



**C Collaborate** Credible Capable Commitment Consistent  
**E Excellence Effective** Expedient  
**D Diversity Dependable Development**  
**A Advocacy** Audacity Assurance Assertive Accountable  
**W Wisdom Willpower**

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# Newsletter

*Ensure the Convention mandates are upheld,  
and the recommendations  
highlighted in the Closing Observations are  
implemented in the context of  
Trinidad and Tobago.*

*A sensitized, knowledgeable and educated citizenry, on the convention and its mandates who will hold all stakeholders accountable for its comprehensive implementation.*

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Pullout

Monitoring Government's action on Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Collaboration for Impact, Know your Status get Tested

CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) is a volunteer non-governmental organization focused on Advocacy and Public Awareness on and for the Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).



Prof. Rhoda Reddock, elected to the CEDAW Committee in July 2018. Prof. Reddock is the first Trinidadian woman to be nominated.

 Ambassador Penelope Beckles-Robinson, Permanent Representative to the United Nations for Trinidad and Tobago elected Chair, UN Women Board. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

## Let's TALK TT - Men Speak

Let's Talk TT is an initiative of the British High Commission and the EU Delegation to Trinidad and Tobago. It was developed to create a neutral platform where pressing concerns related to gender-based violence and gender equality can be discussed, in an effort to raise awareness and create healthy dialogue on the issues. The theme for 2018, #Let'sTalk-TT:MenSpeak was focused on providing a platform to discuss the male perspective on gender inequalities and stereotypes.

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Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is established under article 17 of the Convention. It is composed of 23 experts who are elected by secret ballot by States parties. The Committee is tasked with the review of the reports of States parties submitted in accordance with article 18 of the Convention. The Optional Protocol to the Convention, which entered into force in December 2000, empowers the Committee to consider communications submitted by individuals or groups of individuals alleging violations of the Convention in States parties to the Convention and the Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol also entitles the Committee of its own motion to inquire into grave or systematic violations of the Convention in those States parties where this procedure is applicable, in accordance with articles 8 and 10. Committee members serve in their personal capacities, and not as representatives of the States parties which present their candidature.

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## Let's TALK TT -Men Speak continued

by Crystal Roberts, CCoTT Member

The fact that women are disproportionately affected by Gender-Based Violence (GBV), since one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime, worldwide, members of the CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) engaged in the discussion through a series of media segments on the topic of Male Violence in an effort to create a balanced perspective.

Gender-based violence is an issue that has far reaching consequences as it affects the health, security and autonomy of its victims which in turn affects an entire society. CCoTT in its contribution reiterated the fact that ending gender-based violence should not be seen as a male versus female phenomenon but as a societal issue which requires a collaborative effort between both parties around a common issue.

Gender based violence is still shrouded in a culture of silence in Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the world. CCoTT as in

previous discussions sought to amplify their voices and seize the opportunity to solidify the view that the power of a collective voice through collaboration is what it takes to advocate and lead campaigns towards ending GBV and achieving gender equality.

The amplification of CCoTT's voice though, by no means was an attempt to silence the voice of the men. CCoTT did not forget that this initiative was a platform for men to speak and the importance of listening to what they have to say if we are to continue to raise awareness and develop solutions to ending GBV. Further, CCoTT applauded the fact that men were speaking up about the issue. Representatives from organizations such as the Citizen Security Program and The Single Fathers Association of Trinidad and Tobago all gave meaningful insights during the conversations.

Let's Talk TT is one such initiative which continues to bring together civil society and other individuals from diverse backgrounds to contribute to the ongoing conversation on GBV and gender equality. As the conversations progress, CCoTT remains committed to shaping the trajectory towards achieving a gender equal society.

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## We must all work together to end violence against women

Amílcar Sanatan, Instructor, UWI Department of Geography and Terry Ince, Convener, CEDAW Committee of T&T

Violence against women (VAW) continues to afflict Caribbean societies and undermine national development. This has costs on the psychic and social well-being of victims as well as social and public health sectors and the economy. According to UN Women Caribbean, 1 in 3 women will experience a form of gender-based violence. Violence against women - including domestic violence, intimate partner violence, rape, sexual assault and public street harassment - is fundamentally violation of their human rights.

Notably, through activist agitation and the growing number of parliamentary voices to reduce violence against women, there is legislation that empowers the state to address the problem of violence against women. However, the shortcomings in implementation, low prosecution rates, and discontinued legal proceedings by victims who are sometimes pressured into dropping charges for a few reasons limit the achievements of



CCoTT represented at CSW62 by Terry Ince, Convener, CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT)

the legislation.

In Trinidad and Tobago, where violence and crime are prevalent, it is necessary that the state and social groups make specialized interventions to address the problem of violence against women. While public awareness campaigns share information and challenge the ideas that promote violence against women in society, it is equally important that we assign the resources for community security and social services to eliminate violence against women.

International instruments, such as the CEDAW convention provide guidance and a framework for building appropriate

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societal infrastructures to promote balance and equality and to circumvent the dynamics that indirectly or directly allow for violence against women and girls. CEDAW – the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women – is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Trinidad and Tobago became a signatory to the convention in 1985 and ratified it in 1990. Since then this country has made important advances in protections for women, girls and families in areas such as education, health and safety, family court, maternity and human trafficking

It was welcome news when in March 2018, the green paper on the Gender Policy was laid in cabinet and this past Tuesday November 27, the Gender Equality Protocol for Judicial Officers was launched by the Judiciary, which would provide for justice through a gender lens.

Beyond the legal/judicial framework, however, we must recognize the role we all should play, so that as a country we achieve substantive equality for Men and Women, Boys and Girls. Public and Private sector, Civil Society and Citizens must stand up and speak out against violence in all forms and against women and girls.

Trinidad and Tobago enjoys an active women's movement that, when mobilized, can affect change, so we must continue to collaborate around common issues, form more allies and move the needle forward.

Men too must see themselves as a critical stakeholder working with the women's movement and feminist leaders to advance gender equality. During these 16 Days of Activism, therefore, we encourage men to speak out, speak up and challenge those men who perform acts of violence against women.

Men's organizations in South Africa, Brazil and India, for example, have joined the #HearMeToo campaign to add their voices to the struggle to end violence against women and advance a wider dialogue on accountability. The #LetsTalkTT: Men Speak campaign of the European Union Delegation and the British High Commission here in Trinidad and Tobago is one such effort among many to create conversations with men that mobilise them to public action. Progress is being made, but as a society we must stay engaged, involved and remain vigilant to ensure that we continue moving in the direction of a humane equitable society.

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EOC chairperson Lynette Seeberan-Suite delivers the keynote speech at the working sessions. PICTURES MIKHAIL GIBBINGS

## Local groups address discrimination against women

PAULA LINDO  
trinidadnewsman.com

The CEDAW (Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) Committee of T&T (CCoTT) held a working session on December 6 to examine the five specific recommendations made to the Government following the 2016 CEDAW review in Geneva. CCoTT convener Terry Ince said the five recommendations were wide-ranging and comprehensive.

The working session brought together state and non-state

representatives, women's human rights defenders, policymakers and influencers and concerned citizens, including representatives from the Ministry of the Attorney General Office and Legal Affairs (MoAGLA), International Human Rights Unit, Office of the Prime Minister Gender Affairs Division (OPMGAD), Ministry of National Security Anti-Trafficking Unit, T&T Police Service Victim and Witness Support (VWS) Unit, Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CADV) with the keynote delivered by the Chair of the Equal

Opportunity Commission. During the session, reports were made as to the progress of State agencies towards implementation of the recommendations since they were made in 2016.

The first recommendation was that the State ensure that all cases of gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls be thoroughly and effectively investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished and that the Central Registry on Domestic Violence has up-to-date statistical data on cases focusing on all forms of gender-based violence against women. Since 2016, a Central Registry has been established, but statistical data is only collected for cases involving domestic violence. Attempts are being made to change the data collection form to include all cases of gender-based violence against women. Victims rights brochures have been created in multiple languages and made available with the support of the Anti-Trafficking Unit.

The second recommendation was that the State undertake a needs assessment to establish the demand for shelters by women who are victims of violence and ensure that shelters are accessible and sufficiently resourced throughout the State party. Director of the Gender Affairs Division Antoinette Jack-Martin indicated that three shelters, one male and two female, are needed. Discussion took place as to what is the capacity of the

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### EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT CORNER

**INTERNAL**  
- CEDAW Convention Review Series - deconstructing the convention articles

**COMMUNITY**  
Community Forum on Violence Against Women - La Brea

**NATIONAL**  
- Consultation on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace - Ministry of Labour  
- First Citizens Women's Conference  
- EOC/IGDS workshop on Sexual Harassment  
- Collaborate for Impact - Review recommendations on Violence Against Women Symposium - Understanding and promoting restorative justice in T&T. The Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ) and Faculty of Law, UWI

**INTERNATIONAL**  
- Panelist at Side event - UN Women 62nd session for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62)  
- Lecturer / Attendee - CEDAW for Change, Toronto Workshop

# More discussion on gender based violence to come in 2019

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three shelters to be established, what security measures will be put in place for victims in shelters and what are the health and safety issues with respect to the operations of the shelters. Over 15 recommendations came out of the discussion and the consensus was that not enough work had been done by the State on the issue since 2016.

The third recommendation was that the State prioritise the adoption of regulations for the Sexual Offences Act to introduce a sex offender registry, with a view to combating gender-based violence against women by tracking repeat offenders. Four recommendations were raised including the establishment of a National Sexual Offenders Registry and a Sexual Offences Unit in each police station.

The fourth recommendation was that the State ensure the effective enforcement of protection orders and promptly investigate and punish breaches.

The fifth recommendation was that the State ensure that training for law enforcement officers focuses on gender-sensitive investigation of cases of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, and adopt programmes, including mandatory courses, aimed at eliminating traditional attitudes concerning the treatment of domestic violence as a private matter.

This would involve the amendment of the Domestic Violence Act to include monitoring of protection orders and accountability mechanisms for police officers to respond to breaches. The current status is that the Attorney General had indicated his commitment to amending the Act. Several steps would then need to be put into place once this happens.

Ince said the session was part of a two-part initiative. The second part will take place in 2019 and will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to use the information shared during the session as a baseline to identify progress made from 2018 to 2019 and identify gaps that still exist, if any. She said the initiative is directly in line with CCoTT's mission to ensure that the Convention's mandates are upheld and implemented in a T&T context.

"A citizenry that is sensitized, knowledgeable and educated on the convention and its mandates will hold all stakeholders accountable for its comprehensive implementation."

Ince said CCoTT was heartened by the

willingness of all stakeholders to participate. "They were all clearly concerned about the state of GBV in T&T and demonstrating their willingness to not only talk about it in a vacuum, but to openly discuss actions for a way forward. As a nation we did not arrive at this place overnight, and it will require time and a deliberate, consistent multi-sectoral approach to move the needle, one that not only addresses the violence but asks and answers the question of what makes a person resort to violence in the first place."

**COMING SOON**

## 2019 Events

- IWD Rally and March at Queen's Park Savannah Saturday 9 March, 12:30 - 5 pm
- 63rd Session on the Status of Women (CSW63), 11-22 March 2019
- Movie Screening and Discussion Series - March/May
- Convention Camp - July
- Annual Fundraiser - August
- Collaboration for Impact Part II



Roundtable discussion at the CCoTT working session.



## CCoTT in Action

1. Presented at CSW62 in New York / importance of advocacy, activism and managing backlash
2. Parliament House Roundtable discussion at CHOGM – Women's Forum on the invitation of Action-Aid – "the importance of including women in state Labour and industry decision making"
3. Sub-committee meetings with House and JSC Leadership
4. participant - 10th Gathering of the ParLAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality – Gender Responsive Climate Action
5. Contribution - Ministry of Labour initiative on Sexual Harassment policy
6. Inaugural Fund raiser – August
7. Regional outreach
8. Internal CEDAW convention training – Begins
9. Public awareness and sensitization locally CEDAW/C//TTO//CO/4-7 - 9b
10. Collaboration commitment with Ministry of National Security Counter Trafficking Unit
11. Draft paper on the need for Temporary Special Measures (TSM) Women in Political and Public Life
- CEDAW/C//TTO//CO/4-7 #17
12. Collaboration - Office of the Prime Minister Gender Affairs Division on the Concluding Observation National Action Plan CEDAW/C//TTO//CO/4-7 9c
13. Began work on the inventory of laws discriminatory towards women (need funding) CEDAW/C//TTO//CO/4-7 10c
14. Contribution - Office of the Prime Minister Gender Affairs Division action on the issue of the Gender Policy CEDAW/C//TTO//CO/4-7 11d
15. Collaboration - CSOs to bring pressure on the state to amend the marriage acts CEDAW/C//TTO//CO/4-7 - 19c (resulted in change in law to make 18 years the legal age of marriage) (2017)
16. Lecturer on CEDAW to effect change – Women's Human Rights Institute at the University of Toronto
17. Collaboration - EU and BHC on "Let's Talk TT- Men Speak" campaign
18. GBV programme- Dec 6 to address the 5 recommendations highlighted in CEDAW/C//TTO//CO/4-7 21a-e



## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

January - March 2019

We encourage like-minded rights defenders to join us.

Ms. Terry D. Ince, Crystal Roberts, Stacy-Ann Duncan-Hamilton, Nicole Hendrickson w/ Terry Ince, Amílcar Sanatan w/Terry Ince, Council Members, Advisors, Sub-Committees, Members,

Thank you for your contribution

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