





# **NATIONAL POLICY ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT**

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

## **THE FORMULATION PROCESS**

**DRAFT DOCUMENT**

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## Introduction

The comprehensive Policy Framework comprises four (4) parts namely,

- Part 1: The National Policy on Gender and Development,
- Part 2: The National Gender and Development Action Plan,
- Part 3: The Situational Analysis and
- Part 4: The Policy Formulation Process

**Part Four** examines the policy formulation process for the development of the National Policy on Gender and Development.

The policy formulation process details past and present attempts and approaches to document government policy on gender and development. It details an inclusive, participatory and “bottom-up” approach to the development of the National Policy on Gender and Development. All sectors of society were included through a rigorous series of consultations in Trinidad and Tobago. The methodology included the preparation of a concept paper to facilitate public education, training of facilitators and rapporteurs, and the execution of a first major National Consultation that involved all stakeholders entitled “Building Consensus: Shaping the Vision”. A series of seven regional consultations paralleled by ten interest group consultations was then embarked upon in Trinidad, and an Island-wide Consultation and six interest group Consultations in Tobago. Meetings were held with the Permanent Secretaries of the various Ministries to understand their critical concerns and possible approaches for developing and implementing this sectoral policy. The process also involved in-depth research in selected sectors through the commissioning of six major sector studies. A National Roundtable was held for Senior Public Officers to review gender gaps in each sector and possible strategies to address them. Alongside this process, thorough research was conducted, using available data sets, to comparatively assess the situation of men and women in Trinidad and Tobago.

## **The Formulation Process of the National Policy on Gender and Development**

### **Overview**

A policy defines the underlying philosophy and approach that guides the practice of an organization, institution, or in this case a country. Initiatives to advance gender and equality in Trinidad and Tobago have had an active history of over three (3) decades. Government Policy would have been guiding the process all along. However, action to write the policy, utilize it to guide activities for gender and development, and to make it available to scrutiny to afford stakeholders the opportunity measure practice, has been a legitimate quest for quite some time.

The National Policy on Gender and Development provides a framework for gender mainstreaming in all activities of government and civil society, thereby promoting the full and equal participation of women and men in the development process. As early as 1989, a National Policy Statement on Women was made by the then Women's Bureau. This statement affirmed government's commitment to bringing women into the mainstream of the development process and identified five general principles and thirteen policy objectives. In 1992, this was further strengthened, as a short-term plan of action was developed in collaboration with various women's organisations.

### **In the Beginning- The Policy Statement on Women**

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago established the National Commission on the Status of Women in the Ministry of labour, Social Security, and Co-operatives in 1974. This preceded the United Nation's International Women's Year in 1975. In many respect, this initiative intimated political will and government policy to advance the status of women in the face of gender based inequalities. This Commission was the national focal point during the period of the decade for women ending in 1985 with the End of Decade Conference (Nairobi) and the adoption of the Forward Looking Strategies, and this nation becoming signatory to the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

### **Establishing the Machinery, the CEDAW Convention**

In 1986, the Women's Bureau was established within the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and the Status of Women, which was later named the Ministry of Social Development, and Family Services. The Sexual Offences Act was enacted in this same year and an Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Integration of Women in Development was established in 1987. This National Machinery produced a National Policy Statement on Women by July 1989 and ratified CEDAW in 1991.

## **Strengthening the Machinery**

The Division of Women's Affairs was established in 1991 within the then Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women Affairs as the focal point for women and development, and in this same year the Domestic Violence Act was passed. A revitalized Inter-Ministerial Committee was established as part of the National Machinery for Women and Development. Government entered into technical agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank for a non-reimbursable grant to institutionally strengthen the Women Affairs Division in 1993. In 1994 Specialist Staff were recruited for the Division, including a Director, Deputy Director and four Project Execution Officers. This technical team had the major task of executing the GORTT/IDB Project, the preparation of a National Country Report through a consultative process, and preparation and participation at the fourth World conference on Women in Beijing, China. As part of this institutional strengthening programme the Division was exposed to several consultancies. Under the consultancy for Planning and Management, a Gender Policy Framework was developed in 1996 and a two (2) year strategic plan for implementing this Policy. Trinidad and Tobago hosted the Commonwealth Meeting of Ministers with Responsibility for Women's Affairs (WAMM5) in this same year.

## **Reshaping the Mandate- From WID to GAD, the Beijing Platform for Action, Commonwealth Plan of Action, CARICOM Plan of Action**

The post-Beijing period and WAMM5 period saw a changed mandate from the prevailing Women and Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD). This period saw the establishment of a dedicated Domestic Violence Unit, the establishment of a Male Support Committee and approaches aimed at gender mainstreaming as identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, the Commonwealth Plan of Action, and the CARICOM Plan of Action.

## **Major Attempts**

In 1995 guidelines for a National Gender Policy were developed under the GORTT/ IDB Institutional Strengthening Project for the Women's Affairs Division under the Planning and Development Consultancy. Initiatives continued to frame a draft document and to promote continuity however the Women's Affairs Division witnessed both administrative and location changes during this period. In 2000 there was another major attempt to document official government policy on gender and development, and draft document was prepared by the Gender Affairs Division. Cabinet reviewed this document and appointed a multi-sectoral Cabinet Committee to review and make recommendations for a Gender Policy within two (2) months. The Committee set about co-opting key stakeholders in an advisory capacity to fast track the process however, this timeframe proved too short

## **The Current Process**

The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, launched the Project to develop the national Policy on Gender and Development in July 2002. This initiative is particularly important in light of Government's Vision 2020 National Policy Framework., as

expressed in the Social and Economic Framework 2003-2005, establishing this country's intention to achieve developed country status by the year 2020.

The Project was initiated in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, the Canadian High Commission; Fund for Gender Equity Fund, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. An Advisory Committee representing members from all the partnering agencies was formed. This Committee under the auspices of the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs laid the framework for the execution of the Project. A proposal, Terms of Reference and Draft Implementation Schedules were developed and circulated to source a Consultant for the Project. The University of the West Indies, Centre for Gender and Development Studies was hired as the Projects Consultant from this process.

The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs seeking to implementation a bottom-up approach to the Project embarked on an active communication strategy for public education and sensitisation using various media. Recognizing the importance of gender in the achievement of developmental goals and the impact that each member of the society had in terms of achieving gender equality and equity, every attempt was made to allow for the full participation of members of society.

A concept paper was developed to share the government's thinking around the policy and to set out the expectations. Research was conducted on selected sectors, meetings were held with national and international agencies and stakeholders in the various ministries and in civil society, and a series of consultations were held to plan the process, to determine the programme and to air concerns and get feedback on the issue of gender in society. In addition, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs engaged in public education and sensitization sessions as it sought to educate the public on the issue of gender thereby building awareness and impacting on the level of meaningful contributions in the consultations.

Recognizing the importance of the consultations in gathering information for the development of the policy, personnel were trained in the roles of facilitators and rapporteurs. These persons were equipped with the skills to enable them to encourage interaction and lead the discussion in the consultations, thereby ensuring that all persons and views were embraced in the process.

Overall, the development of the Draft Policy on Gender and Development was based on a process which was research driven, participatory and consultative, educational and which sought to garner support from all areas of society.

### **Laying the Foundation**

A concept paper was prepared by the CGDS as part of initial Terms of Reference. This paper was based on information obtained from previous draft policy papers, up-to-date data on the

status of women and the economy and discussions held with the Gender Affairs Division and the Project's Advisory Committee. It provided definitions for and clarification of gender concepts and terms and sought to outline the need for a National Policy on Gender and Development. In this regard, it presented the philosophy, aims, objectives and overall conceptual framework for the gender policy and highlighted the key thematic issues for discussion at the stakeholder consultation.

In addition to the development of the concept paper, two other events were instrumental in laying the foundation for the development of the National Policy. On August 14, 2002, a teleconference was held at the Canadian High Commission to share the experiences of other countries and discuss best practices. At a later date, a pre-consultation presentation was made to the Minister, Permanent Secretary and other officials of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, and other members of the Advisory Committee including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the United Nation Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, to gain consensus on the way forward. At this meeting the procedure and methodology for conducting the research and consultation process were agreed upon.

### **The National Consultations**

In keeping with its commitment to involve all persons in the development of the National Policy on Gender and Development, the Government through the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs met with women's organisations such as CAFRA and the Network and youth organisations to determine the policy formulation process. It sought to incorporate their past research and experiences in attempting to bring to fruition a gender policy. In addition to this, Officers of the Community Development Division went into the communities and met with persons who were considered to be the 'movers and shakers' in their communities, to get their involvement in the planning of the programme for the consultations and also to get their attendance and participation at the consultations.

On June 13, 2003, the emphasis of the crucial participatory role of all citizens in identifying key areas for policy development was reinforced with the hosting of the National Stakeholder Consultation at the Trinidad Hilton and Conference Centre. The objective of the consultation was to facilitate participation, collaboration and ownership of policy development and the gender mainstreaming process. It also sought to clarify the conceptual framework, the methodology for the implementation of the process, the identification of priority issues for policy and programme research and sensitisation on the policy and development process. It drew a wide cross-section of participants who, by the end of the introductory programme and working group discussions, were able to understand core concepts involved in developing a gender policy.

Eight (8) regional consultations and ten (10) interest group consultations were embarked upon. (See Table 4 for full listing). Participants came from a wide cross-section of groups, agencies and individuals, from the public and private sectors, the CGDS and GAD teams,

Sector Specialists, UNDP, UNECLAC, CIDA and the Minister of CD & GAD, key stakeholders in Trinidad and in Tobago and the general public. (See Diagram 1).

In addition to the consultations, the Ministry instituted mechanisms whereby members of the public could send their views and comments in writing or by telephone to the Ministry.

### **Public Education and Sensitization**

The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs utilized various media, including television, radio and press, to promote public education, advise the public of upcoming events and inform the general public on the status of the project.

Alongside this process was a programme of public education and sensitization to ensure understanding and to create a sense of ownership of the final document among public sector officials who would be the main implementers of the Policy and Action Plan, and among the population. (See Diagram 1 for Participants).

The Gender Affairs Division embarked upon an extensive media and public education campaign to ensure that the national community was aware of and interested in participating in the preparation of a Gender Policy, through voicing their opinions or sending in comments.

### **Research**

Research methods included the collection and analysis of secondary data, which included the review of relevant statistical, legal and other data culled from Sector Studies. Tools included Internet research and desktop reviews. Sector Studies provided in-depth reviews and analysis of selected priority sectors and made recommendations for policy interventions based on their findings. Studies focused on Labour, Trade and the Economy Education and Human Resources Development, Social and Community Development (including Poverty and Social Security), Economy, Law and the Judicial System, Agriculture and Natural Resources and Health and Medicine.

Research also involved primary sources of data collected from stakeholder consultations, including women's organizations, community and interest group, men's organizations, government ministries and departments, which drew upon participants' experiences. (See Diagram 2 for an overview of the process of consultation and research).

## **Gender Sensitization and Integral Support of the Public Sector**

A meeting with Permanent Secretaries was held to sensitize and gain support of the key members of the Public Service on the gender policy and plan to ensure that there was 'ownership' and 'buy-in' of the policy from the top. They were exposed to the key concepts of gender and the main components of the process, especially the cross-sectoral round table, a main vehicle for public sector personnel to further participate. It was envisaged that since the implementation of gender mainstreaming within each sector would be the responsibility of the Ministry, then these leaders must be on board. At this meeting, they were exposed to the role of the GAD and their Ministry's role in formulating the policy through facilitating data gathering, advising and implementing the plan. This meeting was instrumental in securing the commitment of the Permanent Secretaries to support the policy formulation process, including the appointment of Gender Focal Points (senior officials) from each of their line Ministries to oversee and drive the implementation process.

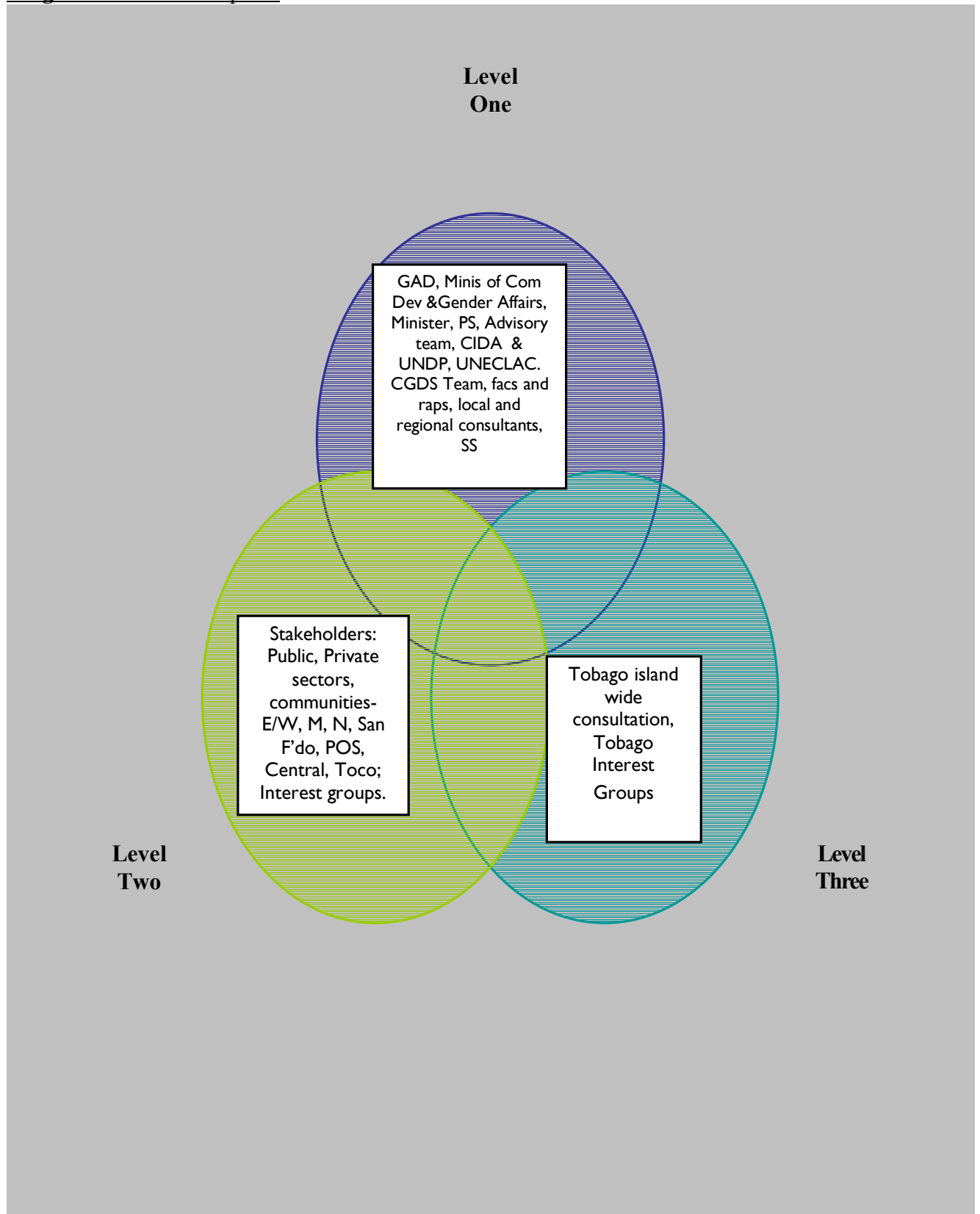
A Cross Sectoral Roundtable for ministry representatives was held to allow them to respond to the findings of the Sector Studies and to further secure their support and participation. The data from the sector studies was presented, discussed and the key/common areas for policy interventions identified and agreed upon.

## **The Formulation of the Policy**

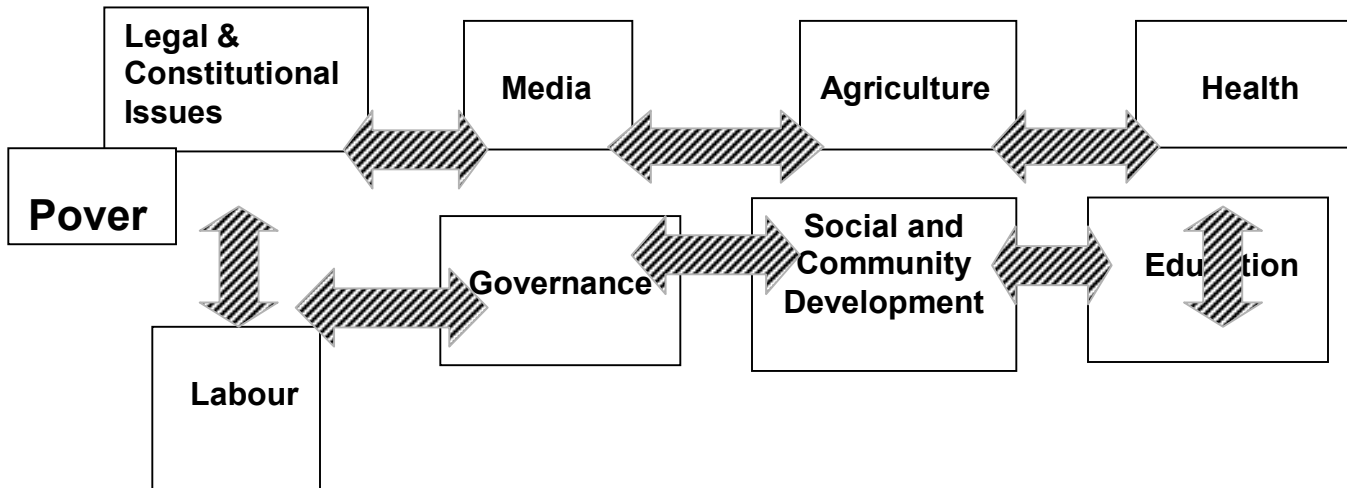
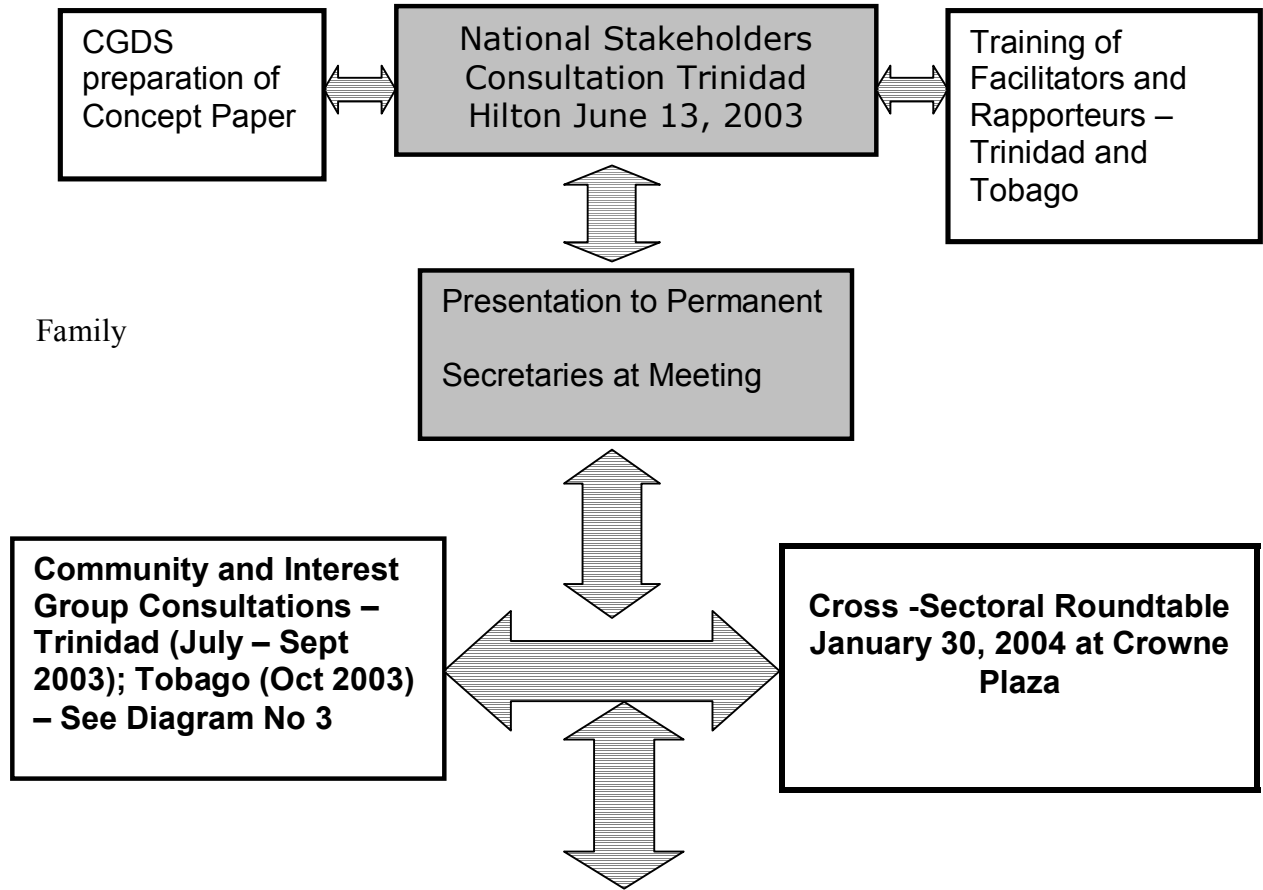
The draft policy document of the National Policy on Gender and Development and Action Plan was formulated from the gathering of the data culled from the National Stakeholders Consultation, Community Consultations, the Interest Group Consultations, the Tobago Consultations (Island-wide and Interest Groups) and the six Sector Studies.

The following diagrams represent the different components of the process:

**Diagram 1: The Participants**



*DIAGRAM 2: The Process of Consultation and Research*



### **3. LIST OF CONSULTATIONS**

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS	<u>VENUE</u>	<u>DATE</u>
<b>EAST-WEST CORRIDOR</b> St. George East (Valencia-Tunapuna)	Aero Services Credit Union	July 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
<b>NORTH EAST</b> -Sangre Grande/ Mayaro/Manzanilla/Rio Claro	Mayaro Civic Centre	July 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
<b>SOUTH</b> – Point Fortin/Cedros	Point Fortin Civic Centre	July 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
<b>SOUTH</b> – San Fernando/Siparia/Princes Town	City Hall, San Fernando	July 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
<b>PORT OF SPAIN AND ENVIRONS</b>	Crowne Plaza	August 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
<b>NORTH EAST</b> – Matura/Matelot/Toco	Toco Community Complex	August, 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
<b>CENTRAL</b> -Couva-Chaguanas-Gasparillo-Claxton Bay	R. Capildeo Learning Resource Centre	August 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
<b>TOBAGO</b> Consultation	Mount Irvine Bay Hotel	October 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2003
<b><u>INTEREST GROUP CONSULTATIONS</u></b>		
<b><u>TRINIDAD</u></b>		
The Disabled	Port of Spain City Hall	July 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
Youth and Youth Organisations	UWI – Sport an Physical Education Centre	September 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003
Religious Organisations	Crowne Plaza	September 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
Elderly Persons	Crowne Plaza	September 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
Media Workers	Trinidad Hilton Hotel	September 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
Protective Services	Trinidad Hilton Hotel	September 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
Trade Unions	Crowne Plaza	September 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
Private Sector	Crowne Plaza	September 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
Women’s Organizations	Crowne Plaza	September 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
Men’s Organizations	Crowne Plaza	September 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
<b><u>TOBAGO</u></b>		
Non-Governmental Organizations	Mount Irvine Bay Hotel	October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003
Youth and Youth Organizations	Mount Irvine Bay Hotel	October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003
The Private Sector	Mount Irvine Bay Hotel	October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003
Arts and Culture	Mount Irvine Bay Hotel	October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003
Religion	Mount Irvine Bay Hotel	October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003
The Disabled	Mount Irvine Bay Hotel	October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003

The above Table details the Community and Interest Group Consultations held throughout Trinidad and Tobago towards the formulation of a National Policy on Gender and Development and Action Plan for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Diagram 4: Formulation of the Policy

