

MAGAZINE OF
THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR FEMINIST RESEARCH AND ACTION
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A HOUSE FOR CAFRA



NARTEL GREEN



AFRA News

CAFRA NEWS is the biannual magazine and primary networking tool of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).

Its main purposes are to:

- Inform members and other interested people about the association's programmes and activities
- Provide a forum for discussion and debate on key issues of concern to women in the region
- Promote the sharing of experiences and foster links among individual feminists, activists and women's organizations
- Assist in breaking down language barriers in the region
- Stimulate women's creative expression
- Contribute to the development of the women's movement regionally and internationally.

We welcome letters, articles, poems, reviews, opinions and artwork for editorial consideration. The Newsletter Committee has a final right to edit content and to reject material that is not appropriate for publication, that is, material that does not further the aims and objectives of CAFRA, that does not promote a spirit of sisterhood, and material that is racist, sexist or 'maternalist'. Individual authors and reviewers are solely responsible for views and opinions expressed in published articles.

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CAFRA IS

A regional network of feminists, individual researchers, activists and women's organizations, which defines feminist politics as a matter of both consciousness and action.

We are committed to understanding the relationship between the oppression of women and other forms of oppression in the society; and we are working actively for change.

CAFRA'S MISSION

To celebrate and channel the collective power of women for individual and societal transformation, thus creating a climate in which social justice is realized.

CAFRA'S OBJECTIVES

- Promote and support the continued growth and development of the feminist movement in the entire region.
- Research, analyse and document the situation of women in the region from the perspectives of ethnicity, class, culture and gender relations.
- Network with women's organizations and other organizations which support CAFRA's Mission.
- Influence policy at national, regional and international levels in government non-governmental organizations and institutions, in keeping with our Mission.
- Support, through our programmes and work, efforts aimed at economic self-sufficiency for women.
- Generate a new and critical examination of the nature of 'politics' and 'power' and of women's relationship to it as a basis for a policy on women, politics and power in the region.
- Provide information on actions and struggles taking place in different parts of the region and to encourage and support international solidarity when necessary.
- Develop action and research priorities based on the needs of women in the region.
- Develop an institution that promotes personal growth, the most efficient use of human resources, sustainable development of our environment and economic self-sufficiency.

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Editorial

This January-June 2004 issue of CAFRA NEWS is dedicated to the memory of Nartel Greene, the CAFRA National Representative of St. Croix, who just walked from us shrouded in mystery, yet leaving a legacy of connectedness. Nartel exemplified the role of a National Representative and a National Committee, initiating and implementing activities in keeping with CAFRA's mission, and disseminating and implementing as requested by the Secretariat. The eloquent tributes speak to the esteem in which we held this Sister who walked tall, yet with fingers in the soil and ears to the ground. With her boots on, she did not say goodbye.

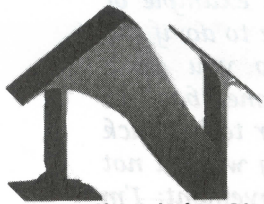
CAFRA is particularly indebted to Nartel for her lead work on HIV/AIDS Intervention/Prevention. We shall carry forward this legacy with the enthusiastic help of the very skilled Maria Govan of CAFRA Bahamas who has produced a CAFRA video on HIV/AIDS prevalence and interventions.

In terms of assets, CAFRA is the proud owner of the Building it occupies. A specific plan has to be put in place to use the space for income-generating. There is a real need to fund raise to meet the shortfall of funds on the cost of the building and the renovation. Let us contribute our ideas towards this goal as a tribute to Nartel, who through CAFRA St. Croix, raised the largest donations from individuals.

Finally, CAFRA's attempts to face the challenge of understanding the differences in age, class, culture, disability, race, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation among the women it seeks to represent, Nartel Green's approach and commitment left us with evidence of success.

Nelcia Robinson
Coordinator
CAFRA

Family Statement on our Sister Nartel Green



Nartel was born in South Carolina and lived in New York City, California, Mexico, Brazil, Michigan, Spain and Germany before settling in St Croix where she has lived for the last 30 years.

Nartel was our big sister who opened up the world for us through her travels and experiences. She sent us people from every part of the world, telling them "When you get to NY, ring my Ma and she will feed you". For us, when Nartel came home, she was the exciting "world-wind" that blew in the front door, bringing the world with her. Her visits were filled with wonderful stories of her travels.

Nartel lived her life doing what she loved; promoting and supporting the rights of women and children; and the health and economic development of our people. Nartel loved life, a good party, good booze, beautiful clothes, exquisite shoes and most of all good friends. She did all these things with vibrancy and wit. Today, we are remembering and celebrating her life.

Nartel was attending the World AIDS Conference in Santo Domingo, while there, Nartel suffered a stroke. She was medically airlifted to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. She underwent surgery but never regained consciousness. Nartel's sisters were by her side in Santo Domingo and in Boston where she passed away.



Nartel Green

Nartel Green died in Boston, Massachusetts on Saturday, March 20, 2004. She leaves behind 4 sisters: Jean, Leslie, Olivia and Cynthia; 2 nieces: Nicolle and Lisa; 1 nephew: Dylan; and extended family.

This was a note she left for us, "Bury me in Red 'cause I ain't got no business being dead." (Langston Hughes) and today we are wearing a little red in honour of her spirit.

Nartel's request was to establish a scholarship fund, for a black female junior or senior college student who is in financial need, enrolled in a university with a predominately black student body. If you wish, you may make a contribution by sending a check to the Executor, Jean Patton, at 321 West 29th Street, New York, New York 10001-4747.

CAFRA Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action

The entire CAFRA Regional Committee, membership and Staff can pay no greater tribute to Nartel than the one she herself composed: *"giving of herself to the service of others up to the last."* It is, after all, the name and memory of the deeds we leave behind which will remain in the minds of those who follow after.

In CAFRA, Nartel's name signals endurance, hard work, style, and creativity in service to the regional women's movement. We saw her commitment and enthusiasm for work in the movement undiminished by health challenges, and we were inspired by her personal style. We deeply feel her loss.

On behalf of all her CAFRA sisters throughout the Caribbean, we offer condolences to her family, friends and the CAFRA membership in St Croix. May God grant you comfort.

Margaret D. Gill
Chairwoman, CAFRA

From Maggie Schmeitz

Condolences to CAFRA and anyone working with Nartel for losing this phenomenal lady. I loved Nartel from the moment I met her, years ago in Dominica. I loved her defiance of all the health issues that so often come with old age, I loved her cynical humoristic criticism of just about everything, and

above all I loved the fact that, despite all her grumbling, she had a deep and passionate belief in, and commitment to the fight for women's rights. She was to me a role model of how to deal with your disappointment and frustration and still hang in there. She was an example of doing the things you promise to do; if she told you she'd get back to you on a subject, be sure that she comes back to you about it. I promised her to get back to her on the issue of young women not being committed to the movement; I'm too late to do it now. So Nartel, I still owe you a paper. I promise, I won't let the issue down. We are not waiting for Godot.

Last time I met her, she brought all kinds of stuff for me and other sisters working in the field of sexual and reproductive health in Suriname. I can still see her, a dignified grand old lady, sitting in the middle of condoms, sponges, and lubricants, casually sorting out the ones with taste.

Nartel, I'm sure this is the way you wanted to leave: in the middle of a meeting. I wish you a safe trip and I thank you for being part of my life. I'm going to miss you.

Love, *Maggie*

**To The Family of Nartel Green
and my CAFRA sisters,**

I am heavy hearted and distraught to learn of the death of a great friend and mother figure Auntie Nartel. From the very first time I met this gracious lady, which seems like all my life, but was really 8 years ago - bold, larger than life, sassy, fashionable, loud, out-spoken and seriously into looking after herself and others, we formed a bond that will never be broken.

Auntie Nartel looked out for Christaline Merrifield and I, protected us; fed us information, chastised us when we were wrong and like a good mother rewarded us with a hearty laugh when we did good. She was never stingy with sharing her life experiences and many a night after being in meetings all day, you could find a group of women led by Auntie Nartel with a bottle of wine, her trusty bottle of water and a bag of something to nibble on, having lively discussions until the wee hours of the morning.

Auntie Nartel knew how important the Westbury Readers Club is to me, and every time we met, with out fail, she would have care packages to give out to the children, what she calls "incentive gifts", tee-shirts, books, pens and pencils, paper and note-books, miniature soaps, creams and even money from her own pocket to treat them to snacks.

We knew Auntie Nartel had her "aches and pains" but she always turned up for meeting sessions where she was a vocal giant, she didn't back down from a point until you could prove her wrong. I marveled at relationships with many persons, nurturing those friendships in the few precious days we got to spend together planning CAFRA's business.

CAFRA Regional has lost a great friend and associate. My deepest condolences to the family, friends and CAFRA US Virgin Islands.

I Salute you Nartel Green, peace be upon you, where ever you are I know you'll find a soul to mentor.

One Love

Kathy Ife Harris

Barbados

CHRONICLE FOR THE MEMORIES

You can not be among us, but you will be in our hearts.

Because death without any reason one day took you away.

We will not hear your voice because you leave in the silence, neither your smile which used to involve us in a sea of joy

But the death made a mistake with you like it does it every morning.

You will be among us to share our sadness, to join our strength, to enjoy happiness.

You will be at each encounter, with the precise orientation, with your reliable look, with your friendly arm.

Good bye to death, your are the life. Simply, you will stay in each woman who's still singing to love and to life.

Elpida Moreno,

*Nacional Representative
Cuba*

**CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION FOR FEMINIST RESEARCH AND
ACTION (CAFRA)**

**Message on the Occasion of International
Women's Day
March 8th**

**"On Our Mothers' Shoulders –
Feminism in the 21st Century."**

INTRODUCTION

International Women's Day was first proposed in 1910 by German Socialist, Clara Zetkin and celebrated the following year by an estimated one million men and women who demanded women's right to vote, to hold public office, and for an end to sex discrimination in employment and training. This was in response to the second class status the system assigned to women.



Clara Zetkin 1857-1933

According to Vera Brittain in the book *Mothers and Daughters* "It was taken for granted that a women's vocation should be laid aside for parental illness, the troubles of relatives and domestic trivialities of every description."

Education was not seen as important for girls as it was for boys, since the boys were being socialized to be male bread winners for the home. Education for girls was limited to reading, writing, home economics and how to be the perfect hostess. In some cases, women received no education at all.

Today's Caribbean women have won among other things the right to vote, to education and are at all levels in the world of work outside the home. As multi-talented and skilled members of the labour-force women appeared to be on a path to equality with men. Notwithstanding this, the causes for which Clara Zetkin fought are still relevant since this does not apply to all women. **Many women continue to be oppressed by systems which promote the subordination of women.**

The Caribbean Women's Movement faces many challenges at the start of the 21st century. These include:

- ❖ Implementing concrete measures to optimize women's participation in the formal political process, where they are inadequately represented.
- ❖ Winning men's commitment to eliminating violence against women.
- ❖ Challenging the anti-feminist backlash, which seeks to blame women for the crisis of manhood plaguing the region.
- ❖ Monitoring and assessing the implementation of commitments made by governments in the Beijing Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women, and other UN Conferences.
- ❖ Understanding the differences in age, class, culture, disability, race and ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation among the women it seeks to represent.
- ❖ Accessing resources to carry out the organizations mission for social justice.

The challenges are however, not without rays of hope. Our foremothers must be smiling as they see the fruits of their toil – the measure of liberty in which women of today are walking. These are hard won gains that must be honored and used as stepping stones to overcome the present challenges. The smiles will be wiped off their faces if we fail.

As we build on this work, women will benefit from several important frameworks emanating from the United Nations as a result of powerful and consistent lobbying by the women's movement. Two such frameworks are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Beijing Platform for Action.

The objective of the Platform for Action agreed to at the Fourth World Conference on women in September 1995, is the empowerment of women. The Platform recognizes that **"The full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women is essential for the empowerment of women. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms"**.



Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations has warned that **"WOMEN'S EQUALITY MUST BE A CENTRAL COMPONENT OF ANY ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE WORLD'S SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS"**

With such powerful endorsements, women will sit in the Seat of Kings. In her futuristic story ***"She Who Would be King"***, Ama Ata Aidoo overturns the gender stereotyping in the story of Adjoa Moji who in 1977, at the age of ten declared her intention to be President of her country. After 49 years, Adjoa Moji rejoiced to see her dream fulfilled when in 2026 her daughter Afi-Yoa was elected the first President of the Confederation of African States. Standing tall on our Mother's Shoulders, will we dream and declare our intention to revitalize and strengthen the women's movement to achieve women's full equality?

Nelcia Robinson

**Coordinator
CAFRA**

Programme Update



Nelcia Robinson
Coordinator, CAFRA

BACKGROUND

In an era of globalization and trade liberalization, widening disparity and loss of social control, women are faced with the prospect of finding common solutions and creative models to advance women's human rights.

Despite the strides we have made and the success we have achieved there is a tremendous amount of work to be done in order to ensure the enjoyment of equal rights and justice by all women, because the corridors of power are being even more jealously guarded by men, because of what we have gained to date. It is therefore critical that the regional women's movement be vibrant and focused.

The Caribbean Women's Movement faces many challenges at the start of the 21st century. These include:

- ♦ Implementing concrete measures to optimize women's participation in the formal

political process, where they are inadequately represented.

- ♦ Winning men's commitment to eliminating violence against women.
- ♦ Challenging the anti-feminist backlash which seeks to blame women for the crisis of manhood plaguing the region.
- ♦ Monitoring and assessing the implementation of commitments made by governments in the Beijing Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women, and other UN Conferences.
- ♦ Understanding the differences in age, class, culture, disability, race, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation among the women it seeks to represent.
- ♦ Accessing resources to carry out the organization's mission for social justice.

When the Beijing Platform for Action was approved by governments in 1995, it outlined twelve critical areas of concern for the advancement of women, and strategies to bring about gender equality. This was a triumph for the women's movement and its efforts to move women from a position of weak second-class citizens to centre-stage as equal partners in development. However, from research carried out by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) and the Caribbean Policy Development Center (CPDC), it appears that trade liberalization has proven to be the greatest threat to the fulfillment of the Beijing Platform for Action. At the time when the women's movement must work for change it appears to be at its weakest. This has led to a growing belief that there has been serious slippage in the women's movement in the decade of the 90's – after Beijing, and the need for strategies to regain ground.

STRATEGIC PLAN

CAFRA Strategic Plan for the period 2004 – 2006 is located within the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action addressing:

- (a) Gender and Trade
- (b) Women and Poverty

- (c) Women and Health
- (d) Women and Work
- (e) Violence Against Women
- (f) Women in Politics and Decision-Making
- (g) Gender and Youth
- (h) Capacity Building of Secretariat and National Committees

Several ongoing projects within this plan are as follows:

Caribbean Women: Catalyst for Change

Each year the Center for Gender Studies, Barbados organizes a prestigious lecture dedicated to the memory of an outstanding Caribbean Feminist – Dame Nita Barrow. For this year's lecture, CAFRA has been invited to collaborate and to host a workshop to address questions around Feminism in the region. The moment is opportune, and the workshop will be held during the period 10-14 November 2004 as the educational component of CAFRA's Regional Committee Meeting.

The agenda will include the following broad themes and questions:

- (1) Challenges facing the women's movement – Is it in abeyance? What are the issues – political and economic that women's organizations have not dealt with? Do they have

the capacity to deal with these issues?

- (2) Should women's NGOs focus on a narrow but pointed agenda instead of trying to do everything? How do we engage the views of grassroots women? How do we become an inclusive movement addressing issues of race, class, ethnicity, age, disability and sexual orientation?

Gender and Trade

CAFRA has just completed two significant pieces of research, designed to promote advocacy on issues of poverty, health and works as they affect women.

(a) **Trade Impact Review**

In collaboration with Women's Edge, Washington, DC, two case studies have been completed in Jamaica and the Windward Island/Trinidad and Tobago, using a Trade Impact Review tool developed by Women's Edge. The Jamaica Case Study will be launched in June 2004 in Washington DC, while the other will be launched in late July 2004.

(b) **Gender Indicators**

The project of developing gender indicators on trade comprises six inter-linked phases of community mobilization,

research, analysis, tools design, evaluation and training of stakeholders in their use. The project targets men and women in communities, NGOs and CBO leaders, government officials policy makers and international development partners. It mainly sets to develop systematic and objective gender indicators for use as a planning tool to guide Caribbean policy makers in negotiating trade agreements that will enhance the livelihoods of women and their families.

In addition, the following activities will be part of the educational component at the November 10-14 Regional Committee Meeting

(i) ***Training***

Each CAFRA member country will be engaged in a survey of a sample of Vendors and Traffickers, to gain information on issues and challenges they face. This information will be shared at a regional meeting on:

- The trade processes in the region - WTO, FTAA, Cotonou and CSME, utilizing the CAFRA Economic Literacy Manual and other relevant material.
- In-depth exploration of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy with particular

reference to Vendors and Traffickers, and the movement of people within the CSME.

(ii) ***Exhibition***

In order to encourage Vendors, Traffickers and Craftswomen to trade among themselves, a CARICOM Market Day will be organized as part of the workshop. Vendors and ourselves will sell products made by women, from the respective member countries, preferably at the UWI Campus, Cave Hill, Barbados.

(iii) ***Cultural Activity***

The skills of women from the region will be utilized, where CAFRA members and Barbadian artistes will deliver a Cultural Evening. The themes will include "skits" around the trade issues and their positive and negative impacts.

WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

This research project will address three important areas of women's work. With regard to Agriculture, the impact of the use of chemicals on women's health will be explored. In the area of industry, the impact of conditions of work

on women's health will be explored with particular reference to their work in the export processing zones. The other aspect of women's work is their involvement as traffickers in fruit, vegetables and manufactured goods, and the constraints under which they work.



**HIV/AIDS
INTERVENTION/
PREVENTION – ACCESS TO
ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE
FOR SEX WORKERS**

Although prostitution is illegal in many countries, the practice continues. Sex workers are at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and contributing to the spread of the disease, particularly as the illegal activity prohibits them from gaining health care. The CAFRA Project seeks to conduct research on the prevalence of sex workers in selected countries, and use the findings to engage health officials as to the need for adequate health care for this sector of the population.

Integral to this research and training will be a video on HIV/AIDS produced by Maria Govan of CAFRA Bahamas. Maria interviewed key persons from the CAFRA member countries. The video is therefore rich in regional realities. In addition, CAFRA will use its Training Manual and Position Paper on HIV/AIDS Intervention/Prevention.

ICPD + 10 AND MDGs REVIEW

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been approved by governments to:

1. **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
2. **Achieve universal primary education**
3. **Promote gender equality and empower women**
4. **Reduce child mortality**
5. **Improve maternal health**
6. **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**
7. **Ensure environmental sustainability**
8. **Develop a global partnership for development**

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) has commissioned CAFRA to conduct research on progress made by governments in implementing the ICPD Platform for Action (1994-2004) in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report will form part of background documents for the ICPD + 10 NGO Forum and official meetings to be held in September 2004.

NETWORKING

CAFRA recognizes the value of networking as a strategy to achieve objectives. The organisation has participated in several strategic Conferences and Seminars as reflected here.

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|
| 1. | Knowledge Fair | India - January 2004 | Margaret Gill-CAFRA
Chairperson |
| 2. | World Social Forum | India - January 2004 | Flavia Cherry-CAFRA
National Representative,
St. Lucia |
| 3. | Sustainable Development
of Small Island Developing
States (SIDS) | Bahamas - January 2004 | Erin Greene-CAFRA
National Representative,
Bahamas |
| 4. | Caribbean Fourth Regional
Conference on Women | St. Vincent and the
Grenadines February 2004 | Carla Bakboord, CAFRA
Deputy Chairperson |
| 5. | International Seminar
Mainstreaming Gender
Equity in Health Sector Reform | Washington DC, April, 2004 | Jacqueline Burgess |

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 6. | IGTN Steering Committee Meeting | Geneva - March 2004 | Nelcia Robinson, Coordinator Caribbean Gender and Trade Network (CGTN) |
| 7. | Launch of the Cotonou Research | Trinidad and Tobago April 2004 | Margaret May Macaulay, CAFRA Immediate past Chairperson |
| 8. | Assembly of Caribbean Peoples | Martinique - May 2004 | Flavia Cherry-CAFRA National Representative, St. Lucia |
| 9. | 7 th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (WAMM) | Fiji - May28-June 3 2004 | Michelle Golding, CAFRA Regional Committee Member, Jamaica |
| 10. | Globalisation and Trade Conference | Dominican Republic June 2004 | CAFRA Regional Committee Members – Carla Bakboord, Sandra Clenem, Patricia Hackett, Ife Harris, Christaline Merrifield, Anita Joseph, Erin Greene, Elpidia Moreno, Flavia Cherry, Sarah Malave Lebron, Margaret May Macaulay, Cecelia Babb |
| 11. | Beijing+10 Sub Regional NGO Forum and Official Meeting | Mexico -June 2004 | Michelle Golding, CAFRA Regional Committee Member, Jamaica |
| 12. | ICPD+10 Sub Regional | Puerto Rico - June 2004 | Margaret Gill-CAFRA Chairperson
Jeanne Henriquez,
Sarah Malave Lebron.,
Casandra Marta, Asha Mungra |

HAITI – VICTIM OF NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS

CAFRA joined with concerned people of the region in expressing outrage at the man-made disaster, which left the people of Haiti without a democratically elected leader, and with suffering masses of people, in particular, women and children.

CAFRA's planned mission to Haiti is even more timely in the light of the human tragedy affecting people on the borders of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, caused by the natural disaster of flooding.

WOMAN by Eilish Mc Art

I am woman
I am every woman
I am a source of Creativity
I am a source of wonder
I am a source

I am a person many parts
I am the epitome of pain and pleasure
I am pure and precious
I am a phenomenon

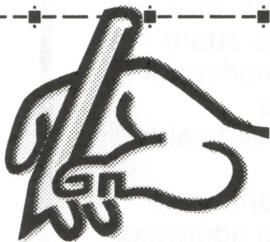
I am a free spirit
I am feline and feisty
I am full of fear
I am a source of fear

I am sensuous
I am succulent of flesh
I am a surreal siren
I am sweet-I am the serpent

I am of rhythm of rage
I am a rhythm of cycle
I am a refuge
I am ravenous
I am rhythmical reality

I am the jewel in Creation

I am Woman
I am here I am I



Letters to CAFRA

Dear Nelcia

I wish to congratulate CAFRA for the purchase of this important asset, the building. This is a step in the right direction and speaks well for the future sustainable development of the regional women's movement. Congratulations.

Josephine Dublin-Prince

Dear Nelcia

The CAFRA Youth Arm of Dominica is undertaking an AIDS Information Festival with music, poems, fliers, speeches and lots more. It is done in collaboration with other youth groups. A concise report will be sent to you.

Josephine Dublin-Prince



Action

International Conference on Population and Development ICPD



MAY 28
**International Day of
Action for Women's
Health**

**FOR WOMEN'S
COMPREHENSIVE
HEALTH AND
RIGHTS: ICPD+10,
NOT ONE STEP
BACK**

Call for Action 2004

In commemoration of the International Day of Action for Women's Health, the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network has launched a new call for action in the context of the **Campaign for the Exercise of Sexual and Reproductive Rights**. This demand reaffirms the agreements from the International Conference on Population and Development and asserts the Programme of Action's significance for promoting women's rights.

Background

A decade ago, at the International Conference on Population and

Development, ICPD (Cairo 1994), a total of 179 countries made history by unanimously approving the Programme of Action. This year, the Cairo Consensus celebrates ten years of existence.

Why is the Programme of Action so important for the lives of women in particular and for the population in general? Unlike earlier demographic focuses, this agreement addresses the issue of population hand in hand with human development, the protection of the environment, women's status, comprehensive health, individual and collective well-being, gender equality and equity, and respect for human rights.

The Cairo Consensus explicitly recognized women's empowerment through autonomous, responsible and informed decision-making and freedom

from discrimination and violence as essential for development.

For the first time, a world summit recognized reproductive rights as human rights, defining them as "the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health."

The Programme of Action also addressed a priority issue for women: unsafe abortion, which it called a serious public health concern. In this respect, the consensus document urged governments to reduce the incidence of unsafe abortion and to guarantee humane care for women suffering complications of unsafe abortions.

The Programme of Action also recognized adolescent women and men as bearers of rights with specific sexual and reproductive health needs that must be met with good-quality and confidential care. The agreement also called upon men to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behavior and to share in the tasks of childrearing.

This historic consensus sought to provide coherent responses to the multiple problems and challenges facing human societies from a comprehensive perspective based on human rights and gender.

The Cairo Programme of Action is halfway along its 20-year agenda. The five-year evaluation in 1999 established a series of key measures for the continued implementation of the agreements, and this year, 2004, we will witness the ten-year evaluation.

While the women's movement has made it clear that the Programme of Action does not address all of our demands, we are committed to supporting and monitoring the implementation of

this important international agreement. One such initiative has been undertaken by the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network in seven countries of the region. Participating feminist organizations undertook a diagnostic evaluation and developed a matrix of indicators that measures the considerable gaps between the Cairo agreement and the realities in our region.

The women, men and youth of our region will only benefit from the advances in this and other summits if we are able to move from rhetoric to concrete action. We need laws, programs, policies, cultural changes, the urgent allocation of sufficient resources, thoughts and actions in favor of human rights and social justice.

We Demand Our Rights

The Open-ended Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the ECLAC Sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development (Santiago, Chile, March 10-11, 2004) unanimously approved a declaration reaffirming the ICPD

Programme of Action, with the only exception of the United States. The Santiago consensus contains references to the main issues addressed in 1994 and at ICPD+5. The position of the governments of the region must again be reaffirmed at the ECLAC session scheduled for June 2004 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

As a result, the women's movement once again faces the challenges of lobbying our governments to confirm their commitment to the agreements from the International Conference on Population and Development.

As a result, the women's movement once again faces the challenges of lobbying our governments to confirm their commitment to the agreements from the International Conference on Population and Development.

We demand:

The renewal of our governments' commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action, the ICPD+5 document, and the Santiago Consensus.

The national implementation of these agreements to promote human development, the status of women and the preservation of the environment.

The implementation of effective public policies and programs for the universalization of basic services (health, education, environmental protection, etc), the eradication of poverty, the creation of equitable and egalitarian living conditions and opportunities for women and men.

A truly democratic, just and inclusive vision guiding government actions (as opposed to reactionary fundamentalism) and prioritization of the human rights and integrity of those whose lives and well-being are threatened due to: the lack of HIV/AIDS prevention; unsafe abortion; age-based discrimination; the failure to recognize the right to free sexual choice; or simply because of a lack of information or access to sexual and reproductive health services or other types of health care.

Sufficient financial support from the countries and donor agencies as the only possible means to turn the conceptual advances of these and other summits into reality.

Campaign Objective

To demand that the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean ratify the ICPD Programme of Action, the follow-up document of the ICPD+5, and the Santiago Consensus; and to ensure the fulfilment of these agreements as essential for women's comprehensive health and sexual and reproductive rights.

Suggested Activities

Three concrete campaign activities are suggested:

1. Public events (marches, street theater, artistic events, public dissemination of information, etc.) Groups are encouraged to focus their activities on priority issues from the Programme of Action and to gather signatures in support of the women and youth declaration

presented at the ECLAC meeting.

2. Letter-writing campaigns to the legislature demanding the ratification of the ICPD Programme of Action.

3. Press releases or press conferences on the May 28 campaign stressing the importance of the Cairo agreements.

For more information about this advocacy campaign, contact LACWHN's Coordinating Office
Tel.: (56-2) 223-7077
Fax: (56-2) 223-1066
E-mail: campanas@reddesalud.org



Conferences & Seminars

- Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Beijing+10) Mexico, June 2004.
- ICPD+10 – Puerto Rico, June 2004.
- Globalization and Trade Liberalization – The Dominican Republic, June 2004

Culture, Human Rights &
Gender Justice in the
Caribbean

CULTURE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER
JUSTICE IN THE CARIBBEAN-
PROGRESS AND PERIL- Tracy Robinson

salutations

Let me begin by expressing my thanks to the hosts of this Ministerial Conference on Women. I am very honoured to be invited to share in the opening session. I am always grateful to be included in conversations of the kind you will have over the next two days.

For those of you who have had to listen to me anytime recently, some less than two weeks ago, my apologies, you have my sympathies and I especially crave your indulgence this morning.

Justice

I am a law teacher and a feminist but I should confess that there are many days that to do the work I am committed to, I feel as if I need expertise in linguistics. The propriety and politics around the words *women* and *gender* has become a far from trifling matter. The question of the legitimacy of still talking about *women* per se (this is, for instance, a ministerial conference on *women*) and the business of when we must use the language of *gender* has made us awkward and bumbling. As you are about to step off on the front foot towards something you see as progress, you have to quickly move on the back foot, into the defensive position, to explain and yourself understand how women's concerns and feminist contributions are firmly grounded in the genealogy of the word 'gender'.



As a preface, let me say two things I feel sure about:

The first is that *women* remain central to an agenda of *gender justice* today for many of the same reasons as existed thirty years ago when the first bureaux of women's affairs were established.

Women remain central because the average woman in Trinidad & Tobago in 1999 earned \$1913.87 and the average man \$2342.47.

¹ See Eudine Barriteau, "Issues and Challenges of Caribbean Feminisms" Keynote Address delivered at Caribbean Feminisms Workshop: Recentring Caribbean Feminism, Barbados, 17 - 18 June 2002.

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They remain central because one third of women in a survey in Suriname said they experienced sexual harassment at work.¹

They remain central because up until recently (I am not sure if it has changed) there were no women sitting in the elected House of Parliament in Antigua and Barbuda.

Women remain Central because in Trinidad and Tobago in 1997, 80% of forced sexual behaviour was carried out by persons well known to the victim, who was usually a woman or girl.²

We can and should broaden the agenda of gender justice, but

make no mistake, women continue to be a legitimate focus of attention, not because women are a special category or interest group, but because women still face pervasive and systemic disadvantage in the Caribbean today.

My second observation is of a different order. I am increasingly worried that with the

professionalisation of 'gender matters' we begin to treat what are really facilitative processes, (like gender analysis, gender mainstreaming,



Delegates at 4th Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Women - St. Vincent

gender perspective) as ends in themselves. I don't want us to be in the business of hugging up gender and forgetting that in the end it is social transformation we are after.

The best way I can make this point is to say, as I have on one another occasion, that I believe we must begin to see *gender as a suggestion*. What I mean is that gender must become suggestive of a broad social justice agenda in which the insights it offers us about power and disadvantage form a strategic platform and an ideological foundation

¹ Suriname, Combined Initial and Second Periodical Reports under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2002), 70-71.

² Trinidad and Tobago, Initial, Second and Third Periodic Report under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2000), para. 132.

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for ending all forms of oppression, but especially addressing poverty, violence, disease and bigotry.

To say the authentic challenge to *gender* now in the Caribbean is the question of *men* and their marginalisation is, forgive me, myopic, and missing the immensity of what lays ahead of us. It is like sizing up how to wade across a small stream - it is really vastness of the Caribbean Sea that is ahead of us to conquer and we will need to build a boat.

The challenge to *gender* in the Caribbean today I humbly submit is the question of justice. By justice I mean a sustained commitment of ensuring that "every human being counts, each is entitled to flourish."³

This idea of justice is not a theory we think up in classrooms, conference rooms, strategic planning meetings and general assemblies. This sense of justice is one we figure out, not know in advance; this sense of justice is settled over time, not found in instruments. I like how David Kennedy talks about this sense of justice as "something that must be made, experienced, articulated, performed each time anew."⁴

Many of you in your Bureaux are already grappling with this broad sense of justice, you are involved in poverty alleviation programmes, initiatives to protect the elderly, labour and policy development focussed on unskilled and domestic workers, community strengthening programmes, both victim and perpetrator interventions in relation to domestic violence, and skills training, to name a few.



Up until now we have hung much of the moral underpinnings of gender justice on the idiom or language of human rights and the crux of my own concern this morning in talking about gender justice today, is the anxiety that we may have achieved some sense of equality in form but not in substance. Or as it was elegantly put to me, using Ann-Marie Goetz's language, the disparity the 'high politics of the state' and the 'deep politics of society'.

This is an anxiety that we have committed more resources than ever before to ensure increased representation of women in political

³ Mari Matsuda, *Where is your body* (1996) xiii.

⁴ David Kennedy, "The International Human Rights Movement: Part of the Problem? (2002) 15 *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 99, 116.

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life, and yet in recent elections in some parts of the region the numbers of women in the lower houses has dropped, not increased.

This is a concern that we are devoting resources to preventing and controlling the transmission of HIV/AIDS but we still continue to see an unreasonable number of especially the young and especially female afflicted.

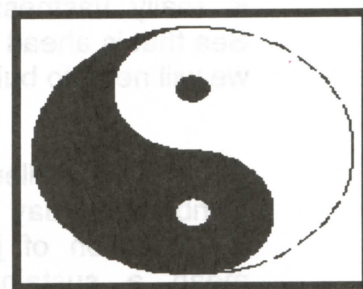
This is a worry that we enacted domestic violence laws everywhere in our regions, one of the most important twentieth century initiatives to protect women, yet we are far from convinced that the incidence of violence is diminishing, some of you fear quite frankly the opposite.

The matter of human rights and culture was plainly put in the last report of Trinidad and Tobago to the CEDAW Committee, which said: "The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. In practice however, there continue to exist entrenched attitudes and behaviours which perpetuate gender-based violence. Patriarchal ideologies and

notions of male dominance still persist and are proving difficult to change. While legislation has been enacted and measures are being taken to address this situation, challenges exist in shifting the sociological context of gender equality.⁵



I am concerned with measuring our accomplishments and shortcomings. On that you are experts. There have been tremendous gains made over the last thirty years, which you have all contributed to, many of these already mentioned this morning. I am very minimally interested in offering us a way of thinking about the relationship between culture and human rights within the larger project of gender justice that might not relieve anxiety but point to modest possibilities.



Quite simply, I think we expect less in terms of progress from the broad commitment to the general language of women's human rights, and conversely I think we should begin

⁵ Trinidad and Tobago, Initial, Second and Third Periodic Report under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2000), para. 107.

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to expect more from the constituencies of community.

I believe strongly in the concept of human rights but we must take it up knowing its limits. Women have turned to the language of human rights because it speaks with certainty, simplicity, and universality. It is merciless to any impediments that stand in its path. The Women's Convention makes it abundantly clear that whether it be sex roles and stereotyping or cultural attitudes and norms, none of these must stand in the way of women's equality, especially in the family: they must be systematically dismantled.

The irony is that this very same quality of human rights that energises our emancipation project—that is, its profound directness and lack of equivocation—(this is the high politics) can impede our transformative agenda (the deep politics). We often forget that agenda for gender justice must start where people are. We are the least likely to have a profound impact on the lives of Caribbean women and men if we completely reject how they see themselves.⁶ This is not necessarily an easy argument to buy.

What is required is not so much the abandonment of culture in our aspirations for gender justice as a re-imagination of culture. We talk about

culture as if it is one thing. Culture is full of contradiction and irony.

In the current process and debates about family law reform in the OECS, one of colleagues has warned about the potential tension between international norms and standards and cultural traditions.⁷ One aspect of culture that is singled out is religion which is routinely described as major obstacle to for example reforms in family law that recognise other unions.

But when you actually talk to Caribbean folks, even though they speak of the importance of marriage in religious terms, their practice clearly suggests that they believe that there are many other forms of constructing families that involve serious relationships with family commitment and contribute significantly to the development of the nation.

Madam and Mister Ministers and Bureau heads, in reimagining culture we have to learn how to have conversations that allow us negotiate justice as "something that must be made, experienced, articulated, performed each time anew"⁸ from the inside of how people talk about their lives and communities, with all its inconsistencies and internal conflict. It

⁶ Katherine Bartlett, "Tradition, Change and the Idea of Progress in Feminist Legal Thought" (1995) *Wisconsin Law Review* 303, 305.

⁷ Leighton Jackson, Leighton (2002). *Summary of Research Reports: Family Law and Domestic Violence in the Eastern Caribbean: Judicial and Legislative Reform*.

⁸ David Kennedy, "The International Human Rights Movement: Part of the Problem?" (2002) 15 *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 99, 116.

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requires compromise and consideration, reflection and reevaluation. It is unethical to hope people will not notice new laws and policies which seem at odds with their sense of self. We must also engage in meaningful discussions at an early stage, learning how to ask the right kinds of questions which expose our varied sense of our culture.

I believe that if we tell women to choose between what we call rights and religion, between individual interests and a life in community, the answers will be resounding. I am not sure this was always my position, but we have to find ways to have our conversations inside the church

and not simply in opposition to the church.

This point is key, to do so, we must recognise and facilitate those who from inside community resist and clearly dissent from dominant cultural norms.

The research and our own work on the ground tells us that domestic violence is endemic, culturally entrenched but it is equally clear opposition to it is also firmly a part of who we are in the Caribbean. Ours has been a culture of patriarchy, but ours has also been a culture of resistance to patriarchy.

There is no other way to explain why in the St. Lucia Family Court in 2000, 30.2 per cent of the applications were for protection orders in respect of domestic violence.⁹ There is also no other way to understand why in Grenada before any domestic violence legislation was enacted about a quarter (24.2%) of the persons seeking its services in 2000 did so to deal with domestic violence. Many women will take their chance in the imperfect legal system, courts commonly known as having a reputation for 'bacchanal and commess'¹⁰ to make it plain that they do not accept patriarchy as their culture.

This means fully opening our eyes to the agency of women. On many occasions I have said that we are too happy to pay attention to women only when they look lifeless and we can see them as victims. Part of what will make gender justice possible, as an ongoing process 'performed each time anew' is the extent to which we empower and recognise those committed to an engaged life within culture, as one that includes dissent and challenge.

⁹ OECS-CIDA Judicial and Legal Reform Project, *OECS Case Profile Review 2000: An Analysis of Criminal and Civil Cases in the magistrates Courts of the OECS* August 2002. 22

¹⁰ UNECLAC, *An Evaluative Study of the Implementation of Domestic Violence Legislation: Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines*. Prepared for the Family Law and Domestic Violence Legislative Reform Project: Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (2001).

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The task of gender justice is not less formidable in this way, but it becomes more possible when we pay proper regard to those we call activists. I am anxious that we understand Caribbean feminists as part of that group who in the midst of community challenge understandings of community. Your work at the state level will not be viable if those engaged in dissent within our culture are demonised, or treated as being irredeemably alienated from women. I have insisted that feminist activism in the Caribbean in its various shapes and forms are *a way in which women live*. That feminists are not *other* women, they are women. That while they often represent women's concerns, equally their lives represent a way women live.¹¹

As I close I cannot help thinking of Singing Sandra's 1987 calypso. Women were and still are castigated for importing foreign concepts alien to our culture into the region with the talk about sexual harassment. And from firmly within culture came Singing Sandra's dissent: that this form of humiliation was not part of her culture, and 'they could keep they money, I will keep my honey and die with my dignity.'

Well the principal aspiration of gender justice is for a *life* with our dignity. To be able to among other things as she says to help to mind your family, in her, to help your man financially. Gender justice lies in the improvement of life at the level of the most ordinary. The very broad articulation of women's rights as human rights is either a beginning or a point in the journey but it can never be all. Justice cannot be a top down initiative, it must have some connection to how we presently live and understand life. The details of human rights must indigenized and culture need not always be the enemy.

Thank you.

¹¹ Tracy Robinson, "Constitutional Reform in the Caribbean: Gender Imperatives in the 21st Century" presented at the Mona Academic Conference 2003, "Gender in the 21st Century", UWI, Mona Campus, 29-31 August 2003.

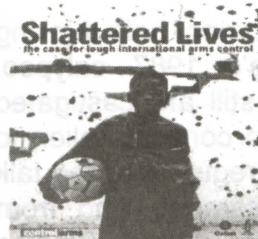
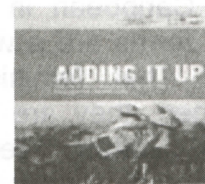
On the Bookshelf

- ⊕ Looking at the Economy through Women's Eyes – A Facilitator's Guide for Economic Literacy – Maeve Taylor, Banulacht
- ⊕ Citizens and Governance Toolkit – Commonwealth Foundation
- ⊕ A Century of Struggle for Women's Rights in the Americas – CIM achieving the promise – OAS
- ⊕ Ver Charo En Lo Oscuro – Teresa Diaz Canals
- ⊕ Procesos de Concentracion para la Gestion Publica – Conceptos, Dimensiones y herremientos
- ⊕ No Greater Priority – Judicial Reform in Haiti – NCHR (National Coalition for Haitian Refugees)
- ⊕ Women of the Americas – Video OAS/CIM
- ⊕ HIV/AIDS – CAFRA Video – Maria Govan – Awakening Our Own: A Caribbean Dialogue on HIV/AIDS from a Woman's Perspective

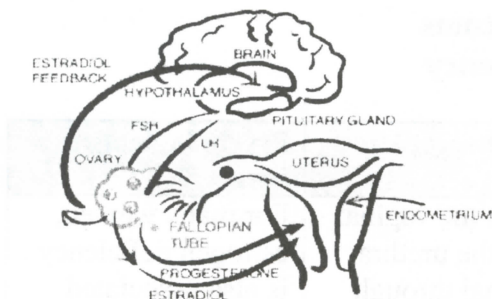


Global Public Goods Financing – New Tools for New Challenges – UNDP

Adding it up – The benefits of investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health Care – Alan Guttmacher Inst/UNFPA



Shattered Lives – The Case of Tough International Arms Control – OXFAM Amnesty International/Control Arms



National Estrogen Deficiency Awareness

Your Mother's Menopause – Understanding the Significance of Estrogen Deficiency & Estrogen Replacement

By Wyeth-Ayerst Global Pharmaceuticals

Your mother's Menopause

You may have heard about menopause, but never really thought about how it can impact your life. After all, you are nowhere near "that age." However, it is possible that your mother may be approaching menopause (or may even be post-menopausal). This brochure is designed to help you understand what menopause means to her now, and what it might mean to you in the future. Read this brochure and share the information with your family and friends. Encourage your mother to see her physician and learn about ways to enjoy good health in her postmenopausal years.

What happens At menopause?

As women get older, their ovaries produce less and less estrogen. As a result, they may begin to experience changes in their menstrual cycle, such as irregular menses or increased or decreased menstrual flow. This stage of life represents the change from the reproductive to the post-reproductive years. Eventually, a woman will have her last menstrual period; this is called menopause. For most women, menopause occurs around the age of 50. Because life expectancy for women is about 80 years, this means women spend nearly one third of their lives beyond menopause.

Menopause means a woman no longer has to worry about her period or getting pregnant. However, the estrogen deficiency associated with menopause can lead to many changes in the body. Some women may not feel comfortable discussing these changes, and some of them might not even know that the symptoms they are experiencing are a result of menopause. You can help your mother by discussing the effects of the estrogen deficiency that occurs at menopause (review below), letting her know she is not alone or "crazy" because she experiences these symptoms. Encourage her to see her physician so she can take steps to avoid some of the effects of estrogen deficiency.

Short –Term Symptoms Of Estrogen Deficiency

Hot Flashes & Night Sweats	Vaginal Dryness	Urinary Problems	Psychological Effects
The hot flush – a sudden sensation of heat that spreads over the body, particularly on the head, face, and chest – is the hallmark symptom of menopause. It is often accompanied by flushing (red face) and sweating, and may be followed by a chill. Hot flushes can interfere with normal daily functioning, and if they occur at night (called night sweats), they can disrupt sleep.	The fall of estrogen levels at menopause can cause vaginal <i>atrophy</i> (thinning and loss of elasticity). This often leads to vaginal dryness, which can make sexual intercourse painful or uncomfortable. In addition, vaginal burning, itching, discharge, and occasional bleeding may occur.	As with the vaginal lining, the urethra (the canal through which urine is discharged from the bladder) and bladder rely on estrogen to function properly. The estrogen deficiency associated with menopause may cause the urethra and bladder to atrophy. As a result, urinary problems, such as an increased need to urinate, pain or burning on urination, leaking of urine during coughing or laughing (stress incontinence), or bladder infections, may occur.	For many women, estrogen deficiency is also associated with psychological effects, such as anxiety or mood swings. Other symptoms may include irritability, loss of concentration, headaches, crying spells, tiredness, loss of libido, and depression. If you've noticed any of these changes in your mother, it may indicate that she is estrogen deficient. Encourage her to speak with her physician to find out.

Long-Term Health risks Associated with Estrogen Deficiency

There are several long-term health risks associated with menopause that your mother may not know about. Make sure you discuss these risks with her and encourage her to speak with her physician.

Increased Risk for Cardiovascular Disease	Changes in Cholesterol Levels	Increased Risk for Osteoporosis	Alzheimer's Disease
Before menopause, estrogen in the body helps protect against cardiovascular disease. Thus, pre-menopausal women have a lower risk of cardiovascular disease than men. However, after menopause, when estrogen levels fall, this protection is lost. In fact, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among post-menopausal women. The estrogen deficiency associated with menopause may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.	The loss of estrogen at menopause is associated with changes in cholesterol levels. Estrogen deficiency causes levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol – the “good” cholesterol – to decrease and levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol – the “bad” cholesterol – to increase. In addition, total cholesterol levels frequently increase. These changes can lead to atherosclerosis (blocking of the arteries), heart attack, and stroke.	Osteoporosis is characterized by decreased bone mass and by an increased likelihood of experiencing a fracture. The estrogen deficiency associated with menopause contributes greatly to the development of this disease. Without the protective effects of estrogen, bone mass decreases rapidly after menopause. As a result, bones may become thin and brittle and fracture easily. The most common places for fractures to occur are in the hip, spine, and wrist. If osteoporosis occurs in the jaw, it may result in tooth loss.	Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease that attacks the brain and results in impaired memory, thinking, and behavior. It is the most common form of dementia – a loss of intellectual function, such as thinking, remembering, and reasoning, so severe that it interferes with daily living and eventually results in death. Evidence suggests that the estrogen loss associated with menopause may contribute to the development of Alzheimer's disease.

What can you do?

If you think your mother is menopausal, talk to her about any short-term symptoms she may be experiencing and help her understand her long-term health risks. Most important, encourage her to see her physician. Treatment options are available that can help eliminate the short-term symptoms of menopause and reduce the long-term health risks associated with estrogen deficiency.

Estrogen replacement can prevent or reduce The symptoms associated with estrogen deficiency

The best way for your mother to alleviate the symptoms associated with estrogen deficiency is to replace the missing estrogen in her body. Estrogen replacement can relieve many of the short-term symptoms and reduce the long-term health risks associated with estrogen deficiency.

Estrogen replacement and short-term Symptoms of menopause

Estrogen replacement can do all the following:

- ☐ **Eliminate or lessen hot flashes and night sweats**
- ☐ **Improve the quality of sleep**
- ☐ **Increase vaginal lubrication, thus helping prevent painful intercourse**
- ☐ **Relieve vaginal symptoms such as irritation and painful sexual intercourse, and prevent urinary tract infections**

Estrogen replacement and long-term health Risks of menopause

- ☐ **Estrogen replacement can reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease**

Studies have shown that women who use estrogen replacement have at least one half the risk of cardiovascular disease as women who do not use estrogen replacement. Thus, by replacing the estrogen that is lost at menopause, a woman can help protect herself against cardiovascular disease.

- ☐ **Estrogen replacement can improve cholesterol levels**

Estrogen replacement has been shown to decrease levels of LDL cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol) and to increase levels of HDL cholesterol (the "good" cholesterol). This is one of the mechanisms for the protective effects of estrogen on the heart.

□ **Estrogen replacement can protect against osteoporosis**

Estrogen replacement is the best way to prevent postmenopausal bone loss. It has been shown to reduce bone loss at the hip, spine, and wrist, where most osteoporotic fractures occur, and to reduce the risk of hip fractures by about 50%. In order to maintain the benefit of estrogen replacement therapy on bone, therapy must be continued. Once therapy is stopped, bone loss accelerates. Estrogen replacement can also protect against tooth loss. Therefore, many women choose to take estrogen replacement from menopause onward to obtain the most protection against osteoporosis.

□ **Estrogen replacement may protect against Alzheimer's disease**

There is growing evidence that estrogen may protect against Alzheimer's disease. One study showed that women who used estrogen had about half the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease as nonusers. Another study showed that women who had used estrogen replacement had a 35% lower risk of Alzheimer's disease than women who had never used estrogen. In addition, the age of onset of Alzheimer's disease has been shown to be later in women who have used estrogen replacement than in women who have not. Although findings are not yet conclusive, the use of estrogen by postmenopausal women may decrease the risk of delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

□ **Estrogen replacement may have other beneficial effects**

As science advances, so does our ability to determine the effects of estrogen on the body. Two other areas of focus in estrogen research are colon cancer and age-related macular degeneration.

Colon cancer: Approximately 15% of all cancers occur in the colon and rectum. Preliminary studies have shown that estrogen replacement may reduce the risk of colon cancer. In one study, women who were recent users of estrogen replacement had half the risk of developing colon cancer as women who did not use estrogen replacement. The study also showed that women who had ever used estrogen replacement had about a 30% decreased risk of fatal colon cancer compared to nonusers, and women who were currently using estrogen replacement had a nearly 50% decrease in risk compared to nonusers. Another study showed a decrease in risk of colon cancer with increased years of estrogen use.

Age-related macular degeneration: Macular degeneration is an eye disorder that can lead to blindness. Studies have shown that women have a greater risk for age-related macular degeneration and that this risk may be related to decreased estrogen levels. Preliminary evidence indicates that the use of estrogen replacement in postmenopausal women is associated with a decreased risk of age-related macular degeneration.

Although early results are promising, additional studies are needed in these and other areas to evaluate the protective effects of estrogen replacement.

Estrogen replacement and risks for Breast cancer and endometrial cancer

- ❑ For women with a uterus, a progestin is added to estrogen replacement to reduce the risk of endometrial cancer.
- ❑ Data regarding estrogen replacement and risk for breast cancer are inconclusive.
- ❑ It is important to weigh the benefits of estrogens replacement therapy against the risks.
- ❑ Encourage your mother to discuss the risks and benefits of estrogen replacement therapy with her physician.

Types of estrogen replacement available

- Oral tablets
- Vaginal creams
- Vaginal inserts
- Transdermal patches
- Topical creams and gels
- Injectables

Let your mother know that her physician can tailor a program to suit her needs. Her medical history, health status, lifestyle, response to therapy, and preferences will play a role in determining the appropriate form of therapy for her. Encourage her to ask her physician about the options available. The more she knows, the more she can take control of her health.

Is estrogen replacement after menopause for everyone?

Although most women can replace the estrogen lost after menopause with estrogen replacement therapy, this treatment should not be used in women with any of the following: (1) known or suspected breast cancer, (2) known or suspected estrogen-dependent neoplasia, (3) known or suspected pregnancy, (4) undiagnosed abnormal genital bleeding, (5) active thrombophlebitis or thromboembolic disorders, or (6) hypersensitivity to any of the ingredients used in estrogen replacement therapy. Encourage your mother to discuss the risks and benefits of estrogen replacement therapy with her physician.

Making therapy work

You have just read about some of the effects of estrogen deficiency and how estrogen replacement can be used to reduce or eliminate many of the short-term symptoms and long-term health risks of menopause. Many women use estrogen replacement therapy solely to relieve short-term symptoms, such as hot flashes. However, long-term therapy is essential if they wish to reduce the chances of developing heart disease and osteoporosis.

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E-mail: cafrainfo@wow.net

MEMBERSHIP FORM - ORGANISATIONS

NAME:

ADDRESS (street):

.....

ADDRESS (mailing):

..... ADDRESS (e-mail):

TEL. NO.: FAX NO.:

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (Aims, activities, membership, etc)

.....

.....

.....

.....

RESEARCH/ACTION EXPERIENCE AND/OR INTERESTS

.....

.....

.....

MEMBERSHIP FEE (55 units in currency of country of residence and not exceeding US\$25 - paid in US\$ if possible)

ENCLOSED: ☐ Yes

☐ No

SIGNATURE

DATE

CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION FOR FEMINIST RESEARCH & ACTION (CAFRA)

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MEMBERSHIP FORM - INDIVIDUALS

NAME:

ADDRESS (street):

ADDRESS (mailing):

ADDRESS (e-mail): TEL. NO. (home):

TEL. NO. (office): FAX NO.:

ORGANISATIONAL AFFILIATION (if any):

ADDRESS OF ORGANISATION:

TEL. NO: FAX NO.: E-MAIL:

RESEARCH/ACTION EXPERIENCE AND/OR INTERESTS (Kindly enclose a Curriculum Vitae
for our Skills Bank):

MEMBERSHIP FEE (40 units in currency of country of residence, paid in US\$ if possible)

ENCLOSED: ☐ Yes ☐ No

SIGNATURE

DATE