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**Reflecting on Gender Mainstreaming Issues in Caribbean Agriculture**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper reflects on study and project experiences in order to understand the state of Gender Mainstreaming within Caribbean Agriculture. Bringing a Gender perspective into the mainstream activities of government policy, programme and project levels continue to challenge the agricultural sector within the Caribbean. Among Caribbean territories there is a declining contribution to gross domestic product from Agriculture. There is a severe labour shortage. There are difficult overseas marketing arrangements for main export crops coupled with a high cost of inputs. Pradeial larceny is an occasional deterrent to new and existing farm operations. There is more ecology friendly agriculture which can impact on improved human health and guarantee sustainable production systems. However support and popularity for these systems can be improved. Food security is a major policy concern while farm populations for both local and export agriculture decline.

Meanwhile there are Gender Issues which must be addressed in order to mediate an equitable consideration regarding the effects on men and women. Are there Gender Gaps? Is there Gender Discrimination? Is there Gender Oppression? The paper extracts evidences of case studies of small women farmers in the Bahamas, a study of access to and control of resources among small banana oducers in Dominica, a participatory observational analysis of male and female farmers in Trinidad and Tobago and the results of a 2004 agricultural census in Trinidad and Tobago. From these assessments the paper concludes that there a varying levels of gender oppression and discrimination. Gender Gaps exist especially in regard to access to resources for food production and special considerations for female agricultural occupations.