, 2013). The data therefore reveals extensive challenges related to women's participation in the productive labour force. Moreover, while female unemployment is high at 19.4%, male unemployment is in sharp contrast at just under 6%.
78. The *2010 CPA* indicated that Belize experienced an average increase in poverty since 2002 from 33.5% to 41.3%, or nearly ten percent. Poverty is very much divided by region and ethnic group, with the Mayans represented amongst the poorest. Even though southern Belize is the poorest overall area in the country, poverty has decreased by 20% in the Toledo area where the Mayans predominate. This is largely attributed to a high level of Government, NGO and private sector investment in the area, including CDB support for agricultural development (Pebbles, 2011).
79. The under-representation of women in productive labour and high rates of poverty are in contrast to the continued economic stability Belize enjoys. The country's steady GDP growth over the past five years suggests that the integration of women in the formal economy is not necessarily a precursor to economic growth. However, as the country's *CSP* notes, Belize's commendable economic gains have not translated into commensurate social gains (CDB, 2011).
80. For a country with an annual growth rate of 3.5% from 2000 to 2009, many citizens and residents are living in poverty. The *CPA 2010* identifies 16% of the population as critically poor (indigent), 41% living in poverty, and another 14% vulnerable to poverty, thus amounting to over 56% of the population living in or vulnerable to poverty.
81. Economic performance across Belize's productive sectors further inflates gender inequalities and exacerbates the strain on households, families and the social welfare institution in meeting the needs of men, women and children in the country. While economic issues throughout 2008/2009 are noted to have had adverse impacts, Belize is encountering on-going inequitable and unfavourable income distribution across all productive sectors (CDB, 2011)—revealed through the country's Gini Coefficient, which increased from 0.4 in 2002 to 0.42 in 2010. These realities further account for the growth-poverty dichotomy experienced in Belize. The strong correlation between gender inequality, poverty and economic development therefore presents challenges to the potential for social and economic growth.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1 GENDER, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES AND MARINE PRODUCTS

82. Agriculture and Fishing continues to be one of Belize's key economic sectors. The three primary export crops are sugar cane, citrus fruits and bananas, and the main farming regions are found in the northern and southern parts of the country (Pebbles, 2011). The sector has experienced recent annual declines, attributed to: natural/environmental issues, namely disease infestation and adverse weather conditions; and adverse terms in trade agreements (Caribbean Development Bank, 2011). In spite of this recent performance, market opportunities in non-traditional agriculture, namely agro-based manufacturing and aquaculture, are seen to hold potential to boost growth over the medium term (CDB, 2011). As a result, growth and development activities are expected to be targeted at improving trade strategies, while mitigating environmental issues and concerns.
83. The potential growth of this sector within Belize's overall development framework may affect men and women differentially, based on current household and population characteristics:
- i. The population of Belize is highly concentrated in rural areas, with 176,624 persons or 54.8% of the population found in these communities. The rural population grew by 31.3% between 2002 and 2010 (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2010). Although the population is higher in rural areas, the number of households is less, meaning that rural households are comprised of larger families with more dependents (Halcrow Group Ltd., 2010).
 - ii. Belize's *Horizon 2030 Long Term Development Framework* aims to see strong rural communities within a vibrant agriculture sector as a 2030 development achievement (Barnett, 2010).
 - iii. Across all districts surveyed for the *2010 Census*, the percentage of persons living in poverty is higher in rural than urban areas. Moreover, persons living in rural areas own less durable goods (stove, fridge, television, cell phone, washing machine, DVD player and vehicle) than in urban areas, in all goods categories (Halcrow Group Ltd., 2010).
 - iv. Agriculture and Fishing accounts for no more than 5% of total employment for persons living in urban areas, across all consumption quintiles. Meanwhile, the sector employs a large segment of the working poor: 53% of the employed and indigent, rural

- ✓ Revisit medium and long term economic development strategies to explicitly address the country's growth-poverty dichotomy. Mainstreaming gender and other cross-cutting social issues is necessary for national development framework(s) to transform the subject position of vulnerable groups along targeted growth strategies.
- ✓ Re-examine medium-term debt and deficit reduction strategies in favour of investment in social infrastructure. Job creation strategies and social welfare spending can contribute to strengthening economic and other life chances for the 56% of the population living in or vulnerable to poverty.

population work in Agriculture and Fisheries; 37% of the employed and poor, rural population work in the sector; and a total of 38% of the employed, rural population are concentrated in the sector (Halcrow Group Ltd., 2010).

- v. Many Belizeans living in remote areas are unable to access agricultural plots during the rainy season, or basic educational, health, communication and other public services (Mendoza, 2010).
84. The *National Agriculture and Food Production Policy (NAFPP)* aims to create a more enabling business environment for the sector, seeking to re-evaluate the contribution of the sector to the Belizean economy. The policy is a reflection of regional and international business practices, establishing the needs of the sector based on demands, stakeholder needs and the current business environment (Ministry of Agriculture and National Resources, 2012). The *NAFPP* articulates a vision of the sector continuing to be a key economic pillar, which prioritizes the following: foods security and nutrition; contribution to rural prosperity; agriculture and food production as the driver of economic growth; sustainable management of agro-ecological systems; and agriculture innovation for competitiveness. The Agricultural Services Programme and Agriculture Economic Development Framework are two further interventions of the Government of Belize (GOBZ) aimed at intensifying agricultural market opportunities (Mendoza, 2010).
85. Policy priorities have also been established for the Fisheries sub-sector, with the aim of improving market access in catch fishing and aquaculture. Medium-term priorities focus on the promotion of: investment in aquaculture to increase production and export of seafood; expansion of land based and caged fish farming; improvement in the technical capacity of the Ministry to provide assistance to the industry; protection and sustainable use of natural resources; and the development of a strong policy environment for the continued growth of the fishing industry.
86. This sector continues to be hindered by a number of challenges, which highlight its stagnation as a productive growth sector for Belize. A challenge faced by both female and male agro-producers is distribution and marketing: producers are able to develop products, but are not necessarily effective at marketing them, or in developing a reliable system for getting their products to the market independently (Pebbles, 2011). The Ministry of Agriculture manages an agro-business incubator project in Cayo which provides training, processing space, and equipment, so that producers require less capital investment for their start-ups. The provisions are determined at 20% of the project costs, which can be in-kind, and this is beneficial to women in particular, who helped to build the facility (Pebbles, 2011). However, the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (Beltraide) has found, in its support to enterprises within the sector, that women tend to concentrate on the production of their products and product development, seemingly not advancing well beyond these components (Pebbles, 2011).

5.1.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

87. The GOBZ announced continued investment in the supporting infrastructure of the sector, spending over BZE\$2.7 million on the rehabilitation of sugar roads in the north, in response to damage caused by heavy rains. The New Macal River Crossing located at the west of the country will connect two boulevards within Santa Elena and San Ignacio. Further capital development projects include a drainage project, highway construction in the south (Barrow, 2014). These initiatives, notably supported by CDB, are said to have “contributed to the creation of hundreds of jobs, particularly for those at the margins” (Barrow, 2014). These capital development areas targeted for the most extensive growth however, all highly favour male employment, with little entry of women in these sectors (Pebbles, 2011).
88. The environmental issues impacting on the growth of the sector (including storm activity, temperature increases, sea level rise and changing rainfall patterns) are also well noted and acknowledged for their impact on sectoral growth.
89. The macroeconomic models on which most international trade theory and policy are based however, fail to acknowledge that different groups access and experience opportunities differentially, and as a result, maintain differences in access to and control over economic and social resources intended to drive economic growth opportunities (Randriamaro, 2006):
- i. The gendered division of labour in the Agriculture and Fisheries sector, in part, underscores the differential impact of policy decisions in the sector on women and men. While primary industries account for the second largest share of the productive labour force in Belize, with a total of 20,2060 workers in 2015, 93.3% of workers in the sector are male, or 18,907, compared to 6.7% or 1,353 female.
 - ii. The Ministry of Agriculture *NAFPP* focuses on facilitating medium and small farmers in securing livelihoods, and therefore contributing to poverty reduction (Mendoza, 2010). Women are recognized to be principally small-scale producers for local markets, engaged in manual harvesting and their own marketing. The *NAFPP* notes however, that the major constraints facing small-scale producers of these traditional production systems are: holding lands of less than 10 acres, requiring several years to recover soil fertility, live/working in remote locations with poor road access, having high post-harvest losses and limited technology, and lacking
- ✓ GOBZ and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) should work with women to develop alternative products in agro-processing and other manufacturing areas that are either more viable, or for which assuring assurance of household food security. Extend support through technological innovation, joint production scaling up, and other measures to enable female-owned businesses to make a larger contribution to the sector.
- ✓ Provide additional support to CSOs engaged in working to disrupt gender inequalities which limit women’s access to and participation to these sectors. Establishing core areas of focus at the national level will assist CSOs in addressing identified needs, such as: increasing women’s child care access; ending domestic violence and household gender inequality; women’s economic empowerment and access to credit; and leadership and enterprise development training.

- access to credit (Ministry of Agriculture and National Resources, 2012).
- iii. The Export Processing Zone (EPZ), intended to attract both local and foreign investments to boost production for export markets, allows for duty exemptions on goods and non-traditional agricultural products. While the *Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS)* acutely underscores the Ministry of Agriculture's particular role in "minimizing the overall macroeconomic impacts that result from the reductions in the guaranteed prices for Belize's sugar exports and competition in a more liberalized world" (Mendoza, 2010), small-scale farmers are negatively impacted by trade policies which lower the prices of imported goods, thereby limiting preferential access to the goods they are likely to produce. Belize is subject to international market access conditions which are increasingly moving away from these preferences (Mendoza, 2010). Erosion in preferential markets for Belize's economies is therefore noted as a challenge to the overall success of the sector (Mendoza, 2010), and to the economic success of small-scale producers. Consequently, the reduction in Government revenue due to less money coming in from tariffs would not only impact on small commercial farms which are chiefly family owned and managed, but revenue losses also impact upon the amount of money available for national spending on social services to alleviate the burden of care borne principally by women.
 - iv. Emphasis is notably placed on improving export quality and standards systems, in order to adopt regional standards in compliance with the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTT) agreement. Moreover, the requirement for export diversification in response to the recent erosion in preferential markets is noted in the country's *MTDS*. Trade liberalisation across economies in the global South has ushered in agricultural policies that promote the farming of cash crops for export over that of food staples, which has jeopardized the supply of basic foods. As cash crops tend to be farmed by men, they are in a better position than women to benefit from such policy shifts (Randriamaro, 2006).
 - v. While men are recognized as the majority of farmers and fishers in Belize, particularly among those engaged in manual labour (e.g., clearing, land preparation and fish harvesting), women also contribute to productive labour on family farms, and are likely to be responsible for farming tasks that do not require considerable physical strength, such as small livestock care and other production processes (Ministry of Agriculture and National Resources, 2012). The main exception to this pattern is in the area of agricultural product sorting; in this area the workers are mainly women, and there is a general perception that women are much better at sorting agricultural products, and in conducting quality control functions (Rural and Economic Development, 2011).
90. Beltraide does not have a policy which explicitly requires the agency to apply gender approaches in its programmatic interventions. However, the staff has consciously worked to ensure there is a gender balance at their business development and promotion workshops, and in the extension of its services. Beltraide has found that in rural areas, women interested in business start-ups often do not know what finances are available and their choice of businesses often reflects low education levels and limited thinking. Conversely, male entrepreneurs who use Beltraide's services tend to have more sophisticated businesses, in part because they often have larger capital inputs or greater access to capital, as well as more exposure to a broader business community and markets (Pebbles, 2011). The type of small scale production that women entrepreneurs often initiate (e.g., cakes, breads, jams, jellies and sauces) does not easily lend itself to scaling up or export due to the need to adopt regional and international standard hygiene and production processes – although two agricultural-based enterprises owned by women, namely hot sauce companies, have been quite successful both nationally and regionally (Beltraide, 2014).

91. The ownership of productive resources is critical to understanding the differential opportunities, benefits and challenges experienced by men and women in the sector. While accurate data on sex-disaggregated land holdings, for example, is difficult to determine, the perception is that more men than women own land, or are holders of land titles, or have lived on parcels of land for years without a title (Pebbles, 2011).
92. The precariousness of establishing ownership is particularly disadvantageous to women, recognising the power dynamics of households, with males traditionally ordained as the leaders. Thus, men tend to have default control of the key resources, and decision-making processes surrounding these resources. This further limits women's potential to gain access to credit and other inputs to grow their businesses, where land is required as collateral. However, in Creole communities in Belize City, there is a notable emerging trend of families leaving land titles to females/daughters, as male family members are increasingly incarcerated (Pebbles, 2011). While this disruption of traditional notions of family lineage rights may be advantageous to females, it also alludes to a significant social issue of male absenteeism, creating new household and community challenges such as: single-parent families limited family support systems, and declining male participation in home and community life.
93. Other Agri-based products with potential for success include dried fruit snacks, which are commonly produced for schools with limited resources. This is a product with which women could become involved at the community level, if a good distribution system were in place (Pebbles, 2011). Unlike jams and jellies, there is a reliable market demand for this specific product when linked to budgets for school feeding programmes. The Ministry of Agriculture also highlights the potential for production of flavoured soya bean snacks as a part of school feeding programmes (Pebbles, 2011). Soy and fruit farmers however, are noted to be predominantly male.

5.1.2 GENDER AND SECONDARY INDUSTRIES – MANUFACTURING, PETROLEUM AND MINING AND QUARRYING

94. Belize's manufacturing sector, which is primarily involving the production of food products and beverages, textiles, clothing and footwear, is not large (Belize Trade and Investment Zone, 2015). A major contributor accounting for recent expansion of the manufacturing sector is aquaculture operations, including fish processing for the export and domestic market. The production of *Cobia* fish by Fresh Catch Belize Limited and processing of *Tilapia* by Marine Farms Limited are fairly new projects which contribute to growth in Belize's secondary industries. Fresh Catch Belize Limited's *Cobia* fish is also processed by Marine Farms Limited, but Fresh Catch is expected to start its own processing in the near future (Pebbles, 2011). EPZs encourage export-friendly manufacturing, as the country maintains a favourable tax regime and no duties for the companies engaged in these zones provide (Commonwealth Network, 2015). Production increased since 2000, from BZE\$159.2 million in revenues to BZE\$243.8 million by 2007, with major contributions coming from aquaculture. By 2011, manufacturing contributed 13.4% to the total GDP of Belize (Commonwealth Network, 2015), which however declined to approx. 9% in 2013.
95. In 2000, petroleum was discovered in the Cayo District and commercial production began in 2005. Thirty (30) million gallons were produced in 2006, which generated BZE\$88.6 million in export revenues. The Inter-American Development Bank noted that in this year, Belize produced approx. 3,000 barrels daily and exported 705,644 barrels of crude (Ministry of Energy, 2015). The Statistical Institute of Belize recorded production increases at 40.1 million gallons in 2007, generating BZE\$142.6 million in export revenues. By 2009, over BZE\$81.91 million in revenue had been generated from export of over 40.06 million gallons of crude oil (Belize Trade and Investment

Zone, 2015). Between 2006 and 2014, 464,628 barrels of crude were sold internationally, and 71,337 locally. As a result, US\$50,309,373 USD or over BZE\$1.3 billion worth of crude oil has been sold on the local and foreign exchange markets (Ministry of Energy, 2015). Production companies pay five different forms of revenue to the GoBZ for production and sale: royalties, 40% income tax, Government production share, revenue from Government working interest in an oilfield (10%), and petroleum surcharges (Ministry of Energy, 2015).

96. According to the Belize Trade and Investment Zone, gold, bauxite, barytes and cassiterite are mined in Belize, but not in sufficient commercial quantities for export. Dolomite limestone, which is used as road ballast and agricultural fertilizer, was the only mineral exploited in 2000. The main local producer of dolomite is Belize Minerals; the company exports mainly to Central and South America, and has upgraded its operations to produce steel industry-grade dolomite (Belize Trade and Investment Zone, 2015).
97. Secondary industries account for the second highest industry share of GDP in Belize. With the inclusion of mining and quarrying however, only 15,508 males and 3,930 females are employed in the sector, comprising a total of 19,438 or 14.4% of the total labour force. Male labour thus accounts for 79.7% of employment in the sector. Despite noted sectoral expansion over the past decade, very few persons benefit directly from employment opportunities in secondary industries, the majority of whom are male, particularly as owners and operators. Moreover, most related industries benefit from EPZ tax exemptions, which limit Government revenues which could be applied to social development programming. The crude oil sector however, provides extensive taxation revenue. In 2010, revenue and grants grew by 8.7%, mainly attributed to higher receipts of income tax from the petroleum industry. Moreover, the collection of a General Sales Tax also increased significantly (up by 20.6% or BZE\$31.2 million), due largely to an increase in the tax rate by 2.5 percentage points to 12.5% (Caribbean Development Bank, 2011). If these taxation revenue gains are appropriately applied, they can contribute to developing the necessary social development infrastructure to address persisting poverty challenges.
98. Environmental impacts of the expansion in commercial petroleum production have however resulted in development challenges. CDB notes that significant reserves of oil may lay within the country's exclusive economic zone, in close proximity to recognized precious coastal and marine resources. Many of these areas enjoy protection under national and international legislation, and future marine exploration and extraction of oil will likely increase tensions between environmental management policies and the country's energy development objectives (Caribbean Development Bank, 2011). Protests against Capital Energy Belize in 2014 by various community-based organisations among the Mayan community of Midway and the Garifuna community of Barranco challenged the exploration of oil prospects in Sarstoon Temash National Park. These challenges have gone as far as the legal system, forcing the GoBZ to terminate agreements to explore the region, including the Blue Hole scuba diving reserve (Cuffe, 2014).

5.1.3 GENDER AND TOURISM (TERTIARY INDUSTRIES)

99. According to the Belize Tourism Board, the tourism industry employs one in seven people, and one in every three households is directly linked to tourism employment in some way (Pebbles, 2011). Tourism is considered one of the country's key sectors, with the tertiary sector as a whole accounting for about half of Belize's total economy (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2015). Economic growth in the sector was an estimated 2.9% of GDP in 2010, fuelled by higher output of tourism services, increased wholesale and retail trade, and high performance in other sectors (Caribbean

Development Bank, 2011). The tertiary industries continued to enjoy gains in 2011, 2012 and 2013, as the only sectoral area which did not encounter any GDP activity declines over the 4-year period.

100. Tourist arrivals, which decreased slightly in 2006, 2008 and 2009, have progressively increased from 2000 to 2011 (the year of the latest available statistics):

T4: BELIZE ANNUAL TOURIST ARRIVALS (TOTAL)

YEAR	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
TOTAL	195,765	195,955	199,521	220,574	230,832	236,573
YEAR	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
TOTAL	247,309	251,422	245,007	232,249	241,919	250,263

101. The sector is still recovering from the 2008 global financial crisis, when a 3% decline in hotel bookings and 7% decline in arrivals were experienced, with serial lay-offs in part-time jobs (Caribbean Development Bank, 2011). Nonetheless, economists and tourism officials interviewed noted that tourism is experiencing a fairly strong recovery (Pebbles, 2011).
102. The industries relating to the tourism sector provide for the closest semblance of equity in male and female labour force participation. 2005 employment figures placed male participation at 55% of all employment in tertiary industries, with females at 45%. In the hotel and restaurant area, more women than men are employed, with female labour representing 65%. Male employment exceeded female employment in the wholesale and retail trade area at nearly 60%, however still showing more balance in employment share than in any primary or secondary industries.

T5: GDP IN TERTIARY INDUSTRIES – SEX DISAGGREGATED PARTICIPATION (2013/2015)

INDUSTRY	BZ \$ MILLION (2013)	TOTAL MALE EMPLOYMENT (1000S) (2005)	TOTAL FEMALE EMPLOYMENT (1000S) (2005)
Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	422.3	11.039	7.422
Hotels and restaurants	99.4	3.540	6.620
Transport, and communication	285.7	5.726	1.004
Transport and storage	83.2		
Post and telecommunications	202.5		
Financial intermediation	255.2	0.630	0.964
Real estate, renting and business services	156.5	1.648	
Community, social and personal services	141.6	2.265	1.807
General government services	228.3	7.748	8.797
Tertiary Industries (TOTAL)	1,589.1	32.596 (55%)	26.614 (45%)

5.1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

103. Despite the effective integration of women in the tourism sector, male and female labour is highly sex-segregated, as jobs follow traditional male/female divisions of labour seen at the household level. In the words of one tourism official, “You won’t find men turning beds; you are more likely to find them behind the bar” (Pebbles, 2011). Females are highly concentrated in domestic services-related roles such as cleaning and housekeeping and other poorly paid service jobs, including hair-braiding and souvenir selling (Pebbles, 2011). Women are also more prevalent in front-line work and travel planning. There are however, increasing numbers of women in professional positions in the sector, including accounting. The National Women’s Commission estimates that approximately 60% of female labour is concentrated in services, shop sales, clerical duties and elementary occupations (National Women’s Commission, 2010), further revealing the significance of the tourism sector to their labour, and underscoring the nature of female employment opportunities.
104. Key areas where male employment is most prevalent include: resort ownership and management; grounds and building maintenance; and tour guiding, including tax driving (Pebbles, 2011). Qualifications (licences) for tour guide operations can be acquired in three months, requiring operators to have little training to start earning right away. Initiatives have been launched to integrate ex-members of criminal gangs in the field. However, this led to safety issues and the granting of licences to illiterate tour guides (Pebbles, 2011). In this area, owning one’s transportation is often required, necessitating either financial assets or access to credit to obtain a vehicle. Women in Belize often have limited access to both (Pebbles, 2011).
105. The growth of in cruise yachting in Belize is generating new and emerging employment areas, e.g., the need for guides to accompany yachts to help them avoid local reefs, as well as for other yachting provisions (Pebbles, 2011). Men have a competitive advantage to entry in this area, with longstanding male domination of the Fisheries sector. As the Belize Tourism Association notes, young men who leave school early to join their fathers on fishing boats, already know the waters and can be recruited as sailors (Officials, 2011). The overall statistics in the Fisheries industry point to a larger potential employment pool among men: males currently occupy 75% of employment in the sector. There is therefore a noted representation of men across all income earning levels of the sector, demonstrating varying experiences and outcomes related to economic downturns and growth.
- ✓ Strengthen the supporting infrastructural and programmatic framework to enable women to further participate in the tourism sector. On-site day facilities in both urban and rural areas would make tourism sites more women and family-friendly. Moreover, affirmative action strategies at the leadership and management levels will propel women’s access to higher paying employment; this should be coupled with appropriate training and development strategies.
 - ✓ Utilize sector data and Labour Market Surveys to identify opportunities for employment and market growth for both women and men. Improving training and support processes requires informed market analysis, as to ensure that they are responsive to market needs and demands. Women, in particular, would benefit from the identification of increased opportunities to participate in the sector, recognizing their current high level of participation.
 - ✓ As the tourism and overall tertiary industries account for the most stable economic growth potential, and highest levels of employment for both males and females, the tourism development strategy should mainstream gender, ensuring that all core development initiatives take into account differential impacts on men and women.

5.1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

106. Geographical location plays a determining role in the participation of males and females in tourism. More remote and rural resorts and hotels tending to have more male employees, supporting the understanding that women are more likely to be at home taking care of their children and the household (Pebbles, 2011). Census and CPA statistics substantiate the phenomenon of larger families among the rural population. The gender division of labour in the home therefore, impacts upon women's access to viable economic opportunities in the tourism sector, as they are unable to leave their care giving responsibilities for long or irregular periods, characteristic of the 24-hour a day operations of most hotels and resorts. The Belize Tourism Board observed that a lot of the female staff are single mothers (Pebbles, 2011), which raises the issue of childcare, particularly in the absence of extended family support structures.
107. At the university level, approx. 10% of students studying tourism management are male. This has been the pattern since a post-secondary programme in tourism was introduced at the University of Belize less than a decade ago (Officials, 2011). The decisions of young men and women in education however, seemingly continue to reinforce unequal opportunities for males and females, and the reinforcement of notions of male leadership, power and decision-making. For example, a tourism faculty member observed a significant difference in male and female approaches to jobs in the industry, with the young men stating, "Sir, I want to own a resort" and young women being more likely to state, "I want to get into marketing and get a grasp of the sector" (Pebbles, 2011). Despite the preponderance of women studying in this field, this difference in attitudes and life expectations is reflected in management positions and tourism business ownership continuing to be predominantly male-dominated (Pebbles, 2011).
108. Commercial sex work is closely linked to the tourism sector, with sex workers operating mainly at nights and weekends, when tourists are more easily accessible, as well as in areas that attract cruise tourism passengers. Transactional sexual activity is also known to take place in hotels and motels (National Women's Commission, 2010). This form of engagement in sex tourism is performed principally by women, while managed by men (Pebbles, 2011). Data on sex work is not readily available, however over 76 incidents of human trafficking were reported during the 2004-2007 period, with additional reported (but not
- ✓ With the over-representation of women in the lowest income earning positions in the tourism sector, an increase in the national minimum wage should be considered, as a precursor to household economic stability, and to poverty alleviation for the working poor.
 - ✓ Advance strategies to prevent and prosecute instances of human trafficking, while implementing core strategies of the *National Gender Policy* to ensure that vulnerable groups, such as sex workers, are accorded the appropriate rights and services (including health care), to ensure that human development is at the core of the response framework.

tracked) cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents (National Women's Commission, 2010). This reveals a significant dimension of gender inequality in the sector, with women and girls particularly victimized in the underground activities surrounding tourism work.

5.1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND NATURAL DISASTERS

109. Belize's vulnerability to natural disasters is evident through a number of hurricanes and tropical storms hitting the country over the past 40 years. Challenges to the protection and preservation of the environment and natural resources are noted, particularly due to individual uses and behaviours, and various economic development initiatives including construction and petroleum oil harvesting. On the macro-level, construction initiatives impact on coral reefs and the surrounding marine environment. While environmental and natural disaster issues are commonly explored from this macro-framework, multiple gender equality issues stem from changes to environmental conditions, and response strategies to mitigate natural disasters. As Belize's tourism industry has been built largely on the basis of the country's spectacular natural attractions and its cultural heritage (Caribbean Development Bank, 2011), the preservation of the environment is of great importance to the country.
110. As various economic development projects impact upon the natural environment, the damage to reefs and the marine environment particularly affect men who are principally engaged in primary industries. Not only do construction initiatives cause harm to marine life, they also limit the available resources for fishing, which continues to be both economically viable, and critical to ensuring household food security. The reduction in marine life challenges the life chances of households in the fishing communities of rural districts, recognized for larger dependency ratios than in other areas of the country.
111. The *SAGIB* notes the vulnerabilities of women to disasters, due to the extra burden of care they carry in meeting family responsibilities. The report notes that women, in particular, feel more pressure to ensure their homers are returned to normalcy following a disaster, yet also maintain a dual responsibility for responding to community needs (National Women's Commission, 2010). As nurses, social workers and police officers, women are therefore among the first responders to disasters.

5.1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Provide technical assistance to environment-responsible agencies to build capacity in gender mainstreaming, ensuring that gender-based considerations form part of planning and response strategies.
- ✓ Sensitize manufacturing companies and other large-scale businesses to the gender, environmental and human development impacts of capital and other infrastructure development initiatives. The GoBZ should set targets for mainstreaming gender and the environment in capital development, such as the inclusion of gender and environmental assessments in all capital development bids over a particular size/scope.

5.1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

112. The maintenance of property and physical spaces are often managed by men, thereby heightening their risk to mortality during disasters while engaged in open-air activities and taking inadequate precautions when facing these risks (National Women's Commission, 2010). A UNDP report on the impact of natural disasters in Belize notes however, that men and women share this particular challenge, as “women form the majority of persons living in poor housing, and they are especially vulnerable because of their lower levels of income and their higher levels of unemployment. Inadequate enforcement of building codes and lack of access to appropriate information and resources also increase the risks for both men and women in these situations” (UNDP, 2009: 17). While the Ministry of Housing is working to improve poorer households’ access to home improvement grants, currently slightly more women than men are taking advantage of these assistance measures (Pebbles, 2011). Approx. 55% of all social housing and home improvement grants are awarded to women, and women also receive the majority of all rental subsidies (Coroporation, 2011).
113. The *Disaster Risk Management Policy* does not currently incorporate a gender analysis in its emergency preparedness strategies. However, the CEO of the Women’s Department takes part in senior management level planning of responses to national disasters (Pebbles, 2011).
- ✓ Sensitize banks and other lending institutions to gender inequality issues embedded in banking and loan processes. By underscoring the challenges that limit women’s access to productive resources, the aim is to improve banking and loan processes, and thus increase access to finance for female-led MSMEs.
 - ✓ Provide support to build capacity for business planning and resource mobilization for women, to ensure that their businesses can participate more equitably with male-led businesses. Provide training and support for initiatives in new and emerging goods and services areas. It is critical to increase the sectoral participation of women, ensuring that women are knowledgeable in and develop sustainable businesses in areas which would advance their economic empowerment.
 - ✓ Collect sex-disaggregated statistics on the ownership and management of MSMEs in Belize, as a basis for developing policies and programmes which ensure women’s equal access to the market. Support to MSMEs in market-driven areas should be prioritized.

5.1.5 GENDER AND MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

114. The World Bank estimated (using 2005 labour statistics) that the self-employed population in Belize accounts for 30.6% of the total of employed persons (World Bank, 2014). Through Beltraide, Belize has a *MSME Policy and Strategy*, which estimates that MSMEs generate over 70% of private sector employment and incomes, thus making a significant contribution to GDP (Seepersaud, 2012). Despite this sizeable estimation, Beltraide indicates that the MSME sector has yet to realise its full potential, with a failure rate as high as 80% among new entrants in some sectors (Seepersaud, 2012).
115. While there are no nation-wide sex-disaggregated statistics in this category, anecdotal evidence points to male domination of MSMEs in the country. A MSME Policy and Strategy Report survey of 100 MSMEs had a response rate of 43% female-owned MSMEs, and 26% of respondents were youth. Bank personnel interviewed indicated that

there were significantly more men than women involved in business, and that male businesses tended to be larger and better capitalized than women's businesses (Pebbles, 2011). According to the Belize Chamber of Commerce, the main exception to this pattern appears to be family-owned businesses that women either inherit or run in collaboration with other family members and which have been established for a long period of time.

116. There are significant gender differences in growth strategies and sector-focuses among male and female-owned MSMEs. Female-led MSMEs are often centred on production or service areas, representing an extension of women's traditional gender roles in the household (Pebbles, 2011). Gender discrimination is noted against female-led MSMEs in non-traditional areas such as construction or distribution, where women's competence in the field is questioned, and bidding processes against male-led firms are met with greater challenge.
117. Women and men also experience differential access to credit and loans, which impacts on the growth and success of their MSMEs. Bank personnel stated that their lending policies are not overtly discriminatory; however they are gender-blind, as they do not include any gender-specific loan criteria. Moreover, banking institutions continue to practice out-dated protocols arbitrarily, requiring husbands to guarantee the loans of their wives (National Women's Commission, 2010). Banks also do not collect sex-disaggregated statistics on business loan applications, and bank personnel interviewed did not perceive that the women's market should be especially targeted or offered specific business development products (Pebbles, 2011). The fact that many female-led MSMEs in Belize operate in the informal economy challenges their access to formal business loans. While commercial banks will work with an informal business to generate the necessary documents to secure loans, they will only do so for a business that seeks a loan of at least BZE\$3,000, and one in which equity investment by the business owner is demonstrated (Pebbles, 2011). This is a greater challenge for women who generally have fewer financial assets than men.
118. The *SAGIB* notes that a number of institutions provide loans to women, and there exist a number of micro-credit schemes, particularly supporting female-led enterprises. Stakeholders indicated however, that while it is fairly easy for women in rural areas to obtain micro-credit loans, it is much more difficult for women to qualify for larger loans (Pebbles, 2011). The *SAGIB* substantiates this, noting that men receive a higher number of loans and larger loans than women, yet women are

5.1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Provide assistance to MSMEs towards strengthening the marketing of goods and services domestically and internationally. This involves further supporting female and male entrepreneurs to meet regional and international distribution standards, by effectively ensure quality and standards frameworks are in place across all productive sectors.
- ✓ Provide training to female owners and operators of MSMEs to address core gender inequalities impacting on the sustainability of their businesses. Work to improve goal setting, business planning and other skills, including distribution issues, in order to improve women's confidence to achieve success as business owners and leaders.
- ✓ Put in place mechanisms to integrate informal MSMEs into the formal economy through the removal of economic and other barriers; develop approaches to ensure that informally-run MSMEs receive the same level of social protection and services as businesses in the formal economy.

more reliable in meeting loan repayment obligations and are more likely to save (National Women's Commission, 2010).

119. Micro-loans issued by the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) from 2009-2011 were mainly granted to women, accounting for 52.5% of all micro-loans. However, the average loans were issued in areas of production with relatively low returns, at an average of BZE\$4,160, and principally related to “professional services” and the tourism sector. In contrast, 42.2% of the loans were awarded to men with an average of BZE\$15,171 per loan (Pebbles, 2011). A small number of couples applied for micro-loans (5.3%) in 17 applications. These 17 applications collectively received the equivalent of 2 % of the resources allocated to the total 168 female applicants, and averaged BZE\$11,479 per loan.

T6: SEX-DISAGGREGATED DFC BUSINESS LOAN APPROVALS 2009-2011

BUSINESS TYPE	FEMALE		MALE		JOINTLY		TOTAL	
	NO.	VALUE	NO.	VALUE	NO.	VALUE	NO.	VALUE
Agriculture--Cattle	0	-	3	30,000	-	-	3	30,000
Agriculture--Corn	0	-	2	8,800	-	-	2	8,800
Agriculture--Honey	1	2,660	0	-	-	-	1	2,660
Agriculture--Machine	0	-	12	204,500	-	-	12	204,500
Agriculture--Other	0	-	2	24,500	-	-	2	24,500
Agriculture--Pig	0	-	3	22,000	-	-	3	22,000
Agriculture--Rice	0	-	10	79,900	-	-	10	79,900
Agriculture--Sheep	0	-	1	10,000	-	-	1	10,000
Agriculture--Vegetable	1	15,000	5	41,600	3	34,850	9	91,450
Building Commercial	1	8,000	1	22,000	1	8,000	3	38,000
Commercial Fishing	0	-	7	51,000	2	23,000	9	74,000
Distribution	3	5,000	1	27,000	-	-	4	32,000
Entertainment	0	-	1	10,000	-	-	1	10,000
Forestry---Jointly	0	-	0	-	1	10,000	1	10,000
Manufacturing---Clothing	2	17,500	0	-	-	-	2	17,500
Manufacturing---Furniture Making	0	-	6	81,000	-	-	6	81,000
Manufacturing---Other	6	27,500	3	68,200	-	-	9	95,700
Professional Services	81	483,800	69	585,537	7	78,300	157	1,147,637
Tourism	22	104,500	6	221,500	3	41,000	31	367,000
Transportation	51	35,000	3	560,600	-	-	54	595,600

Total	168	698,960	135	2,048,137	17	195,150	320	2,942,247
--------------	------------	----------------	------------	------------------	-----------	----------------	------------	------------------

SOURCE: BELIZE DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION

120. A further challenge faced by MSMEs is in the locally-dependent nature of the businesses. Given the limited population and high product-type concentration, there are incidents of product saturation and little connection of product development to meet market demands. Moreover, many women have a limited knowledge of products outside of traditional “women’s products” (Pebbles, 2011). As a result, products are developed based on areas of interest or knowledge, rather than to meet local, regional or international demands, with reportedly very few MSMEs tapping into international markets (Standards, 2014). The issue of quality assurance and standards for export is hereby underscored, as MSMEs do not have the exporting avenues of big companies, and are still in the process of building the culture of quality from the ground up (Standards, 2014). Many producers lack a clear mapping of the value chain, which results in limited development of all the elements that would make their products export-ready (Standards, 2014).

5.2 GENDER AND EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK

5.2.1 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

121. Education is widely considered to be a precursor to human and social development, and to the improvement of a person’s economic opportunities and life chances. In Belize, the participation of both males and females in education is recognised as a significant challenge. The country’s education challenges start at the lowest entry level, as approx. 97% of eligible children attend primary school, with a 78.4% completion rate for girls, and 70.8% completion rate for boys.
122. Starting at roughly the age of 10, boys begin to drop out of school at a higher rate than girls, and primary school completion rates for boys are significantly lower than for girls. There is also a wide discrepancy in primary school completion rates by district, with Toledo recording the lowest and Belize City showing the highest for boys and girls respectively.

T7: PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATE BY SEX

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2010	75.0	80.4	77.6
2011	72.4	79.2	75.7
2012	73.7	78.2	75.9
2013	72.5	80.6	76.4
2014	70.8	78.4	74.5

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 2015

123. At the secondary level, Corozal has the highest completion rate for both boys and girls (at 70.0% and 82.7%, respectively). These statistics are juxtaposed to the reality that across the secondary system in Belize, only 52.1% of all secondary school aged children are enrolled in school (net enrolment rate).

T8: SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATE BY SEX

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2010	56.8	63.1	60.1
2011	53.4	67.0	60.2
2012	58.2	67.6	63.0
2013	59.3	67.1	63.3
2014	56.6	65.1	61.1

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 2015

124. In Belize, there is considerable pressure on boys to help support their families from an early age, thus accounting for early dropout (Pebbles, 2011). Girls are often needed to help out at home so their parents can work, or may need to work themselves. In 2010, UNDP reported that approximately 37% of men and women in Belize had never attended school.
125. The dimensions of household poverty are explored in relation to the issue of school attendance. At the preschool level, Belize has 45 government schools, 55 private schools, and 113 denominational schools spread across the country. Despite this, only 40.3 percent of children aged two to four years were enrolled in school (Ministry of Education, 2014-2015). At the primary level, there are a total of 294 schools, 56 of which are Government schools, 166 denominational, and 72 described as “other”. The attendance rate for children ages 5 to 12 is 86.3 percent. At the secondary level, there are 52 schools, 17 of which are Government, 26 Government-assisted and 9 private (Ministry of Education, 2014), with 52.1 percent of secondary school-aged children attending school (Ministry of Education, 2014-2015). Moreover, the transient nature of labour opportunities in Belize, including significant in-migration of persons from neighbouring countries with porous borders has resulted in the establishment of some one and two-grade schools throughout the country, with varying rates of enrolment and participation. Language and other barriers are further cited as issues impacting children’s success in these instances, which further suffer from strained resources at the Ministry level, to account for new and changing institutional needs (Alpuche, 2015).
126. At all levels there are more privately-funded than state-funded schools, with a higher enrolment in private institutions than public institutions. This reveals that households are principally shouldering the direct costs of education. Where children and youth attend Government schools, families are still required to meet the costs of uniforms, books, transportation and meals. A female school uniform costs approx. US\$15.00 while a pair of trousers and a shirt for males cost at least US\$12.00 (Cobell, 2014). An Inter-American Development Bank report on challenges and opportunities in Belize’s education sector published in 2013 noted that weekly transportation and lunch costs alone are US\$32.50 and US\$27.50 for children attending secondary school from the St. Margaret and Armenia Village areas respectively. An additional US dollar a day was added for students attending Belmopan Baptist High School, where another bus ride is required to and from school (Cobell, 2014). These associated costs particularly disenfranchise the poor and indigent population. Although the Child Dependency Ratio has declined since 2000, the 2010 Census records that across the country there were 59 dependents per 100 persons of working age. A significant number of

children per household need to be supported, as children/ stepchildren/ foster children account for 46.6% of household members (Ministry of Education, 2014-2015).

127. Besides limited enrolment and completion rates, and tuition and other associated costs, a number of deeply embedded gender issues are present within the education system:
- i. Young men are not participating in, under-performing and dropping out of school in high numbers, there is a rise in the incidence of crimes perpetrated by male youths, which has exacerbated the incarceration rate of young men. Programmes have been put in place across a number of sectors to reintegrate former gang members and other at-risk young men into education and training opportunities for employment. These include apprenticeship programmes, a cadet style of disciplined education, and vocational training. All these programmes offer a range of skills training, but there is still a tendency for courses to be selected along gender lines.
 - ii. It needs to be noted that the limited school participation and completion rates for males has not translated into their lower participation in the labour market. However, while men have been able to remain gainfully employed, the latest poverty statistics, juxtaposed to increasing rates of unemployment, foreshadow potential future economic challenges, with a lower-skilled and lower-certified predominantly male labour force charged with the responsibility of ensuring the country's long-term economic development and sustainability.
 - iii. Although teenage pregnancy rates for 15 to 19 year olds declined between 1991 and 1999 by 31%, as of 2010, an average of 1,400–1,500 births by teenage mothers were recorded per year (Health, 2011). While there is a policy that allows girls to continue their schooling when pregnant, this policy is neither well known nor enforced. Moreover, a number of schools are faith-based, and stress the necessity for pregnant girls to leave school before their gestation is visible (Pebbles, 2011). Both public sector officials and NGO stakeholders from the health and education sectors noted they still face a challenge in getting sex education and reproductive health covered effectively in the schools, particularly among the faith-based institutions.
 - iv. In the district of Toledo, girls' attendance in high school is influenced by Mayan cultural beliefs that do not place a high value on girls' education, with parents anticipating that their daughters will marry fairly young and therefore will not need education to support and sustain their families (Pebbles, 2011). This pattern, however, is changing, and girls' high school participation in the district is beginning to increase. Overall completion rates at the secondary level are much higher than at the primary school level. The Ministry of Education records girls' highest high school completion rates in Belize City (69.1%) and for boys in Stann Creek (67.8%).
128. It is generally accepted that women's life chances and economic opportunities are improved through increased access to education, and higher completion rates among females are anticipated to translate into improved labour market performance. However, in Belize there is a significant gap between girls' academic achievement and their labour force participation. If this trend continues, the lag in girls' high levels of academic achievement and their correlating limited labour force participation is likely to be exacerbated over time, further limiting their chances of finding gainful employment to meet the subsistence needs of their households.
129. Available statistics point to the possibility that difficulties for women from Belize to find gainful employment in-country, with the achievement of additional educational opportunities, thereby resulting in out-migration. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) notes that Belize ranks fourth among the top ten CARICOM countries with the highest emigration rate for nurses (International Organization for Migration, 2015), a profession that is traditionally female-

dominated. According to the Migration Police Institute's statistics from 2013, 19% of Belizean immigrants to the United States of America had a bachelor's degree or higher, while close to one-third worked in management, business, science and arts occupations (Migration Policy Institute, 2015).

130. Sex segregation in the school curriculum is evident, reinforcing traditional male/female social roles, and influencing career choices being made by boys and girls. Educators interviewed noted that there continues to be a tendency to focus on preparing students for tertiary education (Pebbles, 2011), as opposed to also developing technical, vocational education and training (TVET), which would improve economic opportunities for both boys and girls. Educators interviewed noted that boys and male youth are more likely to choose to attend TVET, preferring short programmes with short completion times (Pebbles, 2011). Ministry of Education statistics for the 2004-2013 periods reveal that male enrolment in TVET exceeded that of females every year, and across every district (see table below). As with other streams of the tertiary school system, course selection in TVET is highly gendered, with both sexes tending to choose fields that are closely linked to traditional fields of work for men and women, e.g., boys going into the trades and girls into services (Pebbles, 2011).

T9: ENROLMENT IN VOCATIONAL/ TECHNICAL EDUCATION BY DISTRICT AND SEX (2004-2013)

Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Total	489	369	665	760	797	611	569	566	719
Male	372	295	488	479	523	401	453	432	542
Female	117	74	177	281	274	129	116	134	177
Corozal	122	32	24	35	60	74	48	16	71
Male	69	17	5	13	28	39	31	9	47
Female	53	15	19	22	32	35	17	7	24
Orange Walk	0	0	93	119	117	163	171	159	188
Male	0	0	79	104	98	145	157	146	170
Female	0	0	14	15	19	18	14	13	18
Belize	248	196	253	256	296	124	117	105	116
Male	222	175	199	150	187	91	96	81	90
Female	26	21	54	106	109	33	21	24	26
Cayo	91	101	217	230	184	139	136	132	206
Male	63	73	146	147	114	97	90	73	129
Female	28	28	71	83	70	42	46	59	77
Stann Creek	0	0	0	87	102	81	58	77	79
Male	0	0	0	43	59		48	60	62
Female	0	0	0	44	43		10	17	17
Toledo	28	40	78	33	38	30	39	77	59
Male	18	30	59	22	37	29	31	63	44
Female	10	10	19	11	1	1	8	14	15

SOURCE: STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE, 2015

131. The female/male skew in education becomes more pronounced at the junior college and university level, which favours female enrolment. The female/male student ratio at this level is approximately 2:1.

T10: TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT BY SEX AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION (2005-2013)

Enrolment By Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Both Sexes	90,907	92,546	94,692	97,437	99,034	100,327	104,394	105,221
Jr. College	2,468	2,616	2,738	3,472	3,006	3,149	3,653	3,818
University	2,471	2,745	3,039	3,581	4,002	4,464	4,629	4,652
Male	45,159	45,798	46,938	48,127	48,755	49,509	51,670	50,475
Jr. College	963	1,014	1,103	1,382	1,304	1,285	1,462	1,527
University	903	1,029	1,107	1,281	1,382	1,582	1,654	
Female	45,747	46,748	47,754	49,310	50,279	50,818	52,724	54,746
Jr. College	1,505	1,602	1,635	2,090	1,702	1,864	2,191	2,291
University	1,568	1,716	1,932	2,300	2,620	2,882	2,975	4,652

SOURCE: STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE, 2015

132. The gender skew is even more pronounced when one examines male/female enrolment by discipline. The University of Belize notes a predominance of women in the faculties of Education and Arts, Management and Social Sciences, Nursing and Allied Health, with men predominating in the Faculty of Science and Technology (Pebbles, 2011).
133. The Ministry of Education developed an Education Sector Strategy in 2011, financed by CDB. The strategy includes policy reforms implemented over following next four years, as well as a significant review of the curricula at both the primary and secondary levels to address relevance issues (Pebbles, 2011). It is recognised that this strategy has made reference to the differential factors impacting upon boys' and girls' participation and performance, which is reflected further in the National Gender Policy's chapter on Education. In the National Gender Policy's seeking to mainstream gender in the curriculum review and development, the Education Sector Strategy is cited as the precursor to advancing these efforts (Alpuche, 2015). It is critical that there is an assessment of gender stereotyping in the curriculum, linked to sex-segregation in the labour market, and income and other gaps attributing to less successful outcomes for females, in advancing the scope and influence of the Education Sector Strategy on mainstreaming gender in development processes.
134. The education system is highly sex-segregated, with a higher participation of females in the sector, and delineated male and female leadership, teaching and instructing responsibilities. Female teachers predominate in the lower grades (73.3%), while these schools show a higher percentage of male principals (56%). At the secondary school level, 53.5% of teachers are female while 65% of the principals are male. The representation of male teachers thus increases at the higher levels, ranging from 1.3% at the pre-school level and rising to 49.5% in the junior colleges. Educators

interviewed attributed the fact that there are significantly more male teachers at the secondary school level due to a perceived greater status in teaching at this level than at the primary school level (Pebbles, 2011). At the tertiary level, 78% of principals are males (Ministry of Education, 2011).

T11: NUMBER OF TEACHERS BY LEVEL AND SEX (2008-2009)

	PRE-SCHOOL		PRIMARY		SECONDARY		JR. COLLEGE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	5	1.3	816	27.7	591	46.4	108	49.5	1520	31.6
Female	373	98.7	2132	73.3	681	53.6	110	50.5	3296	68.4

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 2009

T12: SEX REPRESENTATION OF PRINCIPALS IN SCHOOLS (2011)

EDUCATION LEVEL	MALES	%	FEMALES	%
Primary	166	55.7	132	44.3
Secondary	33	64.7	18	35.3
Tertiary	21	77.8	6	22.2

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 2011

135. These male/female leadership discrepancies reinforce underlying gender values and perceptions that men are better suited for leadership positions (Pebbles, 2011). Women’s limited participation in educational leadership is connected to the wider absence of their views and voices in decision-making processes in the country. However, simply increasing women’s participation does not ensure gender mainstreaming, as women often perpetuate and reinforce traditional gender norms and stereotypes. Consequently, there is a need to sensitize all teachers, leaders and administrators to gender issues, as to ensure that gender equity is promoted at all levels of the education institution.

5.2.2 LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

136. The country’s combined economic and labour data (see Tables 2 and 3 above), indicate significant differences in the participation of men and women in the labour market. There is also considerable variation by region, with the lowest rates of female workforce participation seen in Toledo in the south – a low of 25.9% compared to 82.2% for males, and in Corozal in the north where female participation is 40.9% compared to 83.5% for males. The region showing the smallest male/female differential is Belize City, where male participation exceeds female participation by 22%; this is in spite of the higher school dropout rates of boys in this district (Pebbles, 2011). Throughout Belize, there is a 28.4% difference between men’s and women’s labour force participation.
137. Unemployment also affects women more adversely. Statistics for 2014 reveal that 67.2% of the unemployed are women, and their unemployment rate is more than three times that of men, at 20.4% to 5.9% respectively (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2015). Additionally, in the same year surveyed, 3,003 males joined the labour force, while 1,120 females exited. Female unemployment may be much higher than recorded, as “housewives” are not included in the economically active population data. As one Government economist interviewed noted, *“even if we calculated these costs, they are not going to be taken into account in the budget”*, and indicated they would need training on how to do this (Pebbles, 2011). This exclusion of women’s contribution to home and care responsibilities further delegitimizes female labour, and the extensive contribution of social reproduction to social and economic development. In addition, in recognition of the significant contribution of the Agriculture and Fisheries sector to employment in Belize, it is not clear that women’s unpaid labour on family farms is quantified in labour market activity (Pebbles, 2011).
138. The greater participation of females in education is therefore not translating into a transformational increase in their labour force participation and economic opportunities. Consequently, other socio-cultural factors seem to have a much greater influence than educational opportunities on the pervasive gender inequality and women’s subject position evident in the labour force.
139. There is also a persisting social concern with the unemployment of black male youth, driven by the involvement of some men in this group in criminal activities and gangs (Pebbles, 2011). Although much larger numbers of women are unemployed across the country, across all socio-cultural groupings and economic strata, their unemployment is much less visible, and subsequently not garnering the same level of critical attention in national strategic interventions.
140. Income statistics from 2007 show that roughly the same percentage of women and men are in similar income brackets, except at the lowest and highest income levels. At the lowest level, 29.6% of women earn less than BZE \$600 compared to 22.3% of men (UNDP, 2009). At the other end of the scale, more men (4.2%) are in the highest income bracket of BZE \$2,500 than women (2.7%) (Pebbles, 2011).

T13: EMPLOYMENT BY INCOME BRACKETS AND SEX

INCOME BRACKETS (BZE)	MALES (PERCENTAGE)	FEMALES (PERCENTAGE)
< \$600	22.3	29.6
\$600 to \$1,199	33.1	30.1
\$1200 to \$1799	12.7	13.2

\$1,800 to \$2,399	4.2	4.3
\$2,400 to \$2,879	2.0	2.4
\$2,500+	4.2	2.7
Not Stated	21.5	17.7
Mean	\$990	\$908
Median	\$768	\$710

SOURCE: STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE, 2007

141. Differences in women’s and men’s earnings are attributable to diverse factors:
- i. Many occupations in which women are engaged are at the lower end of the pay scale. These are often service jobs that are traditionally viewed as extensions of women’s unpaid work within the home, reinforcing domesticity. Consequently, the same undervaluing of women’s work in the home translates into their comparatively low value in the productive labour market. A further 68.4% of women are employed in clerical or “pink collar” work, which is closely followed by services jobs and shop sales work (Pebbles, 2011).
 - ii. There is a general perception that women face considerably more challenges in the workplace than men do. These include: employment environments that are not family-sensitive, limiting women’s ability to effectively balance responsibilities at work and home; sexual harassment; and the ‘glass ceiling’ faced by women with regard to achieving promotions and recognition.

5.2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- iii. Women are visibly absent from positions of leadership and decision-making. With only one elected Member of Parliament, women continue to be disadvantaged by limited decision-making opportunities. Research on leadership and decision-making across the public and private sectors could be used to inform evidence-based policy-making and programme interventions to counter these patterns.
 - iv. Women have also yet to effectively penetrate traditionally male-dominated sectors. For example, women comprised only 7.4% of the national Defence Force in 2004. For data recorded in 2007, this figure dropped to 0.0% (Pebbles, 2011).
142. The CGA finds that women's limited participation in productive work highlights the key factors contributing to the country's poverty-growth dichotomy. It is evident that the pool of available human resources is not well utilized, providing for an effective integration of female labour as a precursor to poverty reduction. Not only does this dichotomy underscore the inability of male breadwinners to meet the needs of their families, but it also highlights the critical issue of failing to mainstream gender equality in approaches to employment. The absence of half of the population from effective participation in productive work is resulting in widespread poverty and economic vulnerability.
- ### 5.2.3 SOCIAL PROTECTION OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION
143. *The Situational Analysis of Older Persons in Belize (2010)* notes that "the population of older persons in Belize has been increasing rapidly and that people are living longer, but this cannot be equated with living a good quality life." In Belize, women outlive men and "these older women are often faced with loss of financial support, limited employment opportunities and greater dependence on them by family members regarding care giving duties" (National Council on Aging, 2010). Almost half of the older population work as care givers and provide for their families and others in diverse ways such as assisting with school expenses, giving to the needy/neighbours, in-laws, and extended family (National Council on Aging, 2010).
144. Currently 63.6% of the older population does not receive a pension or benefit and 84.3% do not earn any employment income (Pebbles, 2011). The majority of those who receive a pension do so from Government (78.9%), and 19.2%
- ✓ Seek technical assistance to undertake a national Education Sector Review, to identify the sector's needs and priorities in order to better respond to the situation and needs of girls and boys. The limited participation of Belizeans in the education system will have significant effects on the long-term economic and social development of the country, and should be immediately addressed both in strategic frameworks and reform agendas, aimed at increasing enrolment and completion at all levels of education. The appropriate resources must be targeted to take action on proposed strategies emerging from the findings of the review. There must be significant improvement in the participation rates in education at all levels for both sexes.
 - ✓ Better align the Belizean education system to changing labour market needs and the national development agenda, and seek to transform the gender segregation that permeates both the education system and labour market opportunities. Utilization of Labour Market Information Systems would assist in taking an informed approach linking education and economic development, and Government-private sector partnerships to offer training and job-shadowing.

receive private and overseas pensions (National Council on Aging, 2010).

145. More women (55.2%) receive pensions than men (44.8%), and more women receive a Government pension than men, who are more likely to get their pensions from overseas. Despite the female-favoured pension earnings, older men have marginally more employment income than women (National Council on Aging, 2010). Only 41% of the elderly indicated that they received income from the family. To support themselves, retired or elderly persons earn extra income from diverse activities such as property rental, small intermittent contributions from their children, assistance from the church, operating small ‘mom ‘n pop’ shops, sundry jobs, and baking and the selling of buns and Johnny cakes (Pebbles, 2011). Some also engage in farming activities or sell fruits and vegetables (National Council on Aging, 2010). However, 75% of participants in a survey conducted by the National Council on Aging reported that their income was not sufficient to meet their needs. Consequently, 65.2% defined themselves as ‘poor’ and indicated that they were always preoccupied about not having enough money to meet their livelihood needs (National Council on Aging, 2010).
146. More than 50% of retired persons surveyed by the Council indicated that while they are no longer active members of the productive labour force, they contribute to their families either in kind or financially (National Council on Aging, 2010). It is highly likely that much of this financial support and in-kind care is provided by elderly women.

5.3 GENDER, CULTURE AND SOCIALISATION

147. As the CGAs of CDB’s other BMCs note, the achievement of gender equality and equity in society is dependent on strategies by institutions, groups and individuals to transform traditional cultural beliefs and socialisation practices (Baksh, 2014). Gender roles and stereotypes are particularly resistant to change, and subject to competing notions of male and female roles in the household, community and nation, further subject to various socio-cultural and ethnic ideas and practices, which are highly influential on individuals and societies as a whole.
148. The diversity of communities comprising the population of Belize presents a potential for varying notions and understandings of the roles and responsibilities of women and men to society. However, despite the diverse belief systems and practices, patriarchy is deeply embedded in key and influential social institutions.
149. Traditional value and belief systems, reinforced through faith-based institutions including churches and schools, are highly influential and impactful in Belize. The faith-based community has actively called for the reinforcement of patriarchal household organization, rigid definitions of male and female social roles, limited sexual and reproductive health rights, and the restriction of rights to vulnerable populations including sex workers and men who have sex with men (MSM). The faith-based organisations have further called for the *National Gender Policy (2013)* to be repealed, and for General Elections to be called over its passing, based on the assumption that the Policy advances ideologies inconsistent with the country’s core values and belief systems. While it is not suggested that all persons with religious affiliations subscribe to gender inequality stereotypes and patriarchal systems of social organization, the views and perspectives of the faith-based community are highly influential in the society, resulting in extensive meetings and negotiations to revise the language of the Policy to better address their concerns. The opposition of churches to the Policy even received the attention of the Prime Minister, who dedicated his time to consult with faith-based groups over the document.

150. However, the systems of social organization perpetuated by the reinforcement of traditional gender roles, fail to take account of contemporary social and economic realities which challenge clear and delineated roles for men and women in society. The 2010 Census indicates that 27.6% of households are female-headed, 60% of which have no men of working age in the household. This reveals that a significant percentage of the population are single parent, female-headed households, without male breadwinners in cohabiting parental units. Thus, there is a fairly common pattern of either “absentee fathers” or male partners involved in visiting relationships with the mothers of their children, with men fathering children with multiple mothers (Pebbles, 2011).
151. The absence of father figures is considered a contributing factor in many households to male youth attracted to gangs (Pebbles, 2011). Not only do gangs provide a place of belonging, but strong male figures are present to emulate, and opportunities are established for relatively easy income, compared to the other economic opportunities available which either require years of schooling or else pay very little (Pebbles, 2011). Despite the targeted attention being paid to black male youth crime and violence, particularly in Belize City, black female unemployment rates are over twice that of males in the same community, and are not immediately connected to family structure issues or challenges.
152. Security issues in Belize have serious implications for both men and women. There is a high level of public social violence perpetrated by men in Belize City in particular. This affects everyone who lives there negatively, in terms of their day-to-day living and threats to their personal safety and well-being. The young men involved also experience higher murder rates than the general population. Those involved in gangs and criminal activity also face the risk of imprisonment. In turn, this places a higher burden on their family members, particularly their wives, common-law partners and mothers, as well as contributes to diminished parenting for their children. This culture of violence also spills over into the home in the form of increased domestic violence (Pebbles, 2011).

5.3.1 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

153. Gender-based violence (GBV) continues to be one of the gravest manifestations of gender inequality in Belize. Over the 6-year period from 2003 to 2009, over 1,200 incidents of domestic violence were reported in each year, with 1,669 cases reported in 2009 (National Women's Commission, 2010). Since the National Women's Commission argues that the majority of cases of domestic violence go unreported, it is expected that numbers are far higher than those indicated here. Reported incidents of rape, indecent assault, unlawful carnal knowledge (sex with a person under the statutory age of consent), commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents are also notably high, and crimes of human trafficking and other violence against sex workers are also prevalent in the country.
154. Over the last decade, the GoBZ has strengthened GBV-related legislation with respect to penalty provisions, applicable ages (for girls), the relevance of evidence, and the scope of rape (extending to within marriage). It is well-recognized that the vast majority of perpetrators of gender-based violence are male, yet strategies to address these crimes are often focused on expecting women to change their behaviours to better ensure their safety, rather than targeting approaches at perpetrators and/or the general male population. While there are progressive, court-mandated training programmes on anger management and other coping strategies for men convicted of gender-based violence, in 2010, only seven men were referred to the programme. In some instances, however,

legislation continues to presume that all perpetrators are male and that all victims are female, further reinforcing the criminality of the male population (Pebbles, 2011).

155. The GBV legislative and response framework fails to adequately protect the lives of women, and/or ensure responsive care, treatment and support services. While in many instances, institutional provisions have been established, such as the formation of a Sexual Offences Unit in the Police Force, and medical professionals responding to related health issues, their hours of work, hesitation to present evidence in court, and inadequate forensic evidence gathering techniques are examples of significant gaps to effectively meeting the needs of victims and survivors (National Women's Commission, 2010).
156. SIB statistics also show that 12.2% of the population still thinks a husband is justified to beat his wife. In Toledo, this belief is as high as 34.2% of the population of that district (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2006).
157. The incidence of public, social and domestic violence come with a high cost to the Belizean economy in terms of loss of life, lost productivity, and the health and social service care costs. World Bank research reveals a strong correlation between gender-based violence and reduced GDP, where in Nicaragua it was found that *“all forms of domestic violence reduced women’s earning by US\$29.5 million, which corresponded to 1.6 % of GDP (not including the multiplier effects of lost earnings)”* (OAS, 2003).
158. The causal and consequential relationship between GBV and HIV is further noted in Belize, as 2.2 out of 10 HIV-positive women and 3.3 out of 10 women living with domestic violence reported that they required the permission of their partners to seek health treatment (National Women's Commission, 2010). As a result, there are legitimate questions over the ability of women to negotiate safer sex, particularly within relationships of dependency. Around 50% of young people in Belize indicated that they used condoms during their last higher-risk sexual activity (UNICEF, 2014), and a health survey indicated that currently only half of the population is aware of how HIV/AIDS is transmitted (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2006). The Ministry of Health notes that Belize has the highest prevalence rate of HIV in Central America and one of the highest rates in the Caribbean. However, the total number of new HIV infections has been decreasing and prevention of mother to child transmission has a coverage rate of pregnant women that is almost 95% over the last 5 years, with a transmission rate that is now below 6% (Pebbles, 2011).

5.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

159. UNICEF data indicates the prevalence of HIV among the adult population (aged 15-49) in Belize is 2.3%. However, the prevalence rate among young women (aged 15-24) is more than double that of young men (1.8% versus 0.7%). While this is a relatively small part of the population, it has significant economic implications as HIV can spread rapidly if the population is not aware of prevention practices. It also tends to be a particular problem related to tourism.
160. As sex work continues to be illegal in Belize, the overall recognition of the vulnerability of sex workers is limited, as is the extension of safeguards against gender-based violence. Moreover, the desire to protect the safety and security of sex workers faces critical opposition and backlash from the faith-based community, who advocate for enforcing the criminalization of sodomy specifically, and homosexuality more generally; and for prostitution, targeting their criticisms at female sex workers. Meanwhile, men are also understood to be actively involved at all levels of the industry. Despite being a small and uncounted group of the population, men who have sex with men (MSM) are particularly vulnerable to discrimination and violence. The legislative framework maintains the illegality of “sodomy”, which by the root of its definition is understood as a moral/religious wrong. Thus men who have sex with men (MSM), along with sex workers are difficult to reach with services, and face serious challenges regarding access to non-discriminatory and confidential health care (Pebbles, 2011).

5.3.2 GENDER AND POLITICS, LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

161. There is a longstanding absence of a critical mass of women in ministerial positions in the country, as Belize has one of the lowest representations of women elected to Parliament in the Caribbean, and among CDB’s BMCs. Among CDB’s other BMCs, Belize ties with Montserrat for the lowest number of women represented in political leadership, however, with more seats in the country’s Parliament to that of Montserrat, Belize has a lower percentage of women serving at the national level.
162. As the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWIL) notes, women in Belize remain marginalized from political participation because of a culture of exclusion, lack of community support, competing family responsibilities, and bias within political structures. In spite

- ✓ Establish a quota system for political parties, the national parliament, local councils, and the private sector, as a special temporary measure to guarantee improved female representation in politics, leadership and decision-making. Support this policy by strengthening the non-partisan training and support offered to female candidates.
- ✓ Target training and sensitization approaches to first responders of crimes of GBV. Ensure the justice and health sector are better equipped to provide gender-responsive services, and address the needs of both women and men.
- ✓ Continue to engage faith-based communities in dialogue on gender issues. With the significant influence of faith-based institutions over the life decisions of citizens and residents in Belize, it is critical to aim to form effective partnerships on gender equality and gender justice issues with faith-based leaders who adopt progressive stances with regard to the issues and challenges facing vulnerable populations and groups.

of these challenges, both at the national and community level, the National Women's Commission, WIN Belize and regional organisations have made significant efforts towards promoting the participation of women in politics, leadership and decision-making. The success of their efforts thus far is chiefly manifested at the municipal level.

163. In 2006, Zenaida Moya became the first female mayor of Belize City, while Fern Gutierrez became the first female mayor of Peini in 2015. Nineteen (19) women out of 45 persons contesting in municipal elections were successful in 2015. In 2012, 35 women contested municipal elections at various levels, with 11 achieving office, revealing an increase in both female contenders and winners.
164. Women's representation within elected government in Belize has always been low, presently two out of 32 (2/32) elected members in the House of Assembly, although there were some improvements from 1993 when women's representation was 3.45 % to 1998 when it increased to 6.9 %. There has however, been better representation at the Senate level, where three out of 16 Senators were women in 2005.
165. Stakeholders indicated that women who have run for office have found that it is very rough arena to enter and that their sexual histories was used as public fodder against them by other politicians and the press – and that this represents something of a double standard as men's sexual histories, while mentioned do not seem to have the same impact with the voters as those of women (Pebbles, 2011). In general, female contenders indicated that there does not seem to be a great deal of support for women in politics from any of the primary political parties (Pebbles, 2011). Women fare better in leadership and decision-making within public service, at senior, technical and mid-level management levels. Yet overall, women's representation at the managerial level is just 20% (UNDP, 2009).

PART II

6.0 NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY

166. The Constitution of Belize (1981) provides protection from discrimination on various grounds, including against sex-based discrimination.

6.1 LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

6.1.1 INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMITMENTS

167. Belize ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1990, and submitted its First and Second Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on progress in meeting its CEDAW commitments in June 1999, and its Third and Fourth Periodic Reports in July 2007.
168. Belize is party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which sets out the basic universal human rights to which everyone in the country is entitled, without distinction or discrimination on the grounds of sex.
169. The country is also party to the Convention of Belem do Para (1994) – the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, a legally-binding instrument developed by the countries of the Organization of American States.
170. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) protects children under the age of 18, and notes their rights to protection from harmful practices such as abuse and exploitation, and to their full participation in family, cultural and social life.
171. Belize is a signatory to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1994), which declares women’s empowerment and full participation in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. The Declaration calls on state parties to intensify efforts aimed at achieving gender equality.
172. A number of ILO conventions have been ratified by Belize, particularly guaranteeing women and men’s rights to dignified employment and non-discrimination in the world of work.
173. In 2000, Belize participated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which formed the basis for the Millennium Development Goals. The successful achievement of all eight MDGs requires the advancement of gender equality, in addition to Goal 3 as a stand-alone goal on gender equality. Belize further participated in the post-2015 agenda which led to the of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. CARICOM countries advocated for gender equality to remain a stand-alone goal in the SDGs.

6.1.2 NATIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF RIGHTS

174. Belize still has some laws on the books that are discriminatory. In some cases, this is a language issue. In others there are explicit differences in the treatment of men and women in the letter of the law. In practice, even though some laws are technically gender equitable, when implemented legal decisions tend to favour one sex over the other.
175. In Belize, the laws that discriminate against women and men related to economic development s are mainly laws regarding pensions, compensation and child support. The latter is particularly important in a region where there is a high level of female-headed households and a pattern of “visiting male partners” who may have children with several different women (Pebbles, 2011).

T14: SUMMARY OF GENDER INEQUITABLE LAWS

LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENT	GENDER ISSUES
Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act (S 18)	Criminalizes prostitution (sex work), making the distinction of males as solicitors and eligible to be charged for living off or soliciting for prostitution, while females are specifically noted as prostitutes. The penalty for men committing the related offences range from as little as being “deemed to knowingly living on the earnings of prostitution”, to a \$100 fine, to a maximum of 12 months in jail. Being a prostitute is considered a Petty Offence.
Registration of Births and Deaths Act (Schedules 1 and 9)	Does not include names of fathers in entries on the Register of Births and Register of Still- births. It further requires the father’s, but not the mother’s, ‘rank or profession’.
Labour Act	Makes provisions for the family of a recruited person, which seems to specifically apply to a male employee. It further provides for the special employment entitlements of 16-17 year old males in evenings or night-times (including enabling them to engage in apprenticeships or vocational training).
Medical Services and Institutions Act (S 59), Evidence Act (S 74), Indictable Procedure Act (S 173), and Criminal Code Act (S 45 & 47)	Makes assumptions about the gender of perpetrators or victims of sexual assaults and abuse. The Medical Services Act further makes a man liable for the cost of maintaining a child (not necessarily his) in a hospital, mental hospital or certified institution, which appears to absolve the otherwise liable (biological) father, whilst – presumably – he remains liable for the same costs associated with his own children.
Families and Children Act (S 64, 65, 69 & 72)	Makes assumptions that the parent liable to pay child maintenance is the father, when in all other references in the Act there is gender-neutrality.

LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENT	GENDER ISSUES
Pensions Act	Precludes a female (but not a male) child aged under 18 years from being entitled to receive a pension if she is married (S 18 extends this to other eligible female children, e.g., a sister). The Act further provides for a pension for a public officer who retires, except for a female officer who resigns due to marriage. S 6(2) states that “a gratuity may be granted”.
Widow’s and Children’s Pensions Act, School Teachers’ Pension Act and Wills Act (S 35 & 36)	Denies a pension or maintenance to a female child if she is married. The Widow’s Pension Act further does not permit female officers as pension contributors, thus precluding male spouses from being beneficiaries. Moreover, the Act states that a pension does not apply to, inter alia, a stepchild unless wholly or partly dependent upon him at the time of his death, which may diminish the obligation of the liable (biological) father to support the child. The Widow’s Pension and Pension Acts do not recognize a common law union as entitling a widow to a pension (viz. not being in a marital relationship), but recognizes a common law union she subsequently enters into as grounds to disqualify her for eligibility (viz. as being in a marriage-like relationship).
School Teachers’ Pension Act	Denies entitlement to a pension, but provides that as long as she has at least five years’ service and has been married less than six months at the time of retirement, she may be granted a gratuity. The Act further states that a widow is eligible for a pension provided that she is “unmarried and of good character”.
Belize City Council Act, Belmopan City Council Act and Town Councils Act (S 45(1))	Establishes conditions where a female officer may “retire or is required to retire” due to marriage.
Companies Act (S 133(4))	Makes conditions concerning share-holdings in the wife’s name which do not appear to apply in reverse.
Married Persons (Protection) Act (S 3 & 5)	Specifies the grounds for an application for separation by a married person, with additional grounds available to a woman (but not vice versa) including that a man had sex with her knowing that he had a sexually transmitted infection (STI), that he has been convicted of assault or aggravated assault, or that he has wilfully neglected to reasonably provide for her and their children.
Evidence Act (S 74 & 96(1))	Specifies that in rape matters, the perpetrator is male and the victim is female, that in sexual cases victims are “women and boys”, and that “offences of gross indecency [are] between male persons” which seems to imply mutual consent, such that there is no recognition of the possibility of non-consensual sex or sexual assault or rape of an adult male (regardless of any assumption about the gender of the perpetrator) (refer also to Criminal Code Act (S 45) re. aggravated assault). The Evidence Act (in addition to the Court of Appeal Act) further refers to

LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENT	GENDER ISSUES
	evidence by a spouse, but given uncertainties in other legislation, may need to clarify the status of common-law spouses.
Criminal Code Act (S 63)	Presumes that a female aged 16 years and over is capable of granting consent, but there seems to be no parallel presumption that a male under 16 years is incapable of granting consent. It also affords protections to females which should be extended to males, including: voiding the consent of a female child who is under 14 years; making an offence of the abduction of an unmarried female under 18 years, but not of an unmarried male; defining the rape victim as a female of any age; and referring to the stealing of a thing with the owner's wife's consent, and instances where the person committed adultery with the wife.
Families and Children Act	Makes a man responsible for the maintenance – where they are unable to maintain themselves – of his own children, whether or not living with him, all children of his wife who are living with her, whether or not he is the biological father, and the child of any of his own children. This provision does not seem to apply equally to the biological fathers of the latter two categories. The Act further makes provision for the determining of a level of maintenance according to the means of the parties in a common law union (including for a child until 18 years), whereas – for the spouse and child in a marital relationship – the Married Persons (Protection) Act (S 2) sets weekly maxima of \$100 for a wife and \$50 for a child (until 16 years), thus treating a spouse and child in a former marital relationship less favourably than those in a former common law union. Finally, this Act also makes better provisions for the collection of maintenance payments for a child born out of wedlock than for a child born to a married couple.

6.2 THE NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERY

6.2.1 CAPACITY OF THE GENDER MACHINERY: WOMEN'S DESK AND NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMISSION

176. In Belize, the National Gender Machinery comprises the Women's Department and the National Women's Commission (NWC). The Women's Department is located within the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation, primarily extending services to women related to gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and other social services. The Women's Department also participates in the formation and analysis of policy, working to mainstream gender across all development sectors.
177. In 1982, the Belizean government established a NWC as a national advisory body on gender related issues. The NWC functioned on a voluntary or part-time basis until 2008, when it recruited its first Executive Director. The Commission now plays the role of advocating for implementation of the *National Gender Policy*, as well as reports on and monitors Belize's compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The

National Women's Commission serves to provide advice on policy actions, while it is also responsible for national education, public awareness, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the policy. The division of responsibility between the Women's Department and the NWC also allows for a degree of independent monitoring of progress on implementation of the *National Gender Policy*. The Women's Department is an ex-officio member of the National Women's Commission and both entities are under the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation.

178. The National Women's Commission developed a *National Gender Policy* in 2002, which was revised in 2010, and updated in 2013. The five priority areas outlined in the 2013 Policy are: i) Health; ii) Education and Skills Training; iii) Wealth and Employment Creation; iv) Violence Producing Conditions; and v) Power and Decision-making.
179. In keeping with the part of its mandate related to service provision, the Women's Department has offices in each of the six districts in the country, with one social worker (a Women Development Officer) per district. These social workers focus exclusively on services for women, such as establishing support groups for survivors of domestic violence.

6.2.2 CAPACITY FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

180. Throughout various sectoral projects, there is evidence of gender sensitization and gender mainstreaming taking place beyond the direction of the National Gender Machinery. These efforts are particularly led by regional and international agencies responsible for extending support to the country in advancing development aims, including United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women.
181. The Women's Department is tasked with implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. In this role its major objectives have been to mainstream gender into all Government policies and programmes. The Department established a Gender Integration Committee (GIC) with representatives from both the Government and non-government sectors. Each Ministry also identified a Gender Focal Point to facilitate the mainstreaming process. As one of its initial actions, the GIC developed a communications strategy to increase public awareness about gender mainstreaming (Women's Department, 2009).
182. The GIC also developed a *Gender Training Manual* to help to build public officers' capacity to integrate a gender perspective into their work and the Women's Department held a gender integration and gender analysis training workshop in 2005, for professional staff from each ministry. The Women's Issues Network (WIN) commissioned a manual on the definition of gender from a Belizean perspective to be used in the training of its NGO member agencies as a means of complementing the Government's gender mainstreaming efforts (Women's Department, 2009).
183. The Women's Department and WIN also developed a *Gender Focal Points Handbook* in 2007, to provide inspiration, guidance, advice, ideas and suggestions to strengthen the impact of Gender Focal Points. However, the Women's Department noted that some Gender Focal Points are no longer active, and has been working on reactivating the network since 2009 (Women's Department, 2009).
184. Interviews with Government personnel from key ministries indicated that there is a mixed understanding of gender mainstreaming, with a common perception being that gender refers primarily to women. Those interviewed felt that men and boys needed to be included in gender

analysis processes, particularly with regard to education and employment (Pebbles, 2011). Some ministry officials also indicated that they were “feeling their way through gender mainstreaming”, and that it would be useful to have related policy guidelines. In general, there was a consensus that there is a need for more gender mainstreaming training within the public sector, but that it needs to be practical in nature and applicable to people’s work (Pebbles, 2011).

185. Many Government officials interviewed also interpreted gender mainstreaming to refer in part to gender balance in employment. They noted that the public sector has high levels of female employment, but that middle and upper management still tends to be predominantly male. Currently out of 19 ministries, seven (36%) have female Chief Executive Officers. There is a much higher percentage of women in senior management positions than is found outside of the public sector, where the national average of women in management, professional and technical positions is 20%.

6.3 NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

186. The GoBZ first adopted the *National Gender Policy (NGP)* in 2002; the National Women’s Commission, revised and updated the *National Gender Policy* in 2010, based on a *Situational Analysis of Gender Issues in Belize*, conducted in 2010, and further revised the new version 2013.
187. The *National Gender Policy (2013)* underwent a review process based on wide consultations, which resulted in a number of changes in the Policy, and the removal of some targets and indicators. The core policy priorities established in the 2010 draft of the Policy remain intact. However, certain provisions safeguarding the rights of sex workers were removed. Further, extensive gender sensitization was undertaken to clarify the definition of issues of diversity, particularly in respect to ‘sexual orientation’, which was heavily challenged by faith-based organisations. Further opposition came from the Belize National Teachers Union and the main Opposition political party, questioning its formation as a foreign aid tool/strategy.
188. Despite these challenges, the *National Gender Policy* has received support at the highest political level, with the Prime Minister of Belize upholding the document in its current form, and full support provided by the Women’s

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Assess the capacity of ministries, CSOs and private sector partners to mainstream gender in their policy, operational and programmatic frameworks. Provide support to mainstream gender across all sectors, through targeted training and development approaches. Utilize the findings of the CGA which reveal critical gender considerations across all economic and social development areas. Sensitize/brief senior/executive management in Government and civil society organisations on key gender equality issues relevant for their areas of responsibility.
- ✓ Upgrade the Women’s Department to a Gender Department, providing the necessary technical support to enhance their mandate for gender justice across all development areas and sectors.
- ✓ Provide support to strengthen the collection and analysis of gender-sensitive data and indicators across all productive sectors. Facilitate inter-agency collaboration with the Statistical Institute of Belize to produce regular annual reports on the status of women and men in key sectors, within a social development framework, and as a measurement of national growth and development.

Issues Network (WIN) Belize. As of 2015 however, the *National Gender Policy (2013)* continues to await full adoption by Cabinet.

6.4 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN THE BMC

189. While the *National Gender Policy (2013)* delineates roles and responsibilities for core departments and agencies to advance gender equitable outcomes across priority sectors, the Policy has gaps with regard to financial support for implementation. Belize's *CSP* echoes the necessity to direct budgetary allocations towards programming, while strengthening the human resource capacity of the Ministries of Finance and Education (Caribbean Development Bank, 2011).
190. The *National Gender Policy (2013)* further outlines the cooperative, partnering responsibilities for mainstreaming gender across all sectors and development areas in Belize. The Women's Department provides the link between the NWC, Government, quasi-government and non-governmental organisations responsible for implementation, chiefly through an established Gender Integration Committee (GIC), comprised of representatives from both the Government and non-government sectors.
191. The Policy specifically identifies the Ministry of Finance as the agency responsible for providing adequate financial resources for gender-responsive budgeting and thus the successful implementation of the Policy, while the Ministry of Public Service is charged with the responsibility of building human resource capacity across Government. The Policy also outlines the roles of other ministries, civil society organisations, international development partners and the Statistical Institute of Belize.
192. Despite the extensive collaborative framework of the policy, and expectations that their work should advance gender equitable outcomes, senior government officials consulted for the *CGA* indicated that their capacity to do gender analysis and budgets is fairly limited, and further for some, that "gender" is one of a number of cross-cutting issues they are expected to integrate into their work. Meanwhile, officials in the divisions of Trade and Exports, Lands and Agriculture, and the Bureau of Standards expressed the need for sensitization/training on "how to do gender mainstreaming", to ensure the development of gender-responsive policies and programmes that respond to the lives and needs of women and men, and do not serve to further exacerbate gender inequities.

PART III

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

193. This *Country Gender Assessment* for Belize provides a gender analysis of key areas of economic and social development, as well as the legislative framework and institutional capacity to promote gender equality and mainstreaming across all sectors. Belize has benefitted from over a decade of national engagement and gender analysis of the subject position of women in society, led by the National Women's Commission, and articulated through successive National Gender Policies. Despite a well-articulated understanding of critical areas and priorities for action to advance gender equality, there are notable persistent and prevailing gender issues, which are exacerbated by high levels of poverty and the limited participation of women in the labour market, and by deeply embedded patriarchal systems of social organization which define distinctive roles and responsibilities for women and men in society, and perpetuate women's subordination. For Belize to advance a development framework where equal opportunities for men/boys and women/girls are ensured, the capacity of citizens and residents must be strengthened for them to contribute equitably to national development, and the broader economic and social development framework must be gender-responsive, establishing the necessary conditions for gender equality to be realised.
194. It is critical to ensure that traditional gender distinctive roles and responsibilities, and gender stereotypes are not reinforced, where they fail to meet the needs of both males and females. These gender inequalities are evident in: Health Care; Education and Training; Social Protection and Social Services; Agriculture and Rural Development; Tourism Development; Private Sector and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development; Infrastructure Development; the Institutional Framework for Economic and Social Development; Environmental Sustainability, Disaster Management and Climate Change; Justice and Security; Governance and Leadership Structures; and other key areas.
195. The *CGA* presents gender-based statistical data and gender analysis which underscore the necessity for the Government to address poverty and development priorities, ensuring equity among men/boys and women/girls. The National Gender Machinery requires support and capacity to guide the development process in a gender-responsive way. This requires that gender is mainstreamed across all sectors and areas, and effectively involves Government, civil society and the private sector. It is critical to devote resources towards gathering, synthesizing and analyzing sex-disaggregated data across all productive sectors, and to utilize this data in policy-making and programming.
196. This *CGA* highlights key areas of opportunity for mainstreaming gender and advancing gender equality, and is therefore a tool to review and assess the pace and direction of development strategies in meeting their intended outcomes. The *National Gender Policy* acutely notes the importance of mobilizing resources for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes on gender equality, and calls for gender analysis to be utilized in wider sustainable development outcomes. Political will is therefore required at all levels of Government, within civil society, and across the private sector to enable Belizeans to participate fully in the development processes which affect their lives, and for their lives to form the centre of the development agenda.

This requires critical and continuous engagement with gender equality issues, and advancing key economic and social development strategies which ensure the country's growth may be balanced, harmonious and sustainable.

7.2 COMPILED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Belize prioritised four (4) recommendations tabled in the CGA for immediate action, at the Regional Validation Workshop held on 5th December 2015, by the Caribbean Development Bank. The prioritised recommendations are highlighted in the summary and table below:

Gender and the Economy

1. Revisit medium and long term economic development strategies to explicitly address the country's growth-poverty dichotomy. Mainstreaming gender and other cross-cutting social issues is necessary for national development framework(s) to transform the subject position of vulnerable groups along targeted growth strategies.
2. Re-examine medium-term debt and deficit reduction strategies in favour of investment in social infrastructure. Job creation strategies and social welfare spending can contribute to strengthening economic and other life chances for the 56% of the population living in or vulnerable to poverty.

Gender, Agriculture and Fisheries

3. Support for women in agriculture necessitates the advancement of trade decisions which support domestic growth in the crops women tend to harvest, and ensuring the enabling environment for the growth of agro-processing is assured. Explore existing trade, import and export relationships to provide women with preferential access to and distribution of locally-harvested agriculture products. New and emerging agricultural research initiatives, namely the Agricultural Enterprise Development Project, should continue to advance its gender-responsive implementation strategies: while more than 10 women's groups have been project beneficiaries, monitoring and evaluation should assess the project's success in promoting food security, sustainable livelihoods, and viable entry points to ensure women's access and success in the sector.
4. Put in place strategies to improve women's access to agri-processing, marketing and export opportunities, taking women beyond rudimentary participation in the sector. Government and private sector policy frameworks and strategies should ensure product responsiveness to the market, both in supporting quality assurance mechanisms for producers, and strengthening opportunities for products and services to meet market demands.
5. GoBZ and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) should work with women to develop alternative products in agro-processing and other manufacturing areas that are either more viable, or for which assuring assurance of household food security. Extend support through technological innovation, joint production scaling up, and other measures to enable female-owned businesses to make a larger contribution to the sector.
6. Provide additional support to CSOs engaged in working to disrupt gender inequalities which limit women's access to and participation to these sectors. Establishing core areas of focus at the national level will assist CSOs in addressing identified needs, such as: increasing women's child care access;

ending domestic violence and household gender inequality; women's economic empowerment and access to credit; and leadership and enterprise development training.

Gender and Tourism (Tertiary Industries)

7. Strengthen the supporting infrastructural and programmatic framework to enable women to further participate in the tourism sector. On-site day facilities in both urban and rural areas would make tourism sites more women and family-friendly. Moreover, affirmative action strategies at the leadership and management levels will propel women's access to higher paying employment; this should be coupled with appropriate training and development strategies.
8. Utilize sector data and Labour Market Surveys to identify opportunities for employment and market growth for both women and men. Improving training and support processes requires informed market analysis, as to ensure that they are responsive to market needs and demands. Women, in particular, would benefit from the identification of increased opportunities to participate in the sector, recognizing their current high level of participation
9. As the tourism and overall tertiary industries account for the most stable economic growth potential, and highest levels of employment for both males and females, the tourism development strategy should mainstream gender, ensuring that all core development initiatives take into account differential impacts on men and women.
10. With the over-representation of women in the lowest income earning positions in the tourism sector, an increase in the national minimum wage should be considered, as a precursor to household economic stability, and to poverty alleviation for the working poor.
11. Advance strategies to prevent and prosecute instances of human trafficking, while implementing core strategies of the *National Gender Policy* to ensure that vulnerable groups, such as sex workers, are accorded the appropriate rights and services (including health care), to ensure that human development is at the core of the response framework.

Environmental Issues and Natural Disasters

12. Provide technical assistance to environment-responsible agencies to build capacity in gender mainstreaming, ensuring that gender-based considerations form part of planning and response strategies.
13. Sensitize manufacturing companies and other large-scale businesses to the gender, environmental and human development impacts of capital and other infrastructure development initiatives. The GoBZ should set targets for mainstreaming gender and the environment in capital development, such as the inclusion of gender and environmental assessments in all capital development bids over a particular size/scope.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

14. Sensitize banks and other lending institutions to gender inequality issues embedded in banking and loan processes. By underscoring the challenges that limit women's access to productive resources, the aim is to improve banking and loan processes, and thus increase access to finance for female-led MSMEs.

15. Provide support to build capacity for business planning and resource mobilization for women, to ensure that their businesses can participate more equitably with male-led businesses. Provide training and support for initiatives in new and emerging goods and services areas. It is critical to increase the sectoral participation of women, ensuring that women are knowledgeable in and develop sustainable businesses in areas which would advance their economic empowerment.
16. Collect sex-disaggregated statistics on the ownership and management of MSMEs in Belize, as a basis for developing policies and programme which ensure women's equal access to the market. Support to MSMEs in market-driven areas should be prioritized.
17. Provide assistance to MSMEs towards strengthening the marketing of goods and services domestically and internationally. This involves further supporting female and male entrepreneurs to meet regional and international distribution standards, by effectively ensure quality and standards frameworks are in place across all productive sectors.
18. Provide training to female owners and operators of MSMEs to address core gender inequalities impacting on the sustainability of their businesses. Work to improve goal setting, business planning and other skills, including distribution issues, in order to improve women's confidence to achieve success as business owners and leaders.
19. Put in place mechanisms to integrate informal MSMEs into the formal economy through the removal of economic and other barriers; develop approaches to ensure that informally-run MSMEs receive the same level of social protection and services as businesses in the formal economy.

Education and Training, Labour and Employment Opportunities

20. Seek technical assistance to undertake a national Education Sector Review, to identify the sector's needs and priorities in order to better respond to the situation and needs of girls and boys, in line with the Education Sector Strategy. The limited participation of Belizeans in the education system will have significant effects on the long-term economic and social development of the country, and should be immediately addressed both in strategic frameworks and reform agendas, aimed at increasing enrolment and completion at all levels of education. The appropriate resources must be targeted to take action on proposed strategies emerging from the findings of the review. There must be significant improvement in the participation rates in education at all levels for both sexes.
21. Better align the Belizean education system to changing labour market needs and the national development agenda, and seek to transform the gender segregation that permeates both the education system and labour market opportunities. Utilization of Labour Market Information Systems would assist in taking an informed approach linking education and economic development, and Government-private sector partnerships to offer training and job-shadowing.
22. Revise, where required, text books and educational materials at all levels to remove the prevailing gender biases. Schools play an important role in the reinforcement or dismantling of traditional gender roles and stereotypes. A country-wide gender sensitization programme for education administrators and teachers should be included in the education review strategies.
23. Foster entrepreneurship within the school curriculum, beginning in primary school, providing training which results in a reduction of failure rates and evokes an overall entrepreneurial focus for

girls and boys as they consider employment options. Provide incentives through scholarships and awards for students excelling in defined target growth sectors.

24. Improve the policy and programmatic response strategies of the Ministry of Labour to mainstream gender. There is a strong need for labour initiatives to specifically target women, and address the high level of unemployment of women in the country, revisiting possible entry points to the market.

Gender, Culture and Socialisation

25. Establish a quota system for political parties, the national parliament, local councils, and the private sector, as a special temporary measure to guarantee improved female representation in politics, leadership and decision-making. Support this policy by strengthening the non-partisan training and support offered to female candidates.
26. Target training and sensitization approaches to first responders of crimes of GBV. Ensure the justice and health sector are better equipped to provide gender-responsive services, and address the needs of both women and men. Issues of support to rural communities, psycho-social support and hyper masculinity in cultural norms form part of this strategic approach.
27. Continue to engage faith-based communities in dialogue on gender issues. With the significant influence of faith-based institutions over the life decisions of citizens and residents in Belize, it is critical to aim to form effective partnerships on gender equality and gender justice issues with faith-based leaders who adopt progressive stances with regard to the issues and challenges facing vulnerable populations and groups.

National Framework on Gender Equality

28. Assess the capacity of ministries, CSOs and private sector partners to mainstream gender in their policy, operational and programmatic frameworks. Provide support to mainstream gender across all sectors, through targeted training and development approaches. Utilize the findings of the *CGA* which reveal critical gender considerations across all economic and social development areas. Sensitize/brief senior/executive management in Government and civil society organisations on key gender equality issues relevant for their areas of responsibility.
29. Upgrade the Women's Department to a Gender Department, providing the necessary technical support to enhance their mandate for gender justice across all development areas and sectors.
30. Provide support to strengthen the collection and analysis of gender-sensitive data and indicators across all productive sectors. Facilitate inter-agency collaboration with the Statistical Institute of Belize to produce regular annual reports on the status of women and men in key sectors, within a social development framework, and as a measurement of national growth and development.

T15: RECOMMENDATIONS MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	ACCOUNTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	CDB LEVEL ACTION	OTHER PARTNERS	CGA SECTION
1	MOF	LOW to MEDIUM – Requires extensive effort to address root causes of poverty in most-affected communities and generate employment opportunities; understand the relationship of gender inequality to poverty, and gender mainstreaming to development outcomes	BNTF and wider programme support towards Social and Economic Infrastructure; Agriculture and Rural Development; Technical Assistance	IICA UN Women UNDP Local CSO	4.1
2	MOF	LOW to MEDIUM – Paradigm shift in economic policy from debt-restructuring and austerity focus to deficit spending to advance employment and investment.	Technical Assistance; Governance and Accountability support		4.1
3	MOTr MOA	MEDIUM – Existing participation of women in the sector; existing networks of support towards advancing industry-related products; international trade agreement agenda impacting upon and limiting domestic autonomy over trade outcomes.	Government and Accountability; Technical Assistance	IICA CARICOM	4.1
4	MOA MOTr BELTraide	MEDIUM to HIGH – Existing trade and export development institution; training for women SMES available at low to no cost; high potential for comprehensive policy environment.	Technical Assistance; Policy-based loan		4.1
5	PS CSO BELTraide	MEDIUM to HIGH – Culture for innovation and MSME development is existing; willingness to support female-led producers cross-cutting ministries	Private Sector Operations; Agriculture and Rural Development; Technical Assistance		4.1
6	NGM	HIGH – Clear articulation of core areas of concern for gender mainstreaming; established relationships with CSO; CSO	Policy-based loan (towards the implementation of National Gender Policy and plans of action)		4.1

RECOMMENDATION	ACCOUNTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	CDB LEVEL ACTION	OTHER PARTNERS	CGA SECTION
		involvement in core areas is high, and fundamental understanding of key gender issues evident.			
7	PS MOL MOT NGM	MEDIUM – Political will at the corporate level necessary to see women’s participation supported and promotions advanced; government-led sensitisation of private sector on gender mainstreaming outcomes.	Policy-based loans towards implantation of National Gender Plan; Education and Training		4.1
8	MOL	MEDIUM to HIGH – Extensive statistical profile may be used to establish labour targets and projects, set labour policy; evidence-based training approaches to emerge from statistical findings.		ILO	4.1
9	MOT	MEDIUM – Supportive institutional framework for mainstreaming gender among partner agencies; requires political will for successful integration and adoption.	Technical Assistance; Policy-based loan		4.1
10	MOF MOL NGM	LOW to MEDIUM – Political will essential to advance progression towards living wage; influence of PS likely to deter wage increases; rationale for increasing women’s economic security likely to come externally; poverty alleviation functioned positioned within Ministry of Human Development.	Technical Assistance	UN Women ILO	4.1
11	NGM	MEDIUM to HIGH – Gender Policy supported at Cabinet level; public pressure against support for sex workers may hinder successful outcomes.		IOM	4.3

RECOMMENDATION	ACCOUNTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	CDB LEVEL ACTION	OTHER PARTNERS	CGA SECTION
12	MOA	MEDIUM – Existing gender considerations and understandings within Ministry; advancing policy framework to integrate gender required.	Technical Assistance; Policy-based loan		4.1
13	NGM MOA MOTr BELTraide	MEDIUM to HIGH – Clear indication of gender-mainstreaming interest within MOTr; existing cooperative relationship between government and PS; requires the establishment of effective strategy to engage with cross-sector of industries	Policy-based loan; Government and Accountability		4.1
14	MOF NGM	MEDIUM – Requires political will within financial institutions to advance gender considerations, and change in overall gender-insensitive culture.	Technical Assistance		4.1
15	BELTraide CSO	MEDIUM to HIGH – Existing training and support framework within institution; opportunities for cooperation between government and CSOs.		UN Women	4.1
16	SIB	HIGH – Advanced statistical framework with regular data and statistics sharing programme; successful exploration of industry sector; requires development of appropriate research methods for the collection of information.		CARICOM (establish regional model framework)	4.1
17	BETraide Chamber of Commerce	HIGH – Existing training and development approaches among core agencies; Identification of participants requires more extensive and broad scope; exploration of barriers to participation in programmes by	Governance and Accountability; Private Sector Partnerships	CARICOM	4.1

RECOMMENDATION	ACCOUNTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	CDB LEVEL ACTION	OTHER PARTNERS	CGA SECTION
		vulnerable women; gender sensitisation within core agencies required on continuous basis.			
18	BETraide Chamber of Commerce	HIGH – Existing training and development approaches among core agencies; Identification of participants requires more extensive and broad scope; exploration of barriers to participation in programmes by vulnerable women; gender sensitisation within core agencies required on continuous basis.	Governance and Accountability; Private Sector Partnerships	CARICOM	4.1
19	MOL Bureau of Standards MOTr	MEDIUM – Exploration of limitations to formal economic systems by women is required; External or international influence on effective integration of women-led industries.			4.1
20	MOE	LOW to MEDIUM – Existing regional support to development of sustainable outcomes in education; Requires extensive engagement to explore core issues impacting limited participation in education through life cycle.	Technical Assistance; Policy-based loan	UNICEF	4.2
21	MOE MOL	MEDIUM – Extensive recognition of the link between education opportunities and employment opportunities required within core ministries; Strong statistical framework to support identification of new and emerging employment areas.	Technical Assistance	UNICEF	4.2
22	MOE	LOW to MEDIUM – Requires extensive investment in Ministry to advance systemic changes.	Policy-based loan; Technical Assistance; Governance and Accountability	UNICEF	4.2

RECOMMENDATION	ACCOUNTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	CDB LEVEL ACTION	OTHER PARTNERS	CGA SECTION
23	MOE MOL	MEDIUM – Connection to be established between economic development outcomes and education policy.	Technical Assistance; Policy development		4.2
24	MOL	MEDIUM – Requires immediate engagement with labour challenges, and recognition of gender dimensions to employment issues; Gender-based employment initiatives require technical knowledge to integrate issues successfully; long-standing gender inequality in labour limits potential for policy to be transformative in short-term.	Policy-based loan; Technical Assistance		4.2
25	NGM Political Parties WIN Belize	LOW to MEDIUM – Persisting challenges to change gender composition in national politics; requires political will within gate-keeping institutions.	Policy based loan towards programmatic interventions	UN Women	4.3
26	MONS NGM	MEDIUM to HIGH – Training programmes an extension of recent efforts on GBV; recognising institutional cultural challenges to systemic reform in treatment of victims and survivors.		UN Women	4.3
27	NGM CSO	LOW to MEDIUM – Demonstrated limited understanding of core gender issues among certain groups within target; opportunity to partner with gender-sensitive CSOs to bridge gaps and challenges.			4.3
28	NGM	MEDIUM – Human and financial resource capacity to engage in extensive gender-mainstreaming support; Findings of CGA provide	Technical Assistance; Governance and Accountability		4.3

RECOMMENDATION	ACCOUNTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	CDB LEVEL ACTION	OTHER PARTNERS	CGA SECTION
		framework for engaging with issues across sector.			
29	Cabinet	MEDIUM to HIGH – Political will at highest decision-making level required; support for gender-mainstreaming demonstrated through support of national policy.		UN Women	5.0
30	SIB	HIGH – Advanced statistical framework with regular data and statistics sharing programme; successful exploration of industry sector; requires development of appropriate research methods for the collection of information.		CARICOM (establish regional model framework)	5.0

REFERENCES

- Baksh, R. (2014). *Country Gender Assessment of Grenada*. Barbados: Caribbean Development Bank.
- Barnett, C. et al. (2010). *Horizon 2030: Long Term Development Framework for Belize, 2010-2030*. Government of Belize.
- Barrow, H.D. (2014). *Bettering People, Building Belize - A Budget for All: Budget Speech for Fiscal Year 2014/2015*. Belize City: Government of Belize.
- Belize Trade and Investment Zone (2015). *Belize Trade and Investment Zone: Secondary Industries, Manufacturing*. Accessed at: The Belize Trade and Investment Zone: <http://www.belize.org/tiz/manufacturing>.
- Beltraide (2014, September). CGA Interview with Beltraide (T. Huggins, Interviewer).
- Caribbean Development Bank (2011). *Belize Country Strategy Paper 2011-2015*. Caribbean Development Bank and Government of Belize.
- Cobell, K. (2014). *The Cost of Education in Belize*. Accessed at: Pathlight: The Cost of Education in Belize: <http://pathlight.org/the-cost-of-education-in-belize/>
- Commonwealth Network (2015). *Finding Industry and Manufacturing Expertise in Belize*. Accessed at: The Commonwealth of Nations Network: http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/sectors-belize/business/industry_and_manufacturing/
- Corporation, D.F. (2011, June). CGA Interview with the Development Finance Corporation. (D. Peebles, Interviewer).
- Cuffe, S. (2014, October 27). *Indigenous Communities Challenge Big Oil in Belize*. Accessed at: Earth Sand Journal: http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/elist/eListRead/indigenous_communities_challenge_big_oil_in_belize/
- Davidson, C. (2013, October 9). *The State of Sexual and Reproductive Health in Belize*. Accessed at: International Planned Parenthood Federation: <https://www.ippfwhr.org/en/blog/the-state-of-sexual-and-reproductive-health-in-belize>.
- Halcrow Group Ltd. (2010). *Belize Country Poverty Assessment*. Government of Belize and the Caribbean Development Bank.
- Halcrow Group Ltd. (2010). *Belize Country Poverty Assessment Final Report*. Government of Belize and the Caribbean Development Bank.
- Health, M. o. (2011, June). CGA Interview with Ministry of Health. (D. Peebles, Interviewer).
- Klippenstein, F.E. (1997). Gender and Mennonites: A Response to Mennonites in Canada, 1930-1970 - A People Transformed. *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 145.

- Mendoza, P. (2010). *Belize Medium Term Development Strategy 2010-2013: Building Resilience Against Social, Economic and Physical Vulnerabilities*. Ministry of Social Policy, Policy and Planning Unit; Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce and Industry and Consumer Protection.
- Ministry of Agriculture and National Resources (2012). *Belize National Agriculture and Food Production Policy*. Government of Belize.
- Ministry of Education (2011). *Profile of Women and Men in Leadership in Education Institutions in Belize (Powerpoint presentation)*. Belize City: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Energy (2015). *Geology and Petroleum Department, Belize Petroleum Industry*. Accessed at: Ministry of Energy, Science & Technology, and Public Utilities: <http://estpu.gov.bz/index.php/geology-petroleum>
- National Council on Aging (2010). *Situational Analysis of Elder Persons in Belize*. Government of Belize.
- National Women's Commission (2010). *Situational Analysis of Gender Issues in Belize: The National Gender Policy*. Government of Belize.
- OAS (2003). *Challenges and Opportunities for Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Organization of American States.
- Officials, T. (2011, June). CGA Interview with Tourism Officials. (D. Peebles, Interviewer).
- Peebles, D. (2011). *Belize Country Gender Assessment 2011*. Caribbean Development Bank (unpublished).
- Randriamaro, Z. (2006). *Gender and Trade Overview Report*. Accessed at: <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk>: BRIDGE Development and Gender.
- Rural and Economic Development, O. (2011, June). Regional and Economic Development and Agriculture CGA Interview. (D. Peebles, Interviewer).
- Seepersaud, M. (2012). *Belize MSME Policy and Strategy Report*. Belize Trade and Investment Development Services (Beltraide).
- Standards, B. o. (2014, September). CGA Interview with Bureau of Standards. (T. Huggins, Interviewer).
- Statistical Institute of Belize (2006). *Select MICS Indicators for Women*. Government of Belize.
- Statistical Institute of Belize (2010). *Belize Population and Housing Census 2010*. Government of Belize.
- Statistical Institute of Belize (2010). *Belize Population and Housing Census Country Report*. Belize City: SIB and UNFPA.
- Statistical Institute of Belize (2013). *Belize Labour Force Survey April 2013: Preliminary Findings*. Government of Belize.
- Statistical Institute of Belize (2015). *External Trade Bulletin February 2015*. Government of Belize.
- Statistical Institute of Belize (2015, February). *GDP Fourth Quarter 2014 Release*. Accessed at: Statistical Institute of Belize: Statistics: <http://www.sib.org.bz/Portals/0/docs/statistics/gdp/releases/GDP%20Q4%202014.pdf>

- UNDP (2009). *Enhancing Gender Visibility in Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change in the Caribbean: Country Assessment Report for Belize*. United Nations Development Programme.
- Women's Department (2009). *Country Report on Gender Equality*. Belmopan, Belize: Ministry of Social Transformation, Government of Belize.
- World Bank (2014, November). *Millennium Development Indicators*. Accessed at: World Bank Catalog of Millennium Development Indicators: <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/millennium-development-indicators>
- World Bank (2015). *Belize GDP Growth (Annual%)*. Accessed at: Worldbank Databank: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>
- World Economic Forum (2013). *The Global Gender Gap Report: Insight Report*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum.