

JAMAICA

Participatory and gender-responsive national security policy

Jamaica suffers from serious social challenges. In particular, high violent crime rates are concentrated in pockets of poverty and threaten to undermine the country's social fabric. There were 32.41 murders per 100,000 persons in Jamaica in 2009 (compared to a rate of 4.28 per 100,000 persons in the United States, for example).¹ Gender inequalities exist in education, employment and decision-making. Domestic violence constitutes a serious problem for women. There were 9,625 incidents of domestic violence in 2007 (a 29.2 per cent rise over the previous year) and approximately 4.4 per cent of murders were attributed to domestic disputes.²

The Jamaican Government realised that an inclusive approach was needed to tackle problems of organised crime and gang violence and socio-economic concerns. In 2005, a broad-based consultation was initiated, involving all potentially relevant branches of government, state agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs), including women's groups. The consultation resulted in the identification of eight Strategic Security Goals, a National Security Strategy Green Paper and a National Security Strategy White Paper, which were tabled in Parliament in January 2006.³ The eight Strategic Security Goals were:

- 1) To reduce violent crime and dismantle organised criminal networks
- 2) To strengthen the justice system and promote respect for the rule of law
- 3) To protect Jamaica from terrorism
- 4) To protect and control Jamaica's territory
- 5) To strengthen the integrity of institutions of democratic government
- 6) To increase Jamaica's contribution to regional and international security
- 7) To provide the environment for a stable economy and effective delivery of social services
- 8) To protect Jamaica's natural resources and reduce the risk of disasters⁴

On the basis of these documents, in mid-2007, the Government adopted a comprehensive National Security Policy (NSP): *Towards a Secure and Prosperous Nation*.⁵ The NSP integrates Jamaica's major security policies, goals and responsibilities into an overall plan for the fulfillment of a "National Vision." It addresses all the main security and justice institutions, including the armed forces, the police, the Ministry of Justice and non-state stakeholders, as well as the complementarity roles and responsibilities of the public and private sectors and CSOs in creating an integrated, cohesive security network. The NSP contains an Action Plan for enhancing Jamaica's capacity to meet the eight Strategic Security Goals, outlining specific capabilities, objectives and actions required by particular ministries, departments, agencies, and other international and local partners within given timeframes.⁶

One of the basic pillars of the policy is that "for all Jamaicans to enjoy a better quality of life and realise their full potential, everyone must become involved", something which confirms the participatory approach with which the NSP was conceived and is to be implemented.⁷ For example, the NSP provides that local public safety and security bodies:

1 Nationmaster.com, "Crime Statistics: Murders (per capita) (most recent) by country," <http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/crime/crime-murders-per-capita> (accessed June 29, 2009). See also: Jamaica and the European Community, *Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for the Period 2008-2013* (Kingston and Brussels: Government of Jamaica and the European Commission), http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/scanned_jm_csp10_en.pdf (accessed June 29, 2009).

2 Rasbert Turner, "Domestic Violence Statistics Alarming," *Jamaica Gleaner News*, July 21, 2008, <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20080721/lead/lead6.html> (accessed June 29, 2009).

3 Ministry of National Security, Government of Jamaica, *National Security Policy for Jamaica: Towards a Secure and Prosperous Nation* (Kingston: Government of Jamaica, Kingston, 2007), <http://www.jis.gov.jm/NSPANNET.pdf> (accessed June 29, 2009).

4 Ibid.

5 Ministry of National Security, Government of Jamaica, *National Security Policy for Jamaica*, iii.

6 Ibid, v.

7 Ibid, iii.

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should have mandatory meetings open to members of the public for citizens to voice their concerns, give feedback on the performance of the police and other State agencies and more importantly to allow citizens to question the police and other agencies.⁸

To institutionalise the participatory approach, a number of joint committees between the National Security Strategy Implementation Unit and relevant local government authorities and civil society groups have been established. These should facilitate constant communication and collaboration between the National Security Strategy Implementation Unit and its stakeholders on the ground.

Consultations on the drafting of the NSP involved the Bureau of Women's Affairs and various women's organisations. Thanks to their input, the NSP highlights the gender-based nature of some security threats. It calls for close attention to the impact of violence on individuals, communities and society by noting that:

domestic violence is one of the more pervasive and common forms of violence plaguing the society. It contributes to the overall patterns of crime and violence due to its debilitating effects on the social fabric and its role in socializing the youths to violence as a means of dispute resolution. Women and children are disproportionately at risk from domestic violence.⁹

Under the umbrella of the NSP, authorities have been encouraged to take measures in response to domestic violence. For example, the Bureau of Women's Affairs and the Government have trained the police to understand and take the issue of domestic violence seriously and have supported services that respond to incidents of domestic violence.¹⁰

The *Jamaica Violence Prevention, Peace and Sustainable Development Programme 2008–2011* (JVPPSD, launched and funded by the United Nations Development Programme, the UK Department for International Development and the Canadian International Development Agency) serves as a framework within which to implement the NSP as far as violence and crime are concerned.¹¹ The JVPPSD contains a Gender Action Plan that drives gender mainstreaming throughout the NSP as a whole. For example, it provides for collection and distribution of gender-disaggregated violence data to inform law enforcement officers, policy-makers and the public. The Women's Resource and Outreach Centre is involved in monitoring the incorporation of the Gender Action Plan into the work plan of all JVPPSD implementing partners, including the Government of Jamaica.

Under the JVPPD, the United Nations Development Programme has trained nearly 600 community representatives on conflict prevention, gender and peacebuilding issues. Institutional support has been provided to key civil society groups, including the Women's Resource and Outreach Centre. Training has also been offered to more than 200 government officials, including police and magistrates. Three Peace and Justice Centres have been created, which besides providing support to the police and courts in tackling crime and violence, are deputed to be responsive to gender issues by working with young men to address aggressive masculinity and providing access to justice for women.

While the Jamaican NSP can be taken as an instructive example of how the drafting of security policies can follow a participatory process, the document itself lacks gender-sensitivity in

⁸ Ibid, 91.

⁹ Ibid, 13.

¹⁰ Ministry of National Security, "Police Going After Men Who Commit Violence Against Women," *Jamaica Information Service*, November 27, 2008, http://www.jis.gov.jm/security/html/20081127T090000-0500_17538_JIS_POLICE_GOING_AFTER_MEN_WHO_COMMIT_VIOLENCE_AGAINST_WOMEN.asp (accessed June 29, 2009).

¹¹ Governance Unit UNDP Jamaica, *Jamaica Violence Prevention, Peace and Sustainable Development Programme (JVPPSD) 2008 Annual Report* (Kingston: UNDP: November 2008), http://www.jm.undp.org/files/JVPPSD_Report.pdf (accessed June 29, 2009).

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some respects. It uses language such as “man-made hazards” and “manpower”—terms emanating from the idea that only men (and not women) are active in public life.¹²

On a final note, women’s lobbying for the integration of gender-based violence into the NSP succeeded in leading the Government towards the development of a national plan of action on gender-based violence, which takes into consideration: comprehensive and protective measures including legislation, better services for victims, stronger partnerships, and increased efforts to engage men and boys. The plan of action is currently in its drafting process but if approved by the end of 2009 as intended, will represent a landmark step towards addressing gender-based and domestic violence in Jamaica.¹³

¹² Government of Jamaica, *National Security Policy for Jamaica*.

¹³ Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth & Sports, “Government to Develop Action Plan to Address Gender-based Violence, *Jamaica Information Service*, November 27, 2008, http://www.jis.gov.jm/information/html/20081127T090000-0500_17534_JIS_GOV_T_TO_DEVELOP_ACTION_PLAN_TO_ADDRESS_GENDER_BASED_VIOLENCE_.asp (accessed June 29, 2009).