





# Active Democracy Citizen Network for the Implementation of Summit Commitments

## Evaluation Index of Government Compliance

### National Report: Barbados

A Project of



FOCAL and INVESP

Prepared By:

Judith Soares, National Coordinator  
Women and Development Unit  
Consortium for Social Development and Research  
The University of the West Indies Open Campus  
Barbados  
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# 1. Executive Summary

This report details the findings of the research project **Active Democracy: Citizen Network for the Implementation of Summit Commitments** which was conducted in Barbados from January to April 2008. The aim of the project was to monitor the extent to which the Government of Barbados had implemented the mandates approved in the Summit of the Americas (2001-2005) to which it had committed itself. Therefore, the research was based on an assessment of government's action during the period spanning 2001 and 2007. Spearheaded by the Chilean Non-Governmental Organisation, Corporacion PARTICIPA, and the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) based in Ottawa, Canada, this project was implemented in 24 countries of the Americas in the following four thematic areas related to the general theme of democratic governance:

- decentralisation and local governments;
- access to public information;
- freedom of expression; and
- civil society participation.

However, in implementing the project in Barbados, only three thematic areas were considered: (i) freedom of expression; (ii) access to public information; and (iii) strengthening civil society participation as they relate to the Quebec City (Canada) and the Mar del Plata (Argentina) Summit mandates. The thematic area, *decentralisation and local government*, did not come up for review, precisely because the governmental system now existing in Barbados is based on a central government arrangement which does not include decentralisation and local government forms.

The research was guided by the methods and methodology as set out in the **Active Democracy... Manual** which also indicated the importance of including a gender perspective in the scientific exercise. In keeping with the *Manual*, therefore, participants were chosen along the lines of professional status, experience and expertise in the particular areas under review, gender, minority groups, disadvantaged social groups and their membership in civil society organizations. Lay persons were also invited to participate in the exercise. Members of the expert evaluation panels were selected from a broad cross-section of individuals, professions and institutions of civil society, academic and research centres. Therefore, the findings contained in this *National Report* are based on the discussions of experts from the fields of academia, information and journalism, law and law enforcement, business development, religion, trade unionism, community development, and members of civil society organizations including women's organizations, men's organizations and an organization representing persons with disabilities. They came together under the umbrella of the Women and Development Unit, The University of the West Indies Open Campus, to review government's performance in respect of the approved mandates of the Summits, and to make recommendations they felt would assist the government in realizing its commitments to the people of Barbados.

The outcome of those discussions was also the basis for the creation of an Evaluation Index of Government Compliance (EIGC) which is simply a statistical presentation or report to give an indication as to whether or not government had violated or advanced the mandates in the thematic areas under review. Simply put, the EIGC is an indicator of the progress or lack of it by governments concerning their commitments to their peoples.

From the EIGC, it was concluded that the Government of Barbados had not, for the most part, fulfilled its commitment to the Summit of the Americas or honoured its promises to the people of Barbados in the thematic areas isolated. However, in a few instances, it was felt the government had actually violated, in a slight way, its commitments. In other instances, it was felt that Government had advanced, to some extent, the mandates of the Summits. Specifically relating to women, there are no laws that speak specifically to women's freedom of expression or access to public information. There is also no mechanism in place to ensure the promotion of women's organizations and the recognition of women's rights as human rights.

## II. Introduction

The purpose of this *National Report* is to present the results of the follow-up performed on Barbados regarding the putting into practice of the Summits of the Americas mandates during the period 2006-2008. In the context of Barbados, these mandates which relate to strengthening democracy are: access to public information, freedom of expression and strengthening civil society participation. As stated earlier, a fourth thematic area, decentralization and local government, is not relevant to Barbados because a local government system which had been part of the administrative arrangements of the country was officially brought to an end in 1969 when the functions of local governments were transferred to central and statutory bodies.

The *Report* seeks to specify the progress and the setbacks experienced in the implementation of the mandates in the areas mentioned in order to formulate a series of recommendations that could contribute to strengthening their implementation. This is particularly important in the context of the joint-work that can be done, in advance, regarding the alliances between civil society organizations and governments.

To achieve this, the results from Barbados are presented in the context of a broader Evaluation Index of Government Compliance (EIGC) and an analysis of this index at the national level. Based on the results, we present a series of recommendations that seeks to contribute to the strengthening of both civil society participation and the fulfillment of the summits' mandates of the thematic areas under review. These recommendations will form part of a presentation to the V Summit of the Americas, to be held in April of 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago.

### **Project to Follow-up on the Summits of the Americas and the Formation of the Active Democracy Network (1997-2008)**

Since 1997, work has been in progress on the **Citizens' Participation for the Summits of the Americas Project**, which has gone through a number of phases during the last 11 years. The wide variety of activities carried out has allowed for the formation of a continental network of civil society organizations, which in 2007, took the name **Active Democracy Network**. This network has participated in the monitoring of the mandates of the Summits of the Americas, which is one of the most important achievements of the project. The work of the **Network** may be considered as one of the factors that has enabled this initiative to increase the number of participating countries in the Americas, which has presently reached a total of 22.

Under the leadership of the PARTICIPA Corporation of Chile, the Project, in its early stages, promoted the participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the preparation of proposals for the Second Summit of the Americas, which was held in Santiago, Chile in 1998.

In its second phase, now led by the PARTICIPA Corporation, the Esquel Group of the United States of America and the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) a set of activities at both the national and continental levels were developed with the aim of promoting the participation of the organizations and social networks in the Summits' process. In this connection, a series of consultations was first carried out with the CSOs in order to formulate proposals for the Third Summit of the Americas which was held in Quebec in April, 2001.

This cycle of consultations was centered on the themes of strengthening democracy, the creation of prosperity and the realization of the human potential. It was developed in 18 countries: Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay. The result of this was the formulation of

243 proposals which received the consensus of 900 CSOs and which were presented to the governments within the framework of the Quebec Summit. More than half of those recommendations were included in the Summit's Plan of Action.

Subsequently, an evaluation of this process was made, and a decision was taken to develop a monitoring initiative regarding the degree of compliance on the part of the governments of certain mandates included in the *Quebec Plan of Action* as they related to democratic governance. To this end, a methodology was devised to enable the Project to extend its coverage to 21 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.

This stage, known as the "Civil Society Follow-Up Strategy for the Implementation of the Quebec Plan of Action", was carried out between July 2002 and March 2005. It was coordinated by PARTICIPA, FOCAL, the network Coordinator for Economic and Social Research (CRIES), the University of the Andes of Colombia and the Inter-American Network for Democracy (RID). The central objective was to monitor and promote compliance with the Quebec Action Plan on the thematic axis of strengthening democracy by means of the improvement and broadening of citizen participation. The participating organizations designed and applied continental, sub-regional and national mechanisms of outreach and dissemination.

For that stage, the **Network** decided to monitor the mandates related to:

- access to public information
- freedom of expression
- local governments and decentralization
- strengthening of civil society participation
- judicial reforms and access to justice

The results of this first exercise produced a series of *National Reports* in each of the 21 countries regarding the degree of implementation of the mandates of this Third Summit. Also, the **Network** presented a set of proposals in order to contribute to the improvement of the way in which governments comply with these mandates in order to support the strengthening of democratic governance in the countries of the region. These results were included in the **Hemispheric Report 2005**<sup>1</sup>, which was brought to public attention at both the Monterrey Special Summit as well as the Fourth Summit of the Americas at Mar del Plata, Argentina. Also, during this phase, a strategy for advocacy and dissemination was developed, both at national and continental levels. To this end, the website [www.sociedadcivil.net](http://www.sociedadcivil.net) was created and various activities were carried out in the 21 countries.

Once this stage was completed, a process of internal assessment and formulation of the next steps was initiated. The evaluation concluded that the Project had made an impact both at national as well as at regional and continental levels with regard to:

- dissemination of the process of the Summits of the Americas in 21 countries of the Caribbean, Central America, Andes and the Southern Cone
- definition of the base lines in 21 countries regarding the situation of the themes being monitored (achievements and challenges)
- broadening and strengthening, in some countries, of the dialogue between government and civil society regarding the deepening of CSOs participation on national, regional and continental levels
- dissemination and advocacy strategies in various forums of the Inter-American System, such as the activities related to the Summits of the Americas process as well as to the Organization of American States (OAS) General Assemblies
- broadening and strengthening of alliances with other networks and CSOs

A new phase began in May 2007, coordinated by PARTICIPA Corporation, FOCAL and the Venezuelan Institute of Social and Political Studies (INVESP). The general objective at this stage was the development of a series of activities during the 2007-2010 period with a view to strengthening the CSOs' participation in the Inter-American processes and, more specifically, with its presence at the V Summit of the Americas to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in April of 2009. This stage focussed on three central objectives:

- the need to **consolidate and broaden the Active Democracy Network** of civil society organizations
- the importance of **emphasizing and supporting fulfillment of the mandates** related to the strengthening of democracy in the region
- the establishment of **alliances between CSOs and governments** in order to implement the mandates of the Summits of the Americas

In connection with these challenges, Stage 11 of this project developed the three following strategies between 2007 and 2008.

### **Strategy 1: Evaluation of Compliance with the Commitments**

The evaluation would be carried out in 22 countries: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, the United States of America, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela. Its goal was to monitor the commitments of the Summits of the Americas in four themes:

- decentralization and local governments
- access to public information
- freedom of expression
- strengthening of civil society participation

On the basis of the application in the different countries of the methodology for the creation of the Evaluation of Government Compliance Index (EIGC) each country produced national reports that include practical and specific recommendations directed to the governments so that they can improve the implementation of the mandates of the Summits of the Americas. In addition, the **Hemispheric Report** (2006-2008) for the project was created on the basis of these reports and the EIGC.

### **Strategy 2: National Government-Civil Society Alliances**

With the intention of improving the implementation of the mandates, and given that work in alliance is vital for this, efforts were made so that in eight<sup>2</sup> of the 22 countries, national alliances would be created between CSOs and their respective governments. As such, we have favoured the establishment of a joint-working agenda, based on concrete actions that contribute to the implementation of the commitments acquired in the process of the Summits of the Americas in the four thematic areas contemplated by the project.

### **Strategy 3: Advocacy and Dissemination**

Advocacy and Dissemination were carried out in the 22 countries and sought to present national and regional public opinion with the achievements of the monitoring of the process of the Americas Summits in the themes related to democratic governance and the broadening of citizen participation. It was intended to influence the improvement of the quality of dialogues that take place in the fora, which have been institutionalized in the OAS and in the process of the Summits for civil society participation.

## The Evaluation Index of Government Compliance and the Gender Perspective

### The EIGC

During this stage of the project, a decision was taken to develop a monitoring methodology, which consisted of the creation of the EIGC. With this new methodology, we aimed to capture the specific aspects of each country in the best way possible, with the hope of improving the comparison between the results obtained for each country.

Based on this, this **quantifying** tool was put into practice so that the **Active Democracy Network** could summarize the evaluation that the CSO representatives and experts made of the degree of compliance of their respective governments with the mandates of the Summits of the Americas regarding the four issues for follow-up from 2006-2008.

The EIGC is an evaluation of the opinions of members of civil society organizations as well as experts on the four issues, regarding the progress or setbacks by the governments in relation to the degree of the implementation of the Summits' mandates which are subject to the follow-up action. The governments, themselves, informed these groups about the activities that had been carried out, and based on this information, the panels of evaluators gave their opinions on the performance of governments in the thematic areas under review. It is an *ad-hoc* Index regarding these general, permanent mandates recorded in the action plans from the Summits of the Americas and in other inter-American mandates. It has a very high degree of generality and states few concrete or specific tasks oriented towards reaching goals in a determined period of time.

Thus, this approach has had the purpose of strengthening the **Active Democracy Network** in its appeal to governments to initiate processes and/or actions that guarantee progress on the implementation of the commitments contained in these general, permanent mandates. This has been done through the three previously mentioned stages of the project: the creation of the EIGC in 22 countries, the establishment of national alliances in eight countries, as well as the strategy of dissemination and outreach developed around this initiative's activities.

The EIGC does not aim to put a value on the final results. Rather, it evaluates the degree to which the actions taken or not taken- by each government as evidence of advancement towards those final objectives. In this way, with a fixed goal in mind (for example, full recognition of freedom of expression) the EIGC measures how active each government has been in carrying out policies which allow the country to move in that direction and avoiding others which go against the principles or goals expressed in that mandate. The EIGC will, therefore, be a channel of expression for CSOs that participate in the process, since they can express themselves by valuing or criticizing what has, or has not been done by governments.

The EIGC was created based on the opinion of a Panel of Evaluation in each of the 22 countries. The Panel of Evaluation comprises experts on the thematic issues and interested CSO representatives, or those who have been affected by one of the thematic issues. This panel evaluated the degree of progress of national governments of the fulfillment of the commitments agreed to in the Summits of the Americas.

The results of the EIGC allow for each country to be able to:

- have a *single number* that summarizes the value assigned by the Evaluation Panel regarding activities and policies carried out during a period of time by governments in connection with the implementation of the mandates in the four selected themes
- analyze *inside each country* the degree to which experts in each of the thematic areas and the CSOs (which are interested in and/or have been

- affected by one of the thematic areas) perceived that the government has complied with agreements signed, comparing their perception among the different thematic areas under scrutiny by the monitoring process
- contrast the *reports supplied by governments* to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), on the degree of advancement and compliance of the mandates established at the Summits, with the evaluation made by civil society through the EIGC. This is possible, since the evaluation documents are presented by the governments themselves regarding how they value their compliance with the agreements of the Quebec *Plan of Action*.<sup>3</sup> After reviewing some of these documents, it becomes clear that they deserve an external assessment as a critical counterbalance to each government's self-evaluation
  - compare the *performance of each government* with the rest of the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean. The force of comparative arguments contributes to highlighting the importance of national debates ("my country has a better or worse evaluation than the rest"). Both domestic and international experience of what has been called "*social reporting*"<sup>4</sup> endorses the power of these comparisons as a way of drawing attention and stimulating debate on insightful themes

### The Gender Perspective

This stage of the follow-up strategy introduced a new challenge: the incorporation of the gender perspective in the analysis. In this sense, the **gender perspective** informs that, "the power relations that involve class, race, ethnicity, age and geographic location interact with gender and produce complex and hidden inequalities"<sup>5</sup> through which women and other sexual identities hold a position that is subordinate to that of men. Thus, the gender perspective demanded that the project include criteria for gender equity that emerged from the definitions and mandates of the Summits, especially those of Quebec and Mar del Plata and the inter-American framework of norms and standards on the human rights of women.

How was the gender perspective incorporated into the EIGC? Regarding the national coordinators, two fundamental strategies were developed. First of all, people with experience working on the gender perspective were included on the working teams. Secondly, the *parity clause* and the *guarantee of inclusion* of expert people and organizations on gender issues were included in the Panel of Evaluation.

Based on this, **gender expertise** was guaranteed by including on the working team members who had qualifications in gender studies and whose work experience allowed them to be proficient in analyzing the way in which the mandates were implemented. The **guarantee of inclusion** of expert people and organizations on gender issues was carried out by respecting the importance of gender equity in the formation of the panels of evaluation. Regarding the **parity clause**, this was given the same importance as the incorporation of the gender perspective into this kind of methodology.

### Acknowledgements

This initiative would not have been possible without the support of the Canadian Agency for International Development (CIDA/ACDI) and the Special Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, (FEMCIDI) Organization of American States (OAS). We also wish to express our special recognition of the contribution of all those experts and representatives of Civil Society Organizations from the three thematic areas who so willingly gave of their time, their knowledge and their experience so that this project could become a reality.

On the Barbados national team, we would like to express our gratitude to Joy Workman, Head Researcher, Danielle Nicholas and Janelle Greenidge, research assistants, and Roslyn Batson, Project Administrator. We would also like to thank Cecelia Batson-Rollock for added administrative support.

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vivere.



Cordaba

P A <sup>Rio</sup>

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R S.

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# III. Evaluation Index of Government Compliance (EIGC)

## A. General Results

### Results of the Overall Evaluation Index of Government Compliance

The results of the **Evaluation Index of Government Compliance** of the **Active Democracy Network**, call for a focus on the way in which governments are implementing the mandates of the Summits of the Americas. Beyond the political will expressed in these agreements, the rhythm of their implementation in recent years has been slow and there have even been worrying setbacks.

The **Evaluation Index of Government Compliance** is a tool especially designed for civil society to be able to monitor the process of the Summits of the Americas. This index summarizes the opinions of a wide-ranging network of experts and representatives of civil society organizations (more than 600 people in 21 countries). Each person was asked to judge the degree to which their respective governments had progressed or had experienced difficulties regarding the fulfillment of four mandates which are fundamental to the strengthening of democracy.

The mandates evaluated refer to commitments in the areas of access to public information, decentralization, freedom of expression and strengthening of civil society participation. These obligations are of a permanent nature and governments are entrusted to carry out constant actions, in the context of public policies, geared towards the fulfillment of the established objectives. To the contrary, governments must also permanently abstain from taking actions against or detrimental to compliance with the mandates.

**It is important to point out that the Index seeks to determine the extent to which the governments have progressed or have seen setbacks in their fulfillment of the mandates as agreed on at the Summits of the Americas during the period 2006-2008.**

The Index is based on information provided by governments and official sources consulted by national teams.

Considering the total of opinions collected throughout the region, the total EIGC reached the value of 0.01 (on a theoretical range of variation that goes from +3 to -3). It must be noted that in the EIGC, positive numbers (+) indicate a perception of progress on the fulfillment of these commitments. Negative numbers (-) indicate a perception of setbacks. The resulting value (0.01) quite close to zero, shows that in the opinion of this group of civil society organizations and experts of the Americas, the 21 governments evaluated in the region, during the period under review, have made little progress and have even experienced setbacks towards fulfilling the commitments made at Summits.

Of the 21 countries analyzed, 57 percent (12) have an average index lower than 0. The results of the countries in terms of their progress and/or difficulties/setbacks in the implementation of the Summits' commitments from 2006-2008 are set out below. The countries are ordered alphabetically.

**Table 1.** Countries that Present Progress

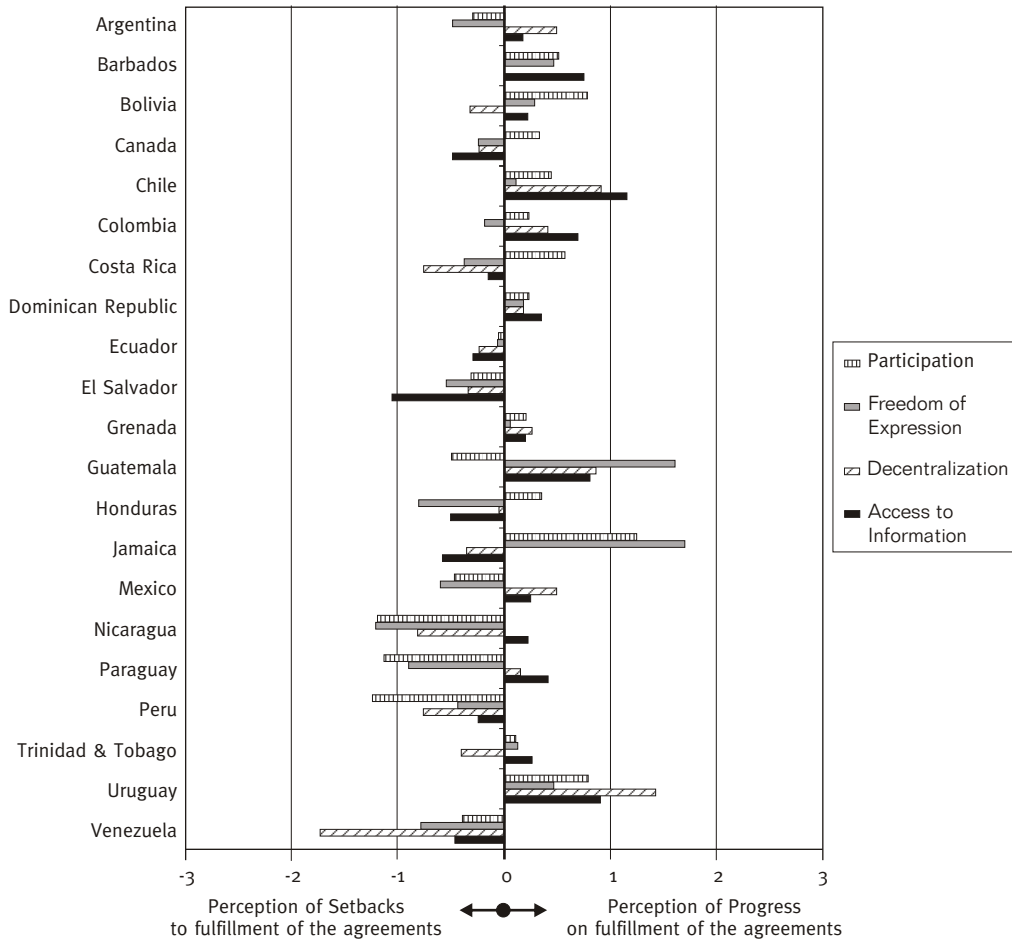
<b>Country</b>	<b>Average</b>
Barbados	0.59
Bolivia	0.24
Chile	0.59
Colombia	0.26
Dominican Republic	0.24
Grenada	0.14
Guatemala	0.72
Jamaica	0.53
Uruguay	0.86

**Table 2.** Countries that Present Difficulties and Setbacks

<b>Country</b>	<b>Average</b>
Argentina	-0.05
Canada	-0.14
Costa Rica	-0.17
Ecuador	-0.14
El Salvador	-0.57
Honduras	-0.24
Mexico	-0.09
Nicaragua	-0.75
Paraguay	-0.36
Peru	-0.70
Trinidad and Tobago	-0.01
Venezuela	-0.85

The following graph compares the situations between participating countries for each of the four areas of the mandates evaluated. Note, however, that Barbados was evaluated in only three thematic areas as indicated earlier.

**Graph 1. Mandates EIGC Country Results**



The government of Uruguay showed the most progress on the fulfillment of the mandates (+0.86). Venezuela was graded as having the largest amount of setbacks and difficulties (-0.85). In considering the total value of the EIGC, only nine countries displayed some degree of progress, while in 12 countries, it was perceived that there were setbacks and difficulties.

As can be seen from the graph, the government of Uruguay introduced and implemented policies that resulted in progress in the four areas. Specifically, in the area of **access to information**, the *Law of Access to Public Information* and the *National Archives Law* were passed. In addition, the *CEIBAL Plan* was put into effect. The latter allows for all children enrolled in public schools to have access to a laptop computer. As for **freedom of expression**, the most recognizable undertaking was that the Executive branch negotiated, with civil society, a reform measure that restricts the interpretation of what is to be considered as reports and information that are illegal.

Regarding **decentralization**, the government established the National Agriculture Council, Departmental Agriculture Councils and the Rural Development Committee. At the same time, Public Attention Centres were established in rural areas. Regarding the **strengthening of civil society participation**, it is considered that the government has extended its backing of these organizations, including financial support.

In contrast, the Venezuelan government undertook actions that led to setbacks in the four areas of analysis. Specifically, in the area of **access to information**, websites were modified in order to diminish the information available to the public. A *Law of Access to Public Information* has not been passed, and the access of the media to government sources of information, such as press conferences, is limited. As for **freedom of expression**, the *PROVEA Report* records 134 cases of violations of freedom of expression and access to information during 2006-2007. Practices of self-censorship and media restrictions were also detected. In the area of **decentralization**, communal councils were created. They have a direct relationship with the Executive, thus excluding the city halls and state governments, and reducing the powers of local institutions. Setbacks also include reduced resources for local and state governments, as well as the transfer of tasks from local and regional governments to the central organ. In the **strengthening of civil society participation**, discussions began on the *Law of International Cooperation*, the contents of which would limit foreign funding to CSOs. There were also signs of a governmental campaign to discredit civil society.

In breaking down this general scoring according to the dimensions of the EIGC, it can be said that in the majority of the countries (13 of 21) there was progress in some areas, but, at the same time, there were setbacks in others. As such, it can be observed that, within this setting of scarce general progress, the **access to public information** dimension stands out as the best evaluated of all the dimensions among all the different countries. On the other hand, the **freedom of expression** dimension appears many times with negative evaluations among the different countries involved in the study.

**Table 3.** Countries that stand out in the four dimensions that make up the EIGC

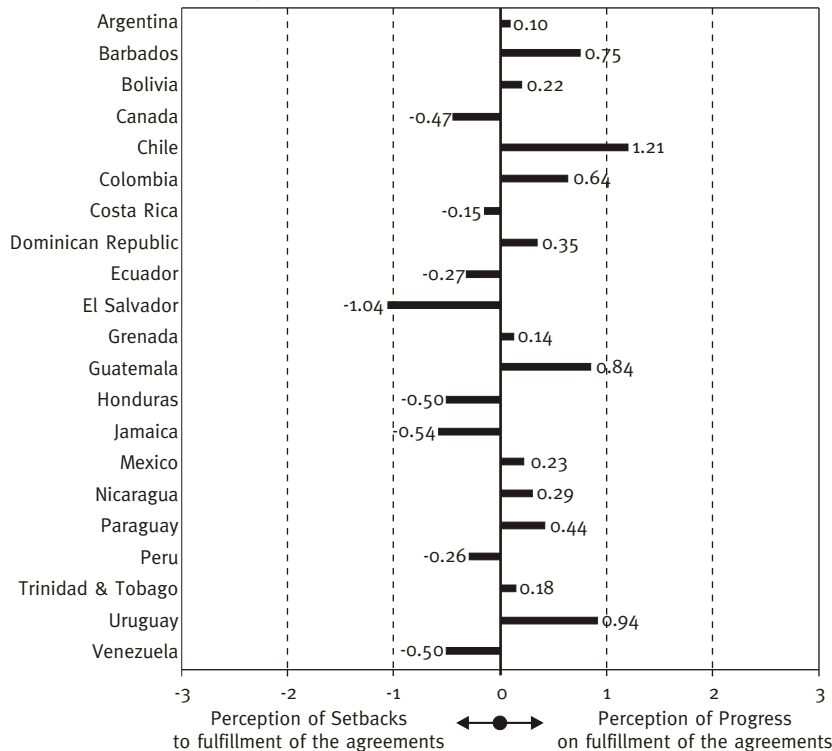
Countries With The Most Progress	Dimension of the EIGC Evaluated	Countries With the Most Setbacks and Difficulties
Chile, Guatemala and Uruguay	<b>Access to public information</b>	El Salvador, Jamaica and Venezuela
Chile, Guatemala and Jamaica	<b>Freedom of expression</b>	Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay
Chile, Guatemala and Uruguay	<b>Decentralization and Local Governments</b>	Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela
Bolivia, Jamaica and Uruguay	<b>Strengthening of Civil Society participation</b>	Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru

**EIGC Results by Area of Analysis**

An analysis of each area shows that it is possible to identify examples of best practices for the fulfillment of the Summits' mandates by some governments as well as examples of difficulties and setbacks experienced by others.

## Results for Access to Public information

**Graph 2. EIGC Dimension: Access to Public Information**



A fundamental factor that guarantees the right of access to public information is having a legal framework that protects this right. Regarding actions that show that progress has been made as far as a legal framework that guarantees this right, nine of the 21 countries evaluated have laws that refer specifically to access to public information (Chile, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay). This represents 42.85 percent of all the countries evaluated. In Chile and Guatemala, these laws were passed in 2008. However, the cases of Ecuador and Honduras demonstrate that a law is not enough, and that such proceedings have to be institutionalized.

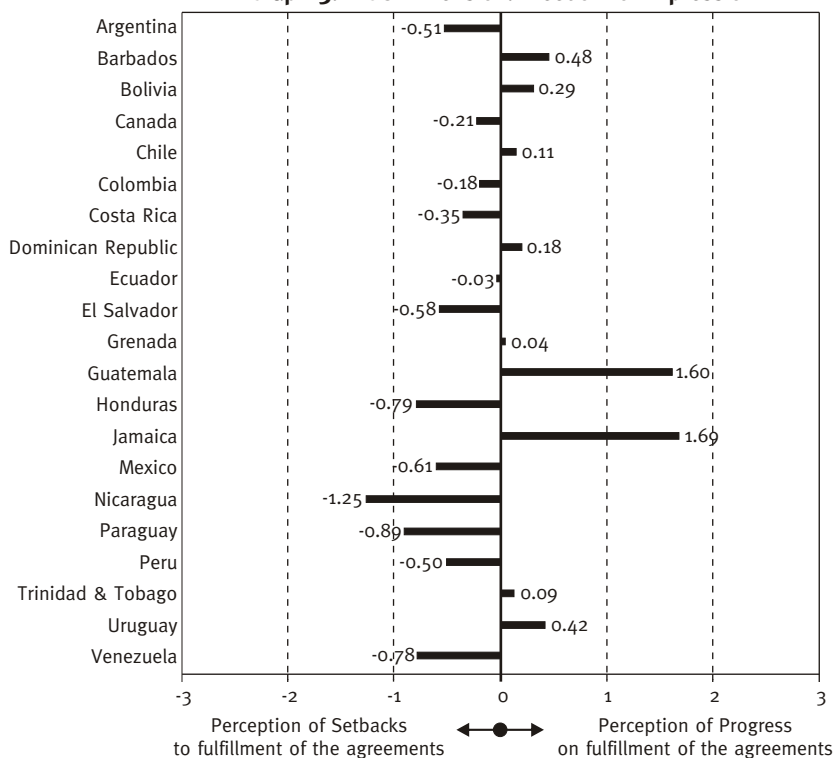
The majority of countries have constitutional guarantees and several laws that protect the right to access to public information, but personal decisions on the part of public officials persist when the public requires access to public documents. In some countries, for example, Canada and Honduras, laws or norms have been passed that go as far as to restrict the information that can be accessed and extend the procedures necessary to request information, thus making the process longer.

In most countries, government agencies have websites that allow for access to information regarding public services and certain official documents e-government. However, in many cases it was also found that difficulties or setbacks persist due to the fact that the information available is not relevant or updated, and in some cases, such as in Venezuela, the information available has been limited. These restrictions can also be found in other countries such as Costa Rica where the provision of information is repeatedly conditioned. For example, the President of the Republic and the Minister of the Environment decreed in 2008 that in cases of environmental damage, only those persons who are directly affected can have access to the relevant environmental information. In addition, in order to receive answers to their requests for information, persons have had to present their cases to the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court.

Finally, the lack of transparency and access to information on public finances and electoral expenditures are evident in all of the countries evaluated.

### Results for Freedom of Expression

**Graph 3. EIGC Dimension: Freedom of Expression**



In this area, it was very difficult to identify coherent examples of best practices in the 21 countries. In this regard, it can be appreciated that in 12 of the 21 countries, which is 57 percent of the total, setbacks or difficulties were reported in this thematic area. No country reported progress for this period in terms of laws that contribute to guaranteeing or extending this right. However, some governments took actions that either reversed or limited freedom of expression. In the case of Uruguay, the fact that the Executive Power introduced reform to reduce the classification of illegal reports or information was positively evaluated. In Chile, the widening of the possibilities of the right to rebuttal also stood out.

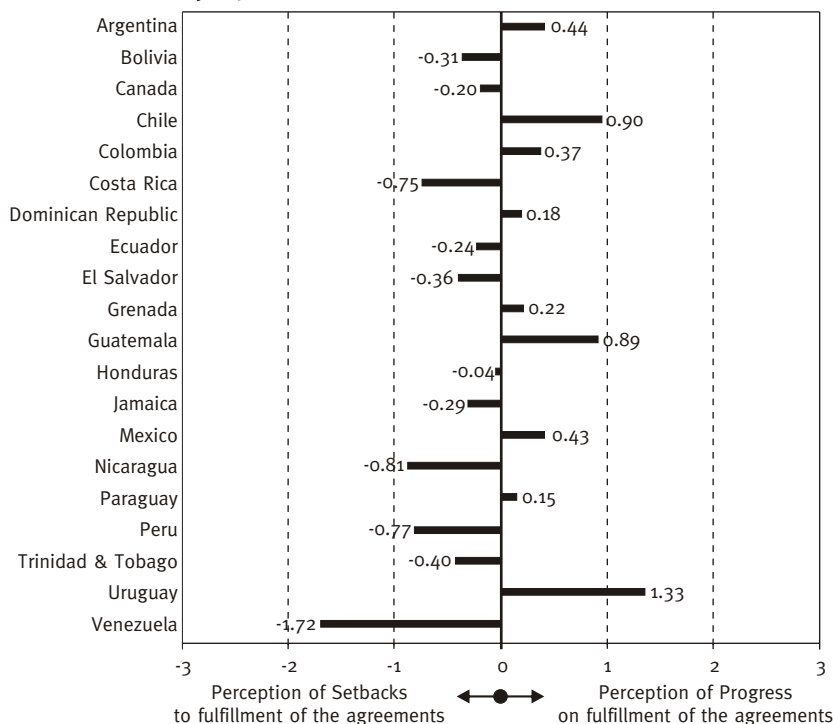
In some cases, such as Grenada, one aspect that has contributed to compliance in this area is the opening of new media and the establishment of public fora that allow for a higher level of public participation in the discussions held on budgets and projects to be implemented by the government. In the same way in Bolivia, one best practice has been the extension of telecommunication services, especially in rural areas.

However, difficulties and challenges persist in the region on this matter. In Mexico, for example, the fact that laws have been passed that contribute towards limiting this right stands out. There are also other difficulties throughout the Americas. First, there is the monopoly of ownership of the media. It was even shown that this is associated with economic and political interests, such as in the cases of Honduras, Mexico and Paraguay. Second, in some countries, there are still serious cases of threats, persecution, trials, incarceration and even assassination of journalists. Countries in which these situations were reported include Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Grenada, Honduras, Mexico and Venezuela.

It was also disclosed that there is an important setback in the use, by national governments, of several mechanisms for applying pressure which lead to censorship or self-censorship. This is reported in the cases of Argentina, Colombia, Honduras and Venezuela. Among such mechanisms is the removal or non-allocation of advertising spaces to media organizations that do not respond to government's interests.

### Results for Decentralization and Local Governments

**Graph 4. EIGC Dimension: Decentralization and Local Governments**



In the area of decentralization and local governments, the results were divided. In nine of the 21 countries, almost 43 percent, it was perceived that there had been progress in this area. In those countries where civil society recognized progress on the fulfillment of the mandates, governmental actions towards the transfer of tasks and resources from the central government to local governments were valued. This is because such actions strengthen a more decentralized and autonomous management for local governments. It was also recognized that laws have been passed to allow local governments to have a certain degree of autonomy for obtaining financial resources so that they do not depend exclusively on the central government for such resources. These best practices were found to take place in countries like Argentina, Colombia, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

As a positive step, the assessment included the establishment of programmes by the central government that contributed to strengthening local governments' technical capacities and their modernization. In some countries, such as Chile, new regions were created, thus widening the coverage of local governments. In this regard, the strengthening of local and regional leaderships was also positively evaluated in Guatemala.

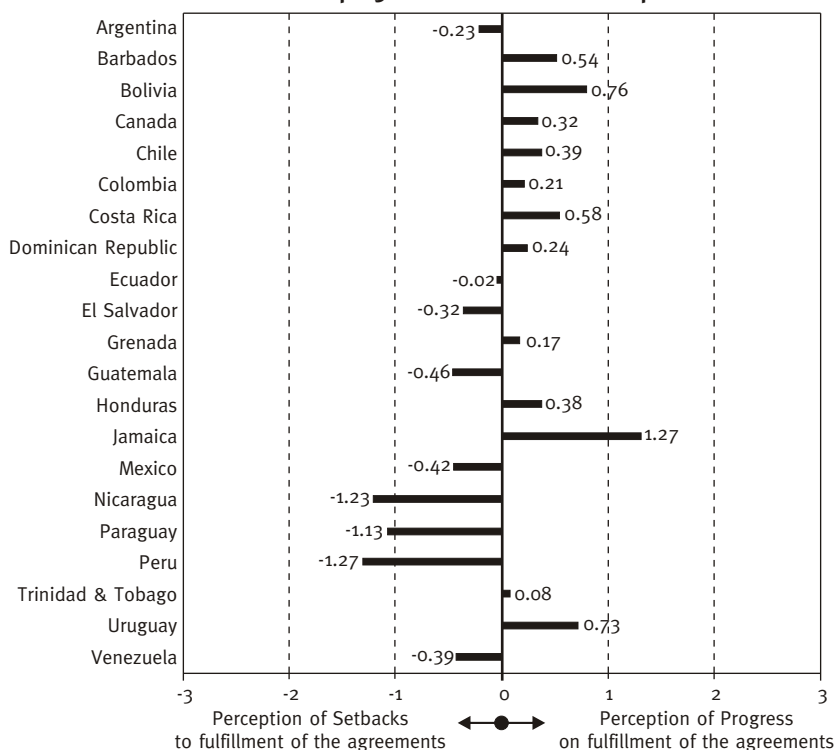
The setting up of public Attention Centers or the inclusion of public participation in rural areas are counted as an expression of political will to decentralize management and increase connections with the public as in the case of Uruguay. The establishment of spaces for consultation and discussion with local communities on budgets and public policies, as in the case of Grenada, was also evaluated as an example of best practices.

On the other hand, the setbacks in this area which took place in 12 countries were related to various kinds of policies which are detrimental to decentralization. First, there is the transfer of tasks from local government to central government, as in Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. There is also evidence of insufficient funding or budget cuts for local governments, as in the cases of Canada, Costa Rica and Venezuela. Another setback is seen in the creation, by central government, of institutions that operate parallel to local governments. Such an action delegitimizes local governments and makes their functioning much more difficult. This is the situation in Venezuela.

In other cases, such as Peru, instances that would have allowed for a higher degree of coordination between local and national governments have been eliminated, leading to a higher degree of centralization of decision-making processes and reversing a fundamental aspect of the processes for decentralization. It was also estimated that there are countries in which the functions of local, regional and national governments are not clearly defined and this leads to conflicts over the powers of each one. This creates obstacles to the formation and execution of public policies on a local level.

### Results for Strengthening of Civil Society Participation

Graph 5. EIGC Dimension: Participation



The strengthening of public participation, like access to public information, is another of the EIGC dimensions with higher levels of progress in the region. In 12 of the 21 countries, 57 percent, it is perceived that there has been progress in this area. Among the best practices, one of the most significant includes the passing of laws to strengthen civil society organizations' participation as in the cases of Bolivia, Honduras and the Dominican Republic. There is also the creation of spaces for consultation and dialogue with civil society for the discussion of bills and other matters. This is the practice in countries such as Costa Rica and Guatemala. Another aspect that was positively evaluated was the provision of resources to finance the initiatives of civil society organizations such as in Chile. Some countries also value the parliamentary discussion

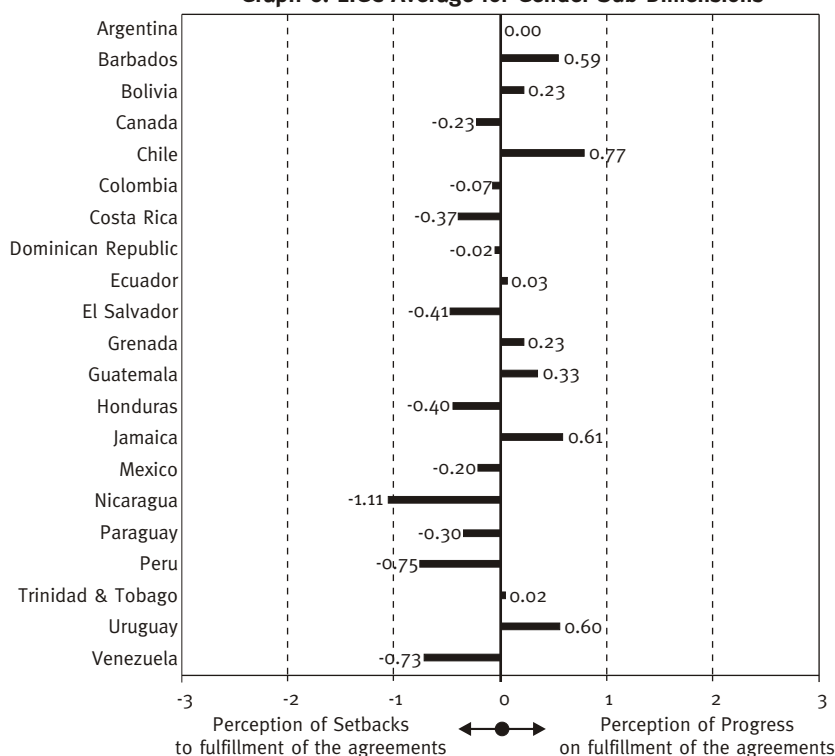
of bills that would facilitate the emergence and constitution of civil society organizations and the existence of public audiences and accountability as examples of participation on a local level.

Regarding participation in the Inter-American system, in Canada, one best practice has been that country's support for civil society organizations to be able to participate in different fora and spaces, especially those connected to the processes of the Summits of the Americas and the General Assemblies of the OAS. In other cases, such as that of Guatemala, the participation of civil society organizations in the preparation of reports to be presented by the government at OAS events also stands out.

The difficulties in this area are shown by insufficient legislation on public participation in public affairs. In some countries like El Salvador and Paraguay, there is not even a legal framework that guarantees or promotes the participation of civil society organizations. As for the lack of compliance with the mandates from the Summits' process, the fact that situations that promote dialogue between governments and civil society organizations have not been put into practice stand out. This is shown in the evaluations of Barbados and Peru. In other cases, restrictions have been placed on non-violent protest by the citizenry, and in many examples, there are only spaces for participation in those projects in which it is demanded by agencies of international cooperation, with no governmental initiative.

### Results for the Gender Perspective

**Graph 6. EIGC Average for Gender Sub-Dimensions**



The gender perspective and that of women's human rights is explicitly considered within each of the four thematic areas covered by the EIGC. To this end, women's human rights are analyzed in each country as the interaction between the specifically "women's" public policies and the public policies and institutions regarding the other four areas mentioned. This analysis is based on the verification of the existence or non-existence of

certain objective elements (e.g. existence of laws, programmes) and on opinions regarding the progress or setbacks that this implies for the Summits' mandates.

As far as **access to information** is concerned, modest progress is seen in relation to laws that remove legal barriers, and the incorporation of measures that promote access to information for women and women's rights in general. This modest progress is overshadowed by the scant production of information on women's human rights, and the virtual lack of promotion and dissemination of fundamental information for women. This puts their rights at risk.

The information available *via* websites is insignificant. This is either because of the precariousness of such information or as a result of the negative effects of the digital divide on women. Information is fundamental to the exercise of women's rights, particularly those dealing with sexual and reproductive health and intra-familial violence. However, little information is produced and its circulation is insufficient.

The situation regarding **freedom of expression** for women is no more encouraging. In general terms, in the majority of the countries, there are no laws or specific government measures towards progress on fulfillment of the mandates referring to gender equity and women's human rights and their freedom of expression. Censorship of sexual and reproductive rights stands out, particularly regarding access to abortion. Also, the absence of government financing for activities concerning women's freedom of expression and women's rights is notable.

Gender equity is not promoted in the media or their programmes. The use of mass media for the expression of women's rights is lacking, and there is no control over the media's use of sexist language or the reproduction of sexist stereotypes. Any governmental measures designed to extend the objective possibilities for women to express themselves freely are the exception, not the rule.

In the area gender related to **decentralization**, there is a positive record indicating that the majority of legislation in the countries analyzed incorporate quotas in favour of women taking on public positions. There is also awareness of the difficulties involved in the effective implementation of such measures. However, there are no specific measures for the promotion of political participation by indigenous or rural women, or for women of African descent. On the other hand, progress on gender equity and the modernization of the state has been recorded in terms of government regulations and administrative measures that include the gender perspective. Nonetheless, there is also a distinct stagnation in public hiring and equal promotion by gender.

Some progress has been noted in relation to laws that recognize women's rights and which establish some programmes to ensure their enforcement on a local level. However, funding is still too scarce to note any substantial progress on the fulfillment of this mandate. Despite this, budgets are not set with the gender perspective in mind. Instead, in the existing cases of progress, the funds channelled through thematic institutions and specific programmes have increased. Also, inaction and setbacks have been recorded on gender and cultural diversity and this constitutes a non-compliance with this mandate. This is especially harmful to indigenous women whose self-determination and other fundamental rights are affected. This also limits their progress in overcoming the poverty that affects the majority of such women.

Public participation was evaluated similarly. In this area, there was some progress but also some setbacks and deficiencies. Regarding the removal of legal barriers and the incorporation of positive measures that promote the participation of women and women's rights organizations, the evaluation noted progress in a significant number of countries.

However, the persistence of deficiencies was also perceived, in particular those having to do with the participation of rural and indigenous women and those of African descent.

At the same time, progress was seen in the area of increasing the budget for coalitions between governments and civil society organizations, particularly for the provision of services oriented towards women. Finally, the participation of women in the Inter-American system had experienced an increase. But, there has not necessarily been an increase in the effects which women's organizations that defend women's rights have on the Inter-American system. Government support for such participation is still inadequate.

## General Results: Barbados

Overall, the findings of the research indicated that the Government of Barbados has neither violated nor advanced significantly its compliance with the principles set out in the mandates of the Summit of Americas: *The Quebec City Summit* (2001) and *The Mar del Plata Summit* (2005) the *Declaration of Nuevo Leon* (2004) which declared commitments in the three, already mentioned, thematic areas under study: (i) access to public information; (ii) freedom of expression; and (iii) strengthening civil society participation.

In thematic areas of *Access to Public Information* and *Freedom of Expression*, it was found that government has not enacted any legislation ensuring respect for access to public information. In the case of freedom of expression, citizens have a constitutional right to express themselves freely although in practice, this right is not applied equitably to all. Even with this constitutional right, journalists and opinion leaders are “not free to investigate and publish without fear of reprisal, harassment or retaliatory action including the misuse use of anti-defamation laws” *Summit Mandate*.

In terms of *Strengthening Civil Society Participation*, the government has not yet enacted legal changes to strengthen civil society participation in democratic governance, thereby ensuring the strengthening of democracy and democratic institution to contribute to creating prosperity and realizing the human potential.

Specifically, we present the findings as they relate to the following areas in the context of their dimensions and sub-dimensions of enquiry.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 4:** Identification of Evaluator, 2008

Name of Evaluator	
Institution	
Sex	a) Female                      b) Male
Age	
Profession	
Years of work experience in general	
Years of experience associated with the theme	

## Access to Public Information

### Dimensions and Sub-Dimensions

**Dimension 1** which speaks to “legislation on freedom of access to information and other norms” includes the following sub-dimensions.

- 1.1 Concrete actions which imply progress in matters of legislation on access to information
- 1.2 Removal of legal barriers and incorporation of measures which promote access to information about women and women's rights

For this **Dimension**, the evaluation ranking was **zero**, indicating that government had not violated nor advanced significantly towards compliance with the principle of concrete actions which would imply progress in matters of legislating on access to information.

**Dimension 2**, on “Effective access public information” included the following sub-dimensions.

- 2.1 Information and state activity
- 2.2 Information on the public budget
- 2.3 Information on the authorities and high public officials
- 2.4 Information on legislative activity
- 2.5 Information on lobby activities before the authorities of the Executive and Legislative powers
- 2.6 Activities and finances of private companies which offer public services
- 2.7 Access to information on human rights violations

Within this **Dimension**, rankings in the case of sub-dimensions 2.1 to 2.6 (with the exception of 2.3) ranged from 0 to -3 and 0 to +2. The predominant view however, was that government had advanced in some measure towards compliance with the principles set out in the mandate (+1). In the case of sub-dimension 2.3, rankings ranged from +2 to -3, with the predominant ranking being +2, indicating that government had advanced in a moderately important way towards compliance with the principles set out in the mandate. This contradicts existing evidence as evaluators pointed out that there was a need for integrity legislation to make public officials more accountable and to allow for transparency in their operations and activities. In the case of sub-dimension 2.7, a ranking of **zero** indicated that government had neither violated nor advanced significantly compliance in this area.

**Dimension 3** on the “Use of new information and communication technologies to facilitate access to public information” had the following two sub-dimensions.

- 3.1 Electronic media
- 3.2 Gender and electronic media for access to public information

With a ranking of +1 for **Dimension 3**, the general view was that government had advanced in some measure towards compliance with the principles as set out in the mandate by providing internet access through computers placed in community centres. However, there was no gender-specific approach to facilitating access to public information.

**Dimension 4** which speaks to “Electoral expenses” had no sub-dimensions. A ranking of +2 meant that government had advanced in a moderately important way towards compliance with the principles of the particular mandate.

### **Freedom of Expression**

Generally, a ranking of +1 revealed that government had advanced in some measure towards compliance on concrete actions which imply progress in matters of legislation of freedom of expression as stated in **Dimension 1** which speaks to “legislation on freedom of expression”. Freedom of expression is guaranteed for all citizens in the country’s *Constitution*.

The sub-dimensions in this category were:

- 1.1 Concrete actions which imply progress in matters of legislation on freedom of expression
- 1.2 Removal of legal barriers and incorporation of measures which promote women's freedom of expression and rights

While sub-dimension 1.1 fetched a ranking of +1, sub-dimension 1.2 was ranked as **zero**. The *Constitution*, as a legal instrument, does not speak specifically to the case of women in this instance. In addition, there is no specific legislation which “incorporates measures which promote women's freedom of expression and rights”.

The general ranking of zero for **Dimensions 2-5** on censorship, communication media, new technologies and objective possibilities for all citizens to express themselves freely indicates that government has neither violated nor advanced significantly towards compliance with the principles set out in the mandate. Again, the issues of women's freedom of expression and rights do not arise.

We set out the text of these dimensions and sub-dimensions below.

**Dimension 2:** “Censorship, limitations and sanctions”

Sub-dimension 2.2: “Censorship, limitations and sanctions on women's expression and women's rights”

**Dimension 3:** “Communication media”

Sub-dimension 3.1: “Communication and women's rights”

**Dimension 4:** “New technologies” has no sub-dimension

Dimension 5: “Objective possibilities for citizens to express themselves freely”

Sub-dimension, 5.2: “Objective possibilities for women to express themselves freely”

### **Strengthening Civil Society Participation**

There are five dimensions (with sub-dimensions) in this category of the study. They are as follows.

**Dimension 1:** “Legal changes which weaken or strengthen civil society participation

Sub-dimension 1.1: Removal of legal barriers and incorporation which promote civil society participation”

Sub-dimension: 1.2: Removal of legal barriers”

**Dimension 2:** “National government CSO relation in practice”

Sub-dimension 2.1: “Financial support”

Sub-dimension 2.2: Functioning in practice of the different institutionalized entrustments in the national context for participation”

Sub-dimension 2.3: “Governments provide the information required to strengthen civil society participation”

Sub-dimension 2.4: Governments welcome/permit activities or initiatives of the CSOs”

Sub-dimension 2.5: National government and institutionalization for the participation of women and their organizations, financing, instruments, [in participation]”

**Dimension 3:** “Participation in the Inter-American system”

Sub-dimension 3.1: “Strategies for national alliances”

Sub-dimension 3.2: “Participation in activities of the OAS”

Sub-dimension 3.3: compliance with agreements of member status which encourage participation of the CSOs”

Sub-dimension 3.4: Participation of women in the Inter-American system”

**Dimension 4:** “Strategies, programs and actions to strengthen the participation of the CSOs within the framework of the Inter-American system”

Sub-dimension 4.1: “The OAS”

**Dimension 5:** “Participation in alternative forums”

The predominantly **zero** ranking of *Strengthening Civil Society Participation* from **Dimension 1** through to **Dimension 5** indicates the government has not violated the principles of the relevant mandates or sought to establish public and private means aimed at building the capacity of civil society organizations, including women's organisations, in order to highlight their work and their contribution to promoting accountability and good governance.

Specifically, for Dimension 3 and 4 which relate to strengthening CSOs participation in the Inter-American system and the OAS, the general ranking of **zero** indicates that government has neither violated nor advanced strategies to increase the capacity of civil society to participate more fully in the Inter-American system or develop strategies at the national level and through the OAS and other multilateral organisations.

## Gender Perspective

At the national level, the general ranking of *zero* again indicated that government has not advanced on its commitment to the mandates in order to promote participation of all minority groups, including women's groups, in forging a stronger civil society. Neither has government advanced any compliance towards developing educational programs, in conjunction with relevant civil society organisations, academic experts, women's organisations and others as appropriate, to provide democracy and human rights education. Specifically in relation to women, government has not taken any significant steps towards recognizing and/or promoting women's rights as human rights. Nor have their organizations been included in decision-making at the national level.

In a National Consultation on “The Rights of Women and Children in Barbados” held on October 14, 2000 on behalf of PARTICIPA Corporation it was noted that:

The Constitution of Barbados does not guarantee the equality of women and men in the protection and enjoyment of human rights nor does it prohibit discrimination against women. In addition, there were no laws defining 'discrimination against women' so while the constitution defines 'discrimination', it does not apply to women. However, there are other laws which have attempted to address the situation of women and to create greater equality such as the domestic violence and sexual offences legislation and the Maternity Leave Act. There were no laws governing sexual harassment at the workplace. And the existing laws did not include in their definition any act that causes or results in a difference of the treatment of women in comparison to men. As well the state (and society) did not see women's issues as human rights issues. And nowhere in the constitution does the word 'equality' appear.... [T]he situation regarding the economic rights of women was not clear but it was felt that there is no specific provision to eliminate discrimination against women in employment. It was pointed out, however, that in the public sector, there is no gender discrimination since salaries were structured. However, there was a problem in the private sector, but one could not speak definitively since they were constrained by a lack of information in a situation where there were hidden pay levels. (Women and Development Unit, “Report on National Consultation on the Rights of Women and Children in Barbados”, 2000, pp. 4-5).

The situation captured in the statement above remains virtually the same.

## B. Analysis of the Country's Situation

(i) Barbados, a small country of 166 sq. miles, is situated in the Atlantic Ocean, east of the archipelago of islands which comprise the Eastern Caribbean. With a population of 270,000 (est. 2005), 51.5% of which are women, the country has a colonial history which dates back to 1627 when the first British settlers arrived at the country's south west on the coast of what is now known as Holetown. The country's colonial history of African slavery has left a racial legacy of 95 % people of African origin, 4% European descent. The population of 16% mixed is a recent phenomenon. Other minority racial types are present in the country: Chinese, Indians and Arabs.

The colonial history also means that Barbados, like the rest of the countries of the Anglophone Caribbean, suffer the same social ills, consequence on some 300 years of slavery: monocrop culture, import oriented, export-propelled economy, unemployment, skewed distribution of land, skewed development, financial indebtedness to international financial institutions, unequal terms of trade with countries of the North and the dominance of foreign capital in the form of foreign direct investment. The economy is based on tourism, services including financial services, light manufacturing and agriculture which makes it vulnerable to external economic and financial developments.

(ii) British rule in Barbados continued uninterrupted until Independence in 1966. Its tradition of parliamentary procedure dates back to 1639 when the first Parliament was established. Barbados, therefore, has the oldest Parliament in the Anglophone Caribbean. Until 1950 when universal adult suffrage was introduced into the political system, franchise was extended *only* to men of wealth or those who had a certain yearly income or property, usually these were white men. Barbados' institutions are largely influenced by British models which continue to dominate socio-political life. The head of state is the Queen of England who is also the Queen of Barbados. She is represented locally by a Governor-General whom she names on the advice of the Prime Minister. In the area of government, politics and political culture, Section 35 of the *Constitution*, states: "There shall be a Parliament of Barbados which shall consist of her majesty, a Senate, and a House of Assembly"; and Section 63 (1) informs that, "the Executive Authority of Barbados is vested in her Majesty". However, the Queen does not take part in the government of the country.

The *Constitution*, the highest law of the country, recognises a system of government based on universal adult suffrage and based on general elections held every five years. The electoral system is patterned on the British Westminster system of Parliamentary democracy which allows for the election of a prime minister as head of government every five years within the context of a multiparty system. While the Prime Minister may be reelected, there is no provision for recall. There are, at present, three political parties: the Barbados Labour Party (1938) the Democratic Labour Party (1955) and the Peoples Empowerment Party (2007). The National Democratic Party, formed in 1989, has been dissolved.

The Barbados political system and form of government then call for a nominated Upper House (Senate) and an elected Lower House (Parliament or the House of Assembly) which are responsible for the total administration of the country. While Parliament comprises all 30 elected representatives, the Senate comprises a nominated body. Of its 21 members, appointed by the Governor-General, 12 are on the advice of the Prime Minister, two on the advice of the leader of opposition and seven at the discretion of the Governor-General.

After the general election, the Governor-General meets with the person whom he considers best able to command a majority of members in Parliament or the House of Assembly. In practice, this is usually the president or leader of the political party which has won the election by acquiring the highest number of constituency seats. That person is appointed as Prime Minister. Section 66 (2) of the *Constitution* gives "great power" to

the Prime Minister and protects him from dissatisfied party supporters who may want to have his appointment revoked. If there is a no-confidence motion against the Prime Minister which is supported by a majority in parliament, then the Prime Minister can, within three days of the adoption of the resolution, either resign or ask the Governor-General to dissolve Parliament, thus precipitating a general election.

The *Constitution* provides for a minimum of five ministers to be selected from either the House of Assembly or the Senate. It also makes provision for the appointment of an Attorney-General, invariably an attorney-at law, who is the principal advisor to the government. The Cabinet, the membership of which is decided by the Prime Minister who also chairs that body, “shall be the principal instrument of policy and shall be charged with the general direction and control of the Government of Barbados and shall be collectively responsible therefore to Parliament” (*Constitution*, Section 64 (2)). The Prime minister can also name a Deputy Prime Minister.

The functions of the Governor-General are merely ceremonial such as conferring honours and receiving ambassadors. The real power of government is in the hands of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. As a rule, the Governor-General exercises his functions on the advice of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and in some specified instances, the Leader of Opposition. The *Constitution* specifically provides that the Governor-General must act on the advice of the Prime Minister in *inter alia*, the following instances: appointing and removing ministers of government; appointing 12 members of the Senate; dissolving parliament; and appointing the Chief justice and High Court Judges. It must be also noted that only the Prime Minister can call general elections and name the Election Day. The governmental system of Barbados is based on one of central government operations. However, a local government system was in operation up to 1969. When it was introduced, each of the 11 parishes had its own local government system known as the Vestry. These vestries were abolished and the country was divided into three “districts”: two served by councils and the third, the City of Bridgetown, was given a city council and a mayor. In 1967, the councils were abolished and local government affairs were administered by an interim Commissioner for Local Government. The system officially ended in 1969 when the functions of local governments were absorbed into central government and statutory bodies.

(iii) The predominant religion in Barbados is that of Christianity with the Anglican Church commanding the majority of the Christian population with a membership of 70,705 in 2000 (*2000 Population and Housing Census*). Other smaller religions such as Judaism, Islam, Rastafari, Baha’i and Hinduism are also part of the country’s religious landscape.

(iv) The socio-economic system is based on dependent capitalist relations of production with an accompanying ideology of patriarchy, inherited, for the most part, from colonialism and slavery, which expresses itself in male dominance and women’s subordination as well as in men’s control and authority of access to the rewards and benefits of society. This ideology of patriarchy has historically been propagated mainly by the family as well as by institutions of state such as the church and school. In this social matrix, women are marginalised both socially and ideologically even though they are central to the production and reproduction processes. Although Government has acceded to the *Beijing Platform of Action*<sup>7</sup>(1995) and has ratified (1981) the 1979 UN General Assembly landmark Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)<sup>8</sup>; the international bill of rights for women, women’s rights are still not seen as human rights, and women and their rights continue to be violated in both the private and public sphere. The presence of a Government’s Bureau of Gender Affairs has not meant that women and women’s issues are located at the centre of political discourse, analysis and social action, despite efforts of the Bureau to create an awareness of women’s condition and status in the country. In fact, there is little or no integration of women in development planning and development, for example. A gender perspective is hardly ever incorporated into government action and policy.

There continues to be a significant percentage of women-headed households and women, as a social group comprise the lower pay categories of workers.

Essentially, there has been no significant change in the status, condition and circumstances of the country's women, although middle and upper class women have gained material comfort.

However, it must be noted that there some laws which speak specifically to the situation of women have equal property rights in a divorce settlement. *The Employment of Women (Maternity Leave Act) 1976* allows women maternity leave with pay; *The Maintenance Act and Maintenance Rules* allows unwed mothers to claim maintenance for their children and the *Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act* gives women the right to a legal abortion. There also exists a *Domestic Violence Law (1992)* which specifies the appropriate police response to incidents of domestic violence. This law which is intended to protect women, men and children applies equally to married and common-law relationships. The Police Force has a victim support unit which provides assistance, to mainly women who are victims of abuse. However, the physical abuse of women and acts of violence against women, for example, continues unabated. There is no law to deal with sexual harassment and it has been reported that "sexual harassment in the workplace was a problem." However, the Coalition on Sexual Harassment, an advocacy group, works with the government to develop legislation on this matter.

(v) Education is free and compulsory and there is universal health care. However, the sustainability of these social services is constantly under threat in wake of policies of neo-liberalism.

(vi) Chapter 111 of the *Constitution of Barbados* guarantees protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual and protection of right to life and personal liberty. It specifically prohibits "torture and inhuman or degrading punishment or other treatment". It also prohibits "arbitrary arrest and imprisonment" and requires detainees to be brought before a court of law within a reasonable time. Despite these provisions, there have been alleged incidents of excessive use of force by the police, and reports of poor prison conditions.<sup>9</sup> According to the U.S. State Department *Barbados Country Report on Human Rights 2006*:

The majority of complaints against the police for alleged unprofessional conduct and beating or assault. Police were occasionally accused of beating suspects to obtain confessions and suspects often recanted their confessions during their trial. There were many cases where the only evidence against an accused was a confession. (2006, 1)

The *Constitution* also provides for freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of worship, but there are no specific laws to protect minority groups such as persons with disabilities and persons with a different sexual orientation from discrimination. Specifically, there are no laws which prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in the areas of employment or the provision other services offered by the state, other than those provided for in the country's *Constitution* which asserts equality for all. In the same vein, there are no laws that prohibit discrimination against persons with a different sexual orientation in employment, education, health care and housing.

(vii) In Barbados, there have been no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

(viii) The *Constitution* provides for freedom of speech and freedom of the press;<sup>10</sup> and the authorities respect these rights in practice, although critics claim that Government sometimes uses its influence to discourage media reporting on "sensitive" issues. The government prohibits the production of pornographic materials. However, it must be noted that there have been incidents which could undermine the right of freedom of the press. According to the *Sunday Sun*, (December 21, 2008, 1) in May of 2007, "three

media people including one of our senior editors, were “roughed up” by police after they arrived at the Queen Elizabeth hospital, following a report that injured passengers in a two-bus collision were being transported to the A&E Department for medical attention”. In another incident in July last year, “another one of our photographers, Rawle Culbard, had his camera taken from him and his photographs deleted after he was told not to take pictures of the scene at the tragic Joe’s River accident in St. Joseph”.

(ix) There is no law which guarantees access to public information, that is, information held by the government. Although access to some information is provided on government websites and government information services, response to requests for information can be slow. However, it must be noted that “sensitive information” and information regarding the country’s national security must be protected and cannot be made available to all.

(x) There is no culture of civil society participation in national decision-making, although governments are democratically elected. The link between government and CSOs is very weak, although government is favourably disposed to making subventions to CSOs which lobby for such support.

(xi) Barbados' diplomatic activity has been within international organizations. The country is a member of the Commonwealth and participates in its activities. Barbados was admitted to the United Nations in December 1966. Barbados joined the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1967. On July 4, 1973, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Jamaica signed a treaty in Trinidad to found the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). In May 1974, most of the remaining English-speaking Caribbean states joined CARICOM, which now has 14 members. Barbados also is a member of the Caribbean Development Bank, established in 1970, with headquarters in Bridgetown. The Eastern Caribbean's Regional Security System, which associates Barbados with six other island nations, also is headquartered in Barbados. In July 1994, Barbados joined the newly established Association of Caribbean States (ACS). Barbados is also a member of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) the Caribbean's most recent integration and development strategy.

# 1V. Compliance with Mandates in the National Setting

In this section we present, first of all for your information, the context within which government's performance was evaluated.

POINTS	MEANING
-3	The government has seriously violated the principle set out in the mandate
-2	The government has, in some important ways, violated the principles set out in the mandate
-1	The government has slightly violated the principles set out in the mandate
0	The government has neither violated nor advanced <i>significantly</i> towards compliance with the principles set out in the mandate
+1	The government has advanced in some measure towards compliance with the principles set out in the mandate
+2	The government has advanced in a moderately important way towards compliance with the principles set out in the mandate
+3	The government has advanced in a very important way towards compliance with the principles set out in the mandate

**Table 5.** Evaluation Template, 2008

Secondly, in keeping with *Manual*, the following “observable activities” were used for the evaluations of the theme *Access to Public Information*, recorded below. “observable activities” are defined “as any action that the government may implement or carry out” (p.19). These “actions must be concrete and therefore observable and open to evaluation by agents external to or different from the government” (p. 19).

Having said this, we record, below, the findings of compliance with the mandates in the Barbados setting.

## B. Access to Public Information

### Observable Activities

The government:

- instructs the organs as well as public employees about rationalization and systematization of the procedures for handing over information
- has implemented systems of information of free access to the budget of the nation
- gives detailed and specific information about the public budget
- carries out a gender analysis of the budget as well as spending and communicating this information
- establishes, as obligatory, the handing over of information in matters of declaration of interest and patrimony of public employees from the three organs of the State

- encourages the creation of websites of public services and of organs of the State administration (including the three powers) establishing the minimum contents which the site should contain
- habilitates centre with free connectivity for use by the population, generating the effective possibility that the whole population can have access to electronic media
- establishes electronic access to the exercise of the so-called social rights, especially the rights related to housing, health, education and access to justice
- promotes official information of candidates' expenses

## **Findings**

### *Laws on freedom of access to information and other legal frameworks*

There are no laws which guarantee freedom of access to public information. In fact, it was noted that there was a “culture of secrecy” in Barbados which would affect the type of information provided for public consumption. Civil servants, for example, are governed by an 'Official Secrets Act' which prevents them from disclosing information on government activity. In this respect, one evaluator noted, “government does a good job of disseminating mundane information, but the politically sensitive information that allows for openness and transparency for effective governance is not accessible”. In addition, there are no measures, legal or otherwise to promote access to information about women and their rights. Nor are there any measures or mechanisms to provide information on the violation of women's rights or the rights of other citizens. However, in the absence of such laws, citizens have some access to public information through government websites, departmental reports and the Government Information Service.

### *Access to public information in practice*

Government has in place a website, “Barbados Integrate Government: Access Barbados”. It is the official portal of the Government of Barbados which describes itself as a convenient first-stop where you can locate the latest Government news, information, policies and services available online. However, as mentioned above, this website only provides access to “mundane information”.

At the present, Government is working on an e-governance structure to manage and coordinate government electronic information which does not include information on gender issues.

### *Use of CITs to assist access to public information*

In its efforts to make public information accessible, the e-Government initiative attempts to bring all social groups within reach of new technologies through expanding the community development programme by placing computers in some community centres and providing adequate funds to support the various e-government programmes.<sup>11</sup> It must be noted that there is no universal access to CITs and there are no specific ways for the promotion of gender and the electronic media or gender issues through the electronic media.

### *Electoral expenses*

There is provision in the laws of Barbados for those candidates contesting national elections to disclose the expenses incurred in conducting their campaign. (*Representation of the Peoples Act*, Section 52, Cap.12.). This law requires each candidate to spend no more than 10 dollars per constituent. This information has to be submitted within seven weeks after elections. Such information is published in the press.

### *Proposals for strengthening this right*

- *integrity legislation* to ensure greater access to public information<sup>12</sup>
- mechanisms to ensure and monitor the implementation of such legislation
- mechanisms to ensure the collection and evaluation of data along the lines of gender
- disaggregation of data along the lines of gender
- information on women, women's organisations and women's issues and women's rights as well as those of other disadvantaged social groups be made accessible through Government's public information initiatives including the electronic medium
- government to provide access to information on human rights violations for all social groups and classes

## **B. Freedom of Expression**

### **Observable Activities**

The government has promoted advances in:

- political constitution in matters of explicitly guaranteed freedom of expression
- matters of abuses of publicity
- legislation which protects intimacy, private life and personal honour, making a conclusive analysis of the way in which conflicts of interests produced between the right to privacy and personal honour and the right to freedom to inform
- existence of rules of ethical behaviour by the media
- legislation on the free exercise of journalism (conscience clause and protection of information sources professional secret
- description of any legal rule which implies an advance or reverse on the subject of rights related to freedom of expression

The government:

- establishes websites for public services and organs of state administration (including the three powers)
- implements centres with free connectivity for the use of the population, with the objective of being able to determine the effective possibility that the whole population may have access to electronic media

It is recommended to learn about;

- advances in the use of the right to reply in the communications media by being able to describe the conditions to exercise it

### **Findings**

#### *Laws on freedom of expression*

The Barbados *Constitution* guarantees freedom of expression for all its citizens as a fundamental right of the individual (Chapter 111, 11). However, the question is: who has the right to freedom of expression? In reality, while freedom of expression is a constitutional right, this freedom is not equitably applied to all citizens, and journalists, for example, are not “free” to “investigate and publish without fear of reprisals, harassment or retaliatory actions, including the use of anti-defamation laws”. In fact, it was reported in the National workshop that “the media is hampered from doing

investigative stories because of fear of reprisals". It was also reported that, in some instances, media houses would not carry certain news items or advertisements for fear of losing financial support from sponsors or advertisers.

There are no measures which promote women's freedom of expression and rights.

#### *Censorship, challenges and restrictions*

There is an unwritten law of censorship adhered to by government and the private sector which affects media output. In this regard, the media and opinion leaders are censored. While other citizens, including organised women, may not face censorship from government and the private sector, they tend to be censored by media houses, for example, calls on radio talk shows which discuss social and political issues. (Or the print medium can decide to omit articles on women e.g. International Women's Day Messages). In this respect, Protocol 5 which speaks to the rights of citizens to use the media points to the *Defamation of Character Act* which tends to contradict and inhibit freedom of expression. There are also restrictions on this freedom brought on by the inability of citizens or their organisations to pay for media services, or they also fear reprisals from government. This freedom of expression, according to the findings, has to be understood in the context of a "culture of fear". That is to say, people are afraid to express their views freely because they fear reprisals from "people in authority" "who will use that authority and their power "to intimidate people". According to the evaluators, this "culture of fear" is characteristic of social and political relations in Barbados. This makes the "right of freedom of expression a paper right only".

Challenges: (i) access to information; (ii) legal restrictions.

#### *New CITs*

There are no rules and regulations governing freedom of expression on CITs. Therefore, the use of new communication information technology exists as a possibility.

#### *Possibilities for citizens to express themselves*

The possibilities for citizens to express themselves do exist, but because of the culture of fear and the reality of reprisals, citizens, including women in their organisations, tend to shy away from freely expressing themselves.

Proposals to strengthen this right

- removal of copyrights on footage of old films
- *Defamation Act* to be updated
- greater need for access to public information (government, corporate sector, behaviour and asset holdings of politicians)
- legislation to ensure freedom of information on the new media, e.g. *Barbados Free Press* about which little is known
- a communication policy for Barbados
- protocol for Barbados media
- mechanisms in place to support the articulation of the interests of women and other socially disadvantaged people in the media so that their voices can be heard

## C. Strengthening Civil Society Participation

### Observable Activities

The government:

- presents new laws or reforms which regulate the role of civil society
- establishes mechanisms encouraging civil society participation, considering gender equality, the participation of women and positive actions in favour of women and other discriminated groups

The recommendations are:

- judicial decision

The government presents and promotes laws and reforms which:

- strengthen the participation of women and organizations for the advancement of women's rights in decision-making processes
- increase the participation of women from peasant, indigenous, African origin and migrant groups in policies of budget, culture, sexual and reproductive health, among others

The recommendation is to identify (i) the existence of judicial decisions which affect the participation of women and women's rights organization in sexual and reproductive rights, social programmes and violence against women; (ii) laws or regulations which may establish controls or programmes so that women can participate effectively e.g. rules which establish schedules for meetings during hours in which women can attend; and (iii) measures to cover the work in the home done by women so that they can take part in the transfer of technological capacity, measures to ensure that women can express themselves at the meetings and that their opinions may be taken into account in the making of decisions.

The government:

- establishes funds for the assignment of specific resources
- distributes public information on criteria used for deciding their award for women's civil society organizations
- formulates and executes specific strategies to promote gender equality
- establishes dialogues or negotiations on the participation of women's rights organizations
- authorizes actions of protest and mobilization and participation of women's rights organizations
- implements citizens' participation in the different instances and channels bearing in mind gender

### Findings

*Laws that strengthen or weaken civil society participation*

There are no laws governing the role and function of civil society organisations (CSOs). In fact, Barbados does not have a CSO culture. Therefore, CSOs are not included in government activity or decision-making processes. Nor does Government provide “public and private funding instruments aimed at building civil society organisations in order to highlight the work and contribution of these organisations and to promote accountability”. In addition, Government does not promote the participation of minority groups, women and the disabled, in creating a stronger civil society.

### *National government-CSO relations*

There are no mechanisms to engender relations between government and CSOs, including women's organisations. However, there are some social groups, e.g. Barbados National Organisation for the Disabled, which lobby government for support and are usually successful in this effort, even if it is a small subvention. There is hardly any dialogue between the two entities.

### *CSO participation in the Inter-American system*

CSOs in Barbados do not participate in the Inter-American system. At the same time, Government has not developed any strategies at any national level or through the OAS "other multi-lateral organisations and MDBs to increase the capacity of civil society to participate" in the Inter-American system.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs participates in the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM), but does not participate in the OAS.

### *Proposals*

Since Government has not established any measures to strengthen democracy through building the capacity of civil society organisations, the following proposals were offered.

- institutionalisation of NGOs as part of the governance structure
- recognition of CSOs as critical to good governance and the practice of democracy
- system of grants and subventions should be expanded and rationalised in a way that avoids political clientilism
- mechanisms for CSO participation in government decision-making processes
- technical assistance in interpreting Government documents to ensure their full participation in the democratic process which includes formulating policy
- government should ensure that CSOs are aware of funding sources
- effective mechanisms by government to disseminate information on regional and international bodies, such as the OAS, and international instruments like the Economic Partnerships Agreement, to better equip them to participate in external systems (Inter-American system)
- government to include all relevant NGOs in discussing particular issue instead of selecting a few on the basis of political patronage

## V. Conclusion

The research project, “Active Democracy: Citizen Network for the Implementation of Summit Commitments” implemented in Barbados from January to April 2008 is part of a larger study comprising 21 countries of the Americas. At the core of this project is the construction of an Evaluation Index of Government Compliance which is an indicator of the extent to which the government of Barbados has made good on its promises to improve the quality of life of its citizens through providing access to public information, promoting freedom of expression and encouraging and facilitating the participation of civil society organisations in national decision making. Specific reference was made to the incorporation of women and women's rights organizations as well as organizations of other disadvantaged social groups, in decision making. Central to the evaluation, therefore, was the identification of concrete observable government actions and an assessment of the way in which these actions indicated government's advance, inaction or violation of the mandates to which it had committed itself. The evaluation was carried out by members of civil society with expertise and experience in the three areas under review.

The assessment the project calls for indicates, for the most part, that the Government of Barbados has neither violated nor advanced significantly towards compliance with the principles set out in the mandates of the Summit of the Americas, particularly those from the Third and Fourth Summits.

In addition, no specific attention was paid to the circumstance, condition and status of women who continue to be located in a subordinate position. Women are seen as having little agency to impact state relations of rule.

Essentially, the government of Barbados needs to pay particular attention to honouring its commitments to the Barbadian people agreed on in the summits of the Americas. This is particularly critical in the area of involving civil society organisations within the system of governance.

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Arucife  
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## C. Evaluation Panel Members

### ACTIVE DEMOCRACY: CITIZEN NETWORK FOR GOVERNMENTAL COMPLIANCE WITH THE SUMMITS

#### Freedom of Expression

Country	Evaluator	Organisation	Profession	Experience in Gender
Barbados	Anthony Cave	Men's Educational Support Association	Tutor: Mass Communication	yes
	Derek Alleyne	National Union of Public Workers	General Secretary	yes
	Kaymar Jordan	Caribbean Media Corporation	Journalist	no
	Patrick Cozier	Caribbean Media Corporation	General Secretary	
	Roslyn Smith	National Union of Public Workers	Trade Unionist	yes
	Roxanne Gibbs	National Publishing Co. Ltd.	Newspaper Editor	
	Wilfred Abrahams	Bar Association of Barbados	Lawyer	
	Wilma Clement	Barbados Workers' Union	Tutor	yes

### Access to Public Information

Country	Evaluator	Organisation	Profession	Experience in Gender
Barbados	Adrian Massiah	Tele Barbados	Information Specialist	
	Curtis Gittens	Pinelands Creative Workshop	Community Development Worker	
	David Comissiong	Clement Payne Center	Lawyer	
	Harold Beckles	Private Citizen	Writer	no
	Joy Springer	Government Information Service	Journalist	yes
	Julian Delice	Royal Barbados Police Force	Police Officer	
	Michael Thomas	University of the West Indies	Researcher	yes
	Ray Baptist	Information Society of Barbados	Media Specialist	
	Rodney Grant	Pinelands Creative Workshop	Community Development Officer	
	Seilest Bradshaw	Royal Barbados Police Force	Police Officer	
	Sharon Alexander Gooding	University of the West Indies	Archivist	
	Yvonne Walkes	National Organisation of Women	Trade Unionist	yes

### Strengthening Civil Society Participation

Country	Evaluator	Organisation	Profession	Experience in Gender
Barbados	Cecilia Babb	Caribbean Policy Development Center	Gender Specialist	yes
	Eudalie Wickham	Barbados National Organization of the Disabled	Student	yes
	Gerald Seale	Evangelical Association of Barbados	Bishop	
	Noel Titus		Retired Academic and Clergy	yes
	Reginald Burke	Caribbean Youth Environmental Network	Natural Resources Management	
	Roosevelt King	Barbados Association of NGOs	Secretary General	
	Sandra Husbands	Small Business Association of Barbados	Business Woman	yes

No. of Website Articles: 32

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[http://eprints.rclis.org/archive/00005661/01/vijayakumarjk\\_11.pdf](http://eprints.rclis.org/archive/00005661/01/vijayakumarjk_11.pdf)

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# Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>See [www.civilsociety.net](http://www.civilsociety.net) and [www.activedemocracy.net](http://www.activedemocracy.net)

<sup>2</sup>These countries are Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, The Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Uruguay and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>3</sup>See [www.summit-americas.org](http://www.summit-americas.org)

<sup>4</sup>See UNDP reports on Human Development or ECLAC, Social Panorama.

<sup>5</sup>See GEM methodology of evaluation with gender perspectives, Mexico 2005, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup>According to the *Manual*, “dimensions are aspects or distinguishable parts within each thematic area....It is defined thus so as to recognize the different debates and lines of action currently existent in each one that express their complexity...” Each dimension is divided, where applicable, into sub-dimensions “related to specifications within each dimension”.

<sup>7</sup>The *Beijing Platform for Action* emanated from the fourth World conference on Women held in Beijing, China, 1995. It is basically an agenda for women's empowerment, is intended to remove obstacles to women's full and active participation in all spheres of social life through full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.

<sup>8</sup>CEDAW which defines what constitutes discrimination against women introduced an agenda for national action, on the part of governments, to end such discrimination. CEDAW defines discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing, nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”.

<sup>9</sup>Barbados now has a new prison, but there have been no reports of the existing conditions in the new facility.

<sup>10</sup>It is to be noted that at the time of writing this report, two journalists were arrested and charged with assaulting a police officer and resisting a police officer after they were involved in an alleged altercation with the police as attempted to take photographs and footage of a policeman who had been charged with possession of cocaine and drug trafficking. Another reporter was ordered to leave the police station compound and not to return. See *Sunday Sun*, December 21, 2008, pp. 1-3A.

<sup>11</sup>e-government strategy is prepared by the sub-committee on e-government, Ministry of the Civil Service.

<sup>12</sup>The government is now drafting an integrity legislation and *Freedom of Information Act* to be brought before Parliament in early 2009.

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# Appendix 1

## Access to Public Information

Mandates to governments treating issues of access to public information also emanate from the different Summit Declarations and Plans of Action. The **Plan of Action** issuing from the 111 Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in 2001 contains the unequivocal agreement of all 34 governments:

“To strengthen democracy, create prosperity and realize human potential, our governments will:

- “work jointly to facilitate cooperation among national institutions with the responsibility to guarantee the protection, promotion and respect of human rights, and access to and freedom of information, with the aim of developing best practices to improve the administration of information held by governments on individuals and facilitating citizen access to that information...”;
- “ensure that national legislation relating to freedom of expression is applied equitably to all, respecting freedom of expression and access to information of all citizens, and that journalists and opinion leaders are free to investigate and publish without fear of reprisals, harassment or retaliatory actions, including the misuse of anti-defamation laws....”

In the **Declaration of Mar del Plata**, on the occasion of the 1V Summit of the Americas, Argentina, 2005, the governments also made commitments having to do with access to public information.

- we recognize that for democracy to prosper, governments must be responsive to the legitimate aspirations of their people and to work to provide their people with the tools and opportunities to improve their lives....

Arising from the Special Summit in Monterrey in 2004, the **Declaration of Nuevo Leon** also supports government mandates surrounding access to public information:

- “Access to information held by the State, subject to constitutional and legal norms, including those on privacy and confidentiality is an indispensable condition for citizen participation and promotes effective respect for human rights. We are committed to providing the legal and regulatory framework and the structures and conditions required to guarantee the right of access to information to our citizens...”

## Freedom of Expression

In the **Plan of Action** of the 111 Summit of the Americas held in Quebec City in 2001, the countries of the Americas committed themselves to:

- “ensure that national legislation relating to freedom of expression is applied equitably to all, respecting freedom of expression and access to information of all citizens, and that journalists and opinion leaders are free to investigate and publish without fear of reprisals, harassment or retaliatory actions, including the misuse of anti-defamation laws....”

## Civil Society Participation

With respect to civil society participation in democratic governance, the **Plan of Action** issuing from the 111 Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in 2001 contains the unequivocal agreement of all 34 governments:

“To strengthen democracy, create prosperity and realize human potential, our Governments will:

- “seek to establish public and private funding instruments aimed at building the capacity of civil society organizations in order to highlight the work and contribution of these organizations and to promote accountability;
- “develop strategies at the national level and through the OAS, other multilateral organizations and MDBs to increase the capacity of civil society to participate more fully in the inter-American system as well as in political, economic and social development of their communities and countries, fostering representation and facilitating the participation of all sectors of society; and increase the institutional capacity of government to receive, absorb and act on civil society input and advocacy, particularly through the use of information and communication technologies;
- “promote participation of all minority groups in forging a stronger civil society and
- “develop educational programs, in conjunction with relevant civil society organisations, academic experts and others, as appropriate, to provide democracy and human rights education and to promote the introduction of books and educational materials that reflect the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of the Americas as part of primary and secondary school curricula”. (p. 14)

In the **Declaration of Mar del Plata** during the 1V Summit of the Americas in Argentina in 2005, the governments declared:

- “we consider it essential to strengthen broad, transparent, and inclusive social dialogue with all concerned sectors of society at the local, national, regional and hemispheric levels. Social dialogue is an important and basic instrument to promote and consolidate democracy and to build societies with inclusion and social justice.” (Paragraph 36)
- “we reaffirm that he participatory nature of democracy in our countries in different aspects of public life contributes to the consolidation of democratic values and to freedom and solidarity in the Hemisphere.” (Paragraph 6o)
- increased participation by citizens, communities, and civil society will contribute to ensuring that the benefits of democracy are shared by society as a whole.” (Paragraph 62)

With further respect to civil society participation in governance, the **Plan of Action** issuing from the 1V Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata in 2005 contains the unequivocal agreement of all 34 governments:

- “to promote tripartite and inclusive social dialogue and cooperation among social partners and governments.” (Paragraph 16)
- “to promote an inclusive social tripartite and transparent dialogue as an instrument for the proposition of policies...” (Paragraph 24a)
- “to make efforts aimed at facilitating the incorporation...of the information on the contribution to the generation of added value, reduction of poverty, fostering social welfare by productive cooperatives and other independent labor categories.” (Paragraph 26)

Also, at the Special Summit in Monterrey in 2004, the governments' mandates regarding civil society participation:

- “We agree that, through citizen participation, civil society organizations should contribute to the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies adopted by different orders or levels of government. We recognize the role of civil society and its contribution to sound public administration and we reaffirm the importance of “continuing to forge new partnerships that will enable constructive ties to be built between governments, nongovernmental organizations, international organizations, and the diverse sectors of civil society to work in favor of development and democracy.” (p. 11)