

Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP)

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) ranked 37th of 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021 (in the last two annual reports, T&T was not covered). In the same report T&T ranked 6th of 26 countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. In the UNDP Gender Inequality Index 2021, T&T ranks 81st of 191 countries (score: 0.344), a deterioration of 14 places since 2019.

Regarding domestic politics and leadership, during the last general elections in 2020, 30% of the candidates were women and 26% won seats in the Parliament (31% in the previous elections). The current President of the Republic, the Speaker of the House, and the Leader of the Opposition are all women.

T&T is part of various multilateral agreements, including the 'Convention on the Elimination of 'All Forms of Discrimination against Women' (CEDAW), the 'Beijing Platform for Action' (1995), and the 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women' (1994).

The UNDP 2017 Gender Analysis identifies a number of strengths and weaknesses in the country. Strengths include; high levels of education amongst all citizens; high-income country; democratically elected government; high representation of female elected officials and legislation to protect women. Since the start of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, with an €4.5m allocation for T&T, in 2020, the awareness of the entire population about the necessity of eradicating Gender-Based Violence has strengthened. Positive changes have also taken place within the framework of national legislation with the adoption in 2023 of the first ever-costed National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP), which will coordinate the continuation of projects and activities against GBV in T&T.

These strengths are balanced by weaknesses including: absence of approved 'National Gender Policy; national legislation and policies are not generally gender responsive; high levels of gender based and domestic violence, child abuse and incest; gender wage gap; limited progress on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB); lack of economic diversity; unpaid work is not counted as part of GDP; absence of child care facilities accessible to single parents; and low levels of female participation on high level boards.

The Government continues to improve existing legislation and policy to further eradicate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. For instance, Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2020, which, among other things, changed the definition of 'Domestic Violence' to now include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or financial abuse committed by a respondent against a person, who is in a domestic relationship with the respondent, was unanimously approved. The Act further provides for emergency Protection Orders, the establishment of the National Domestic Violence Registry for Domestic Violence Complaints and the expansion of the category of persons who can apply for a 'Protection Order' ensuring that more persons from marginalised populations can seek protection.

supporting CSO campaigns and end the cultural acceptance of domestic violence. The objectives for the “LGBTI rights” priority are: 1) to encourage Government and CSOs to recognize LGBTI rights as human rights issues and work towards an acceptance of the community in the society; 2) to combat discrimination, stigmatisation and violence of LGBTI in law and in practice; 3) to prevent a deterioration of the legal framework on LGBTI and promote LGBTI coverage in existing legislation; and 4) to support Human Rights Defenders and CSOs working to promote LGBTI rights.

In preparation of the CLIP in 2021, EUD consulted relevant documents, such as the “EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Trinidad and Tobago” (CSO Roadmap), “Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago” (HRDCS), and the “Gender Analysis for Trinidad and Tobago (2017)”. Further, the CLIP benefited from the various stakeholder consultations done during the CSO Roadmap and HRDCS preparation, which included civil society organisations, international organisations, EU Member States present in the country, and relevant Divisions at Headquarters. These consultations took place starting from April 2021 via bilateral or multi-stakeholder virtual meetings in addition to an online questionnaire, which was sent to more than 60 CSOs.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

The overall objectives of EU action for gender equality and women’s empowerment in Trinidad and Tobago is aligned with the GAP III Joint Communication and the accompanying Joint Staff Working Document (SWD). In particular, the aim is to address the key objectives and action in six key thematic policy areas from the Joint Communication. For Trinidad and Tobago, the areas of engagement and objectives are:

- Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence
 - Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity are better protected from all forms of gender-based violence in the public and private spheres, in the work place and online through legislation and effective enforcement
 - Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are agents of change regarding discriminatory social norms, gender stereotypes, and gender-drivers of conflict
 - Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, who experience sexual and gender-based violence have increased access to essential services and protection
 - Women’s rights organisations, social movements and other civil society organisations are influential in ending gender-based violence
 - Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices are increasingly collected and used to inform laws, policies and programmes.
- Strengthening economic and social rights and empowering girls and women
 - Increased access for women, in all their diversity, to decent work, including women’s transition to the formal economy and coverage by non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection systems
 - Women in all their diversity have improved access to entrepreneurship opportunities, including social entrepreneurship, alternative livelihoods and strengthened participation in the green and circular economy

As identified also in the T&T HRDCS 2021-2024, EUD and EUMS will engage in political and HR dialogue with the Government (incl. line ministries, specifically: Gender and Child Affairs Division of the Office of the Prime Minister) through demarches, local statements and engagement with authorities. Further, structured dialogue will be held with women's rights defenders.

It is complicated to finalize concretely the frequency of consultations and actions as they depend on the staff capacity and fluctuating funding availability of the EUD and EUMS.

Regular dialogue and exchange of information by EUD and EUMS already takes part through a 'Gender Coordination Group' via WhatsApp platform, and includes in total 21 participants from various CSOs, HRDs, and like-minded partners.

5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

The EUD will continue to organize/participate/facilitate public diplomacy events to increase the visibility of EU-funded activities. Further, EUD and EUMS will engage in public diplomacy activities around the "International Women's Day" and "International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women". During the GAP III period, relevant topics will be highlighted through one or several of the following public diplomacy activities: joint Op-eds and HoMs statements, newspaper advertisements, digital campaigns, TV/radio/newspaper interviews, and public events (e.g. a panel/roundtable discussion, film screening, art exposition, workshop, conference, and HRD award or festival).

EUD and EUMS will also utilize their social media platforms in order to share relevant information and to raise awareness, drive opinion change, and complement other activities and events. The small geography of T&T along with the relative accessibility to generate media coverage is advantageous for such a public diplomacy approach. Further, such an approach caters to EUD and EUMS limited budgets. Where possible and applicable, communication and public diplomacy activities will include other stakeholders, such as, diplomatic missions, international organizations, and CSOs.

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

Since Trinidad and Tobago does not have a national MIP, no specific amount has been earmarked in the EUD's cooperation facility to support the implementation of GAP III at country level.

However, T&T is expected to be eligible for the Pan-American, regional and Caribbean funding windows identified under NDICI-Global Europe for the Americas and the Caribbean 2021-2027. Moreover, Trinidad and Tobago CSOs benefit from HRD and CSO budget allocations.

Date: 30/11/2023

Signature by Head of Delegation: 