



**Report on the Mauritius Media  
Training Workshop on**

**Covering Gender Violence**

25-29 March 2002



## **SYNOPSIS**

This report provides an overview of the Mauritian workshop on Covering Gender Violence held at the Media Trust, St. Denis Street, Port Louis from 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> March 2002. Biographies of participants are attached to *Annex A*. Biographies of resource persons can be found on *Annex B* and the list of editors that attended a lunch time briefing is attached to *Annex C*. The programme is attached to *Annex D*. A summary of the evaluations is attached to *Annex E*.

## **BACKGROUND**

Gender violence is one of the most flagrant, yet under-reported crimes of our time. In 1998, SADC Heads of State signed an addendum to the Declaration on Gender and Development pledging to eradicate gender violence. Two years later, in December 2000, SADC member states met in Lesotho to review progress towards this objective. They found that while there is heightened awareness of gender violence in member countries, the number of reported cases has actually increased. While the media is playing an increasingly important role in exposing gender violence, it has often, through its own biases, use of inappropriate language and images, been part of the problem than of the solution.

A few months before the Lesotho conference, Inter Press Service, a global development news network, developed a manual on covering gender violence with the assistance of Gender Links, a Southern African NGO committed to the fair representation of women in the media. This manual was tested at a workshop comprising 35 journalists from the SADC region alongside the SADC conference in Lesotho. The workshop included producing a daily newsletter and final bumper supplement on the conference, widely distributed in hard copy and via the Internet. These journalists formed a network called the SADC Gender and Media (GEM) Initiative that is committed to improving coverage on gender violence in SADC media.

As a follow up to the workshop, Gender Links, with the support of the Ford Foundation, and working in close collaboration with SADC GEM members, is convening training workshops at country level on covering gender violence in six SADC countries. The workshops are being held in conjunction with local media training institutions, which bear a key responsibility in carrying such work forward.

The course was open to:

Male and female media practitioners. Male journalists were especially encouraged to apply, as the intention is to achieve gender balance among participants.

Print, radio and TV journalists.

Journalists with at least three to five years of experience.

Journalists with a commitment to reporting from a human rights perspective.

All participants were required to make the following commitments:

- To participate for the full five days of the course.

- To collect samples of coverage of gender violence in Mauritian for discussion at the workshop.
- To write or produce at least one story during the course.
- To write or produce two stories after the course. Certificates for the course will only be issued on completion of these assignments after the course.
- To become part of the SADC GEM electronic network for at least three months after the course, so as to receive ongoing support and backup from the main facilitator, and from peers in this and other courses.
- To contribute to a SADC Journal on Covering Gender Violence in June 2002.

# **DAY ONE**

## **OPENING**

### **President of Mauritius**

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasant duty to be here this morning for the inauguration of the five day Training Course on 'Covering Gender Violence', a joint Media Training Project of the Media Trust and Gender Links of South Africa. I should like to commend this excellent initiative and also to congratulate Gender Links of South Africa, which, I understand, will be convening, with the support of the Ford Foundation, training workshops at country level on this subject in six SADC countries.

In Mauritius, after independence in 1968, a series of women's movements, ranging from the radical liberation movements to the more moderate groupings of middle class housewives, emerged with all of them advocating a change in women's status. A Ministry of Women's Rights was created in 1982. A number of amendments were brought to the law, especially those relating to marriage with the view to removing the formal subordination of women in marriage and to grant secular, legal status to religious marriages.

The granting of free secondary education in 1976, helped in considerably broadening the access of girls to education. This measure eventually led to the emergence of a young literate labour reservoir, which largely made possible and successful the setting up, and development of the Mauritian Export Processing Zone. The labour participation rate of women increased from 20.3 % in 1972 to 28 % in 1983 and 34.6 % in 1990, and was around 35 % in mid-2000.

The gender issue has surfaced as a national concern in the last few years mainly as a result of the growing pressures of rapid industrialization on family life, and which often lead to friction or violence in conjugal relations. There is no question that violence against women is a serious and widespread problem with a long history. Its roots are buried deep in a culture that for hundreds of years considered women inferior to men – and even as their property. Though equality of the sexes is now recognized in law, the attitudes that kept men in power for centuries do not die easily, nor does the belief among many men that they have right to express that power through physical force.

However, if we look beyond the discriminatory treatment meted out to women or to the various forms of violence to which they are subjected, we can detect certain in built mechanism is society, resulting mainly from particular traditions or cultural affinities, which stand in the way of the full emancipation of women. It is not uncommon to find that in certain families, girls are made to stop their schooling early and that in others, the womenfolk will abstain from mixing socially in gatherings where male elements are

present. These are also issues, which need to be addressed if society wishes all women, without distinction, to be fully emancipated.

I do not miss any opportunity to harp on the fact that the family is the basic unit of society and that, as such, it should be strengthened. The rights, capabilities and responsibilities of family members must be respected. The very significant contribution of parents, men and women, to the welfare of family and to the development of society is still not recognized or is not given its full importance. The social significance of maternity, motherhood and the role of parents in the family and in the upbringing of children have to be acknowledged. The upbringing of children requires the shared responsibility of parents, women and men and society as a whole. Maternity, motherhood, parenting and the role of women in procreation must not be a basis for discrimination nor should they restrict the full participation of women in society.

In this, the media have an important mission to accomplish, as they have a great potential to promote the advancement of women and the equality of women and men by portraying women and men in a non-stereotypical, diverse and balanced manner, and by respecting the dignity and worth of the human person.

Mr. President of the Media Trust

As your organization has kindly sponsored this workshop, may I appeal to you to impress upon your members the need for a more balanced reporting on women's issues. Admittedly, advertisements displaying glamorous and sexy women or like photographs, which are used to illustrate certain articles or features, are more appealing to the public, from a commercial point of view. While this particular aspect is likely to increase the readership of newspapers, I believe that the media should also devote some efforts, in the name of fairness and equity, to campaign against sexual harassment, violence and sexual assaults towards women, which, to my mind cannot, under any circumstances, be condoned. I am sure you will be the first one to share my views on this score.

I have no doubt that this workshop, which has attracted a wide participation of Mauritian journalists, will have a positive outcome, with the media coming up with more articles and features likely to help reducing sexual discrimination and domestic violence, and to promote equality of treatment between men and women, not only in face of the law but in everyday relationships at home and at work, in private and in public.

With these words, I now have the pleasure in formally declaring open this workshop and to wish it all the success it deserves.

Thank you

## **RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH**

**Colleen Lowe Morna**  
**Director, Gender Links**

This is the seventh Gender Links workshop on covering gender violence in the SADC region. It is the first in which we have had the honour of being addressed by someone of your stature. Excellency, your presence here is deeply appreciated. Mauritius is also the first SADC country to have adopted a far-reaching Domestic Violence Act. As we have gone around the region, we have seen this piece of legislation cited and serving as a model in other SADC countries.

Your presence, the Domestic Violence Act, and so many other positive developments in this area in Mauritius reflect the extent to which the government here has made gender violence a key political concern and issue. This is critical to overcoming what is, by any measure, one of the most serious yet under-reported crimes of our time.

In my own country, bank robberies and car hijacks often receive more prominence and political attention than gender violence. A car can be replaced. Money can be replaced. When the body of a woman or child is violated, no amount of counseling or consolation can change the permanent scar that these leaves. Gender violence is not just a crime. It is a human rights violation of the most serious order.

As we drove into Port Louis this morning, we heard on the radio about the world campaign against the threatened stoning to death of a woman in Nigeria for the alleged committing of adultery under Sharia law. I stress the word *alleged* adultery- the other version of the story is that in fact that this woman was raped. Either way, nothing in this world could justify such a sentence. This example is but one of thousands, reported and unreported, of the insidiousness and pervasiveness of gender violence; and of why we are running these workshops.

As an NGO we are guided by the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, as well as the accompanying addendum on the Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children. We asked ourselves what our most useful contribution would be. We decided that it would be working with the media and communicators more broadly. All too often gender activists talk to each other. We need to learn to communicate with the rest of society. The media is a powerful tool for doing so.

For a long time, the media has been more a part of the problem than of the solution where gender violence is concerned. The media has gone from ignoring the problem, because it occurs in the "private space" to sensational and often shameful reporting that trivializes the experience of women, give the impression that women are to blame, tell stories from the point of view of perpetrators; stories that lack depth and context, in brief that are not written from a human rights perspective.

No matter how many laws are passed on gender violence, it is only when we sense a deep outrage within that there will begin to be any change.

This is not the role of the so-called alternative media. It is the role of the mainstream media. In every country where these workshops have been held, with the generous support of the Ford Foundation, they have been held in partnership with mainstream media training institutions. In Mauritius we are delighted to be partnering with the Media Trust.

The workshop in Mauritius is a continuation of a series of workshops. But it is also unique in many ways. There are many "firsts" that I would like to highlight:

- This is the first time that a president of a country has opened one of our workshops. Your Excellency, we are deeply touched by your presence.
- This is the first time that a media training institution has offered us its facilities completely free of Trust. Surely, there can be no greater sign of commitment than this!
- This is the first time that a mainstream media institution has given us free space for the publication of our supplement, produced as part of the training. To L'Express we say: please, continue to light the way!

All this points to that particularly collaborative spirit that is Mauritius; that unity within diversity that makes Mauritius even more special than Mark Twain's "first God created heaven and then he-maybe even she- created Mauritius".

I would be remiss if, within this paradise I did not single out one important GEM, and excuse the pun here because GEM is the acronym we use for our Gender and Media Initiative. Just before we started, a colleague from the British High Commission asked us how we manage to parachute into different countries, presume to make sense of what is going on, let alone to be the bringers of new knowledge. In each country we have a secret, a gem, and in Mauritius this is Loga Virahsawmy, the tireless organizer, no, spirit behind this venture. Loga, you are the gem in this paradise called Mauritius, as well one of the most deserving members of the SADC GEM Network. With all my heart, thank you for all you have done, and for all that I know you will do.

To all present, to the many resource persons, participants, well-wishers, and to you, Excellency, thank you. Your energy gives us energy. Hand in hand, we can, we will, rid our region of the scourge of gender violence.

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

### **Loga Virahsawmy**

Mr. President  
Distinguished Guests

The audience we have here today is a clear evidence of the importance of this training workshop on reporting on gender violence. Mr. President the fact that you have accepted to open this workshop at such short notice shows your interest in this most under-reported crime of our time. I am sure you are here today not only as the President of our Republic but as a human being committed to say to the world 'enough is enough'. One Nazma is just too many if we want Mauritius to be a fair and just society

where women and children will be considered as human beings with hopes and visions, dreams and aspirations. Women have always been portrayed as victims of violence deserving our pity. It is not pity that we want to generate but anger and a sense of revolt without which there cannot be any change.

Media can reveal what is happening. Media is a product of society, a mirror of society, a witness of society and can be an agent of change. By playing this key role, the media can contribute to put an end to all the sufferings and hardships of all the Nazmas of this world. The media can help to restore back the dignity stolen from women. The media can help to re-shape the world into that of a more humanized and womanised world where all human beings will be treated as human beings.

We have here with us today two very committed ladies, our two facilitators from South Africa – the tireless and the workaholic Colleen Lowe Morna and Ruth Ansah Ayisi.

**Colleen** is Executive Director of Gender Links. She began her career as a journalist specialising in gender and development. Among positions she held were co-ordinator of the Africa office of Inter Press Service in Harare; correspondent for South Magazine and Africa Editor of the New Delhi-based Women's Feature Service. She joined the Commonwealth Secretariat as a Senior Researcher on the Africa desk in 1991, and later served as Chief Programme Officer of the Commonwealth Observer Mission to South Africa. Following South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, Colleen became an advisor on gender and institutional development to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Assistance special programme of assistance to South Africa. She subsequently served as founding CEO of the South African Commission on Gender Equality.

**Ruth**, former Africa editor of the Women's Feature Service is currently a consultant to UNICEF. A long time activist in the gender and media field, Ruth's area of specialisation is women and children in armed conflict. She brings to Gender Link practical experience from the frontline- having covered the wars in Angola, Mozambique and Sierra Leone.

In December 2000 after the Lesotho Conference on Gender Violence and Child Abuse a network called the SADC Gender and Media committed to improving coverage on gender violence was formed and as a member of this network I can tell you that we are very lucky to have the two best facilitators for this training course. This workshop has been run by Gender Links with the support of the Ford Foundation in nearly all the SADC countries and Colleen did not want to leave Mauritius out. On behalf of the Media Trust, the electronic and print media of Mauritius let me tell you how grateful we are to you Colleen.

I am also very grateful to all these committed men and women, our resource persons, who readily agreed to bring their share of contribution to this workshop.

Before asking the President of the Republic, Mr. Karl Auguste Offmann to officially open this workshop, I would like to express my gratitude to L'Express and especially to Jean Claude de L'Estrac, Denis Ythier and Ariane Cavalot de L'Estrac for their tremendous help and support. L'Express is giving us a photographer, newspapers for the journalists throughout the whole workshop and most important two broad pages where articles of

the participants will be published. L'Express is also helping with the editing of the articles. And on top of that Colleen and Ruth will get free copies of the supplement to distribute in the SADC countries.

### **Mr Finlay Salesse, President of the Media Trust of Mauritius**

Mr President  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen and Dear Participants

Media is democracy and democracy means gender equality. I am therefore very proud that the Media Trust is hosting such an important training workshop on covering gender violence.

We all know that gender based violence is a violation of human rights and it needs to be discussed, condemned and eradicated. What a better way to do that than to train journalists both male and female to report on gender violence in a more unbiased manner. I have been in the media since a long time and as the Editor in Chief of a newspaper, I am very sorry to say that very often media is perceived as passive observers rather than active participants and partners of addressing this critical issue. I hope that after this workshop the situation will be redressed.

Ms. Colleen Lowe Morna, the Director of Gender Links, proposed this important training workshop to the Media Trust as early as September last but unfortunately Media Trust was at a turning point with the election of a new President and the new Board took up the idea only in January this year. Fortunately we have Loga here who kept the ball rolling and what was a vague idea is now a reality.

Although this workshop is a joint collaboration of the Media Trust and Gender Links, I must admit that all the hard work is being done by Gender Links. I am, therefore, most grateful to our two facilitators from South Africa, Colleen Lowe Morna and Ruth Ansah Ayisi who will work with you for a whole week. I have been told that the mastermind behind this whole course is Colleen. Colleen let me congratulate you and the Inter Press Service for having developed a training manual on "Fighting Violence Against Women". I am grateful that our participants will get the opportunity to work on this training manual.

I am also very pleased that the course has been designed in such a way that our journalists will have to take stock of the Mauritian reality as well. They will have to share examples of coverage of gender violence in the Mauritian media and conceptualise the articles. I am sure that at the end of the workshop all participants will not only question their articles but will question themselves on what is good gender reporting and what is bad gender reporting.

The timing of this workshop could not have been better with the Sexual Discrimination Bill going to Parliament on Tuesday next and I can tell you that you are very lucky to have a session with the person who is behind this Bill. When we talk about violence

against women we must also talk about HIV/AIDS and yet we tend to associate HIV/AIDS more with African countries than Mauritius but the time has now come for us to take stock of the Mauritian situation.

Having been a politician myself, I know how important it is to talk about "Gender Violence and Politics" and I can assure you, you are getting the best resource persons to talk on this burning issue. There are so many stigmas attached to women in politics that the representation of women in the Mauritian Parliament is the lowest in the SADC countries.

Sexual assault is on the rise in Mauritius and women and girls are routinely targeted be it in public or private places. We all know that the effects of sexual harassment can be devastating and some women can go as far as committing suicide. To probe further into this subject we will have the representatives of the Police, the Ministry of Women, the President of Shelter for Women in Distress and an Associate Professor in Social work.

It is not everyday that we come across victims who are prepared to talk in public, you will get first hand information in the session "Domestic Violence". Portrayal of women in the media is another sensitive issue. Are women only bodies? Are women only sex pots? I am sure the inputs of the resource persons on "Media Reporting and Ethics" will put records straight.

Whether we like it or not men have a great role to play in combating gender violence and it will be very interesting to know what our three very committed men on this session have to proposed to eradicate this scourge in our society.

Having done an overview of the programme, I will now ask Loga, the local coordinator, who gave "*corps et am e*" for this course to take over.

Thank you.

## **SHARING OF EXAMPLES FROM THE MAURITIAN MEDIA**

Participants were asked to bring examples of gender-based violence from the Mauritian media. The following were their observations:

- One journalist suffered discrimination at work because she was pregnant.
- L' Express supplement wrote on social problems with a special focus on gender violence.
- A psychologist from SOS Femme in a lead story about the work she does. Article showed ways of helping women overcome this problem.
- A producer from the MBC noted that the problem of gender violence was most prevalent in the middle class.
- There were sexualized images of rape and incest cases.
- Media does not know how to talk about child prostitution.
- Women can also be decision makers and businesswomen not only victims.
- Mauritian media also highlights violence of women by other women.
- Sexual harassment on a bus: adolescents tried to commit suicide as a result.

- Women evicted out of their houses.
- Solidarity by police and the judiciary during the case of women who killed her husband was front-page news. The Ministry of Women's Affairs took a supportive stance and for the first time the judiciary gave bail to a murder case.

Participants noted that the media could be a source of secondary violence as well.

## **GENDER VIOLENCE AND POLITICS**

### **Lindsey Collen Politician**

When we talk about "violence", there are all sorts of levels of violence – overt and hidden, official by the state and by individuals who act with impunity.

When women come into politics, here is the base-line violence of the rules, set out by the bourgeois state. For my talk, I will restrict myself to these official forms of violence only – just because of lack of time. If Mme Chair, when I'm over can say if I have a few minutes left, I would love to add another completely different dimension: the question of violently misogynist language in politics (as well as in other spheres).

#### *Anti-Women Educational Qualifications*

Women got the right to vote AFTER men. And when women were allowed to vote for the first time in 1953, there was a "reading and writing" qualification introduced: electors had to be able to write their names. The implication was already clear: women are uneducated; "illiterate" even, and THEREFORE, cannot exercise their vote sufficiently well to be able to vote without passing a "test". This was done away with, of course.

But today, if we take the totality of women and of men, women are still less educated than men, and there are fewer women who can read and write than men.

To qualify for membership of the National Assembly, Section 33 of the Constitution of Mauritius says that "he" "*is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the Assembly.*"

Any elector can put in a Supreme Court case to challenge the extent to which you can speak and read the English language.

Women are not only less educated on average than men (although this is changing), but also what is not changing, is that women have less confidence in their abilities. Many women feel that they cannot speak and read English well enough to stand.

This is state violence against citizens.

Section 49 says the "*The official language of the Assembly shall be English but any member may address the chair in French*". Note that neither Creole nor Bhojpuri, which taken together are spoken by 93% of the population, are permitted at all. Of course, Creole is used in all informal repartee. Mainly swearing. Much of it misogynist. But we will come to that subject in detail later.

Suffice it to say that the Colonial languages and a literacy qualification still haunt the little democracy that we have. These colonial and anti-democratic laws have the violent effect of preventing poor people in general, and women in greater numbers, from taking active part in politics. So much for an education qualification.

### *Anti-women Property qualifications*

In the colonial era, there was also a "property" qualification. You had to own land, or have a regular income of more than "x" in order to stand for Parliament. This was gradually decreased until it came to a Rs 250 "deposit" for candidates, which represented, and indeed still represents, a form of "property" qualification. (If the sum were a percentage of one's income, then it would, of course, be more fair.)

Why I mention the question of the "deposit" is that women, who are in general much, lower wage earners than men (every study shows this) are in for a big shock. The Report on Constitutional and Electoral Reform by the Albie Sachs Commission has recently published its advice to Government. Though the terms of reference said nothing about raising this "deposit", the Report blithely comes and proposes a "deposit" of Rs2,500 per candidate. As everyone here know the basic wage in the free zone is Rs 1800 per month (\$60). Many forms of work do not have overtime, but even with overtime, women can only double this basic wage. Because any absence from work for even one day (for a child's vaccination, first day at primary school, illness, for an old person's care) demolishes any hope of the overtime money – there is still the "double cut" from the times of indenture. So, women in the free zone would need to spend a whole month's wage just in order to stand as candidate. And they are the only people who could represent women in the free zone in the National Assembly: women in the free zone. Ex-Justice Robert Ahnee was on a live radio programme, Club de la Presse, the Sunday after the publication of the Sachs Report. When the Le Defi Plus reporter asked him about this his reply, talk about gender violence, was "I would advise the free zone workers not to keep her money and not to stand for election; she would not be elected anyway."

Women who work in large numbers in the fields, as hotel domestic workers, as private domestic workers, for cleaning firms, all earn less per month than the proposed new deposit. This is a violent and anti-women measure being proposed. The existing Rs 250 is difficult enough for women candidates in the working class. And any woman who relies on her husband for an income is not easily able to request even this amount of money for a deposit.

Now, what is particularly violent about this draconian anti-woman measure, proposed so frivolously, is that the Sachs Commission (although the question was NOT in the Terms of Reference of the Commission) pretended it was very *concerned* about the under-

representation of women in the National Assembly. Mauritius is the worst in SADC, so they were quite right to be *concerned*.

But are they blind? Are they in bad faith? Can they not see that the two above-mentioned qualifications and the huge problem I'll mention below are indicators of some of the REAL reasons why women are not high up in politics. (Let it be remembered that at the agent level there are loads of women!)

Anyway, the Sacks Report then suggests that in order to get a whole lot of MONEY from the state (millions of rupees) parties can get this money by fielding women. If a party were to field 20 women out of 60 according to their bizarre proposals, it can get Rs 3 million rupees, in exchange for the deposit as it were of Rs 2500 x 60 = Rs150,000. The 20 women are thus worth some 2.85 million rupees.

*Anti-Women Communal Provisions in the race-religious classification required in the Schedule to the Constitution*

Another major problem is the Best Loser System. This system represents a communalization, that is to say an ethno-religification of the entire democratic system. A kind of virus that infects the whole thing. It turns every single member of the National Assembly into a "communal representative" after the election, AND THIS ENSURES THAT COMMUNALO-RELIGIOUS LOBBIES RUN MUCH OF POLITICS. Well, women are not strong in communal-religious lobbies. Women are zero in the hierarchies and running of religious and communal pressure groups.

Although the Supreme Court has called on the Legislature to do something about the Best Loser System, the present government seems bent on keeping it.

It keeps women sub-altern in an insidious, archaic and violent manner. To question a religious lobby can get you called a "witch" at any moment.

## **Gender Violence in Politics**

### **Sheila Bapoo**

We shall all agree that inspite of women being poorly represented in the world of politics; women participation in public life has taken an important world place on the world agenda for discussion in all international conferences. Many countries have improved their democratic system in giving the chance for more women participation, while others still remains stagnant with no improvements or only in some cases weak efforts are being made. Today in Mauritius our daily press writes about electoral reforms and the report of the Commission chaired by Albia Sachs and his team to look into the issue, where one important aspect of his recommendation is Gender. What a shame when the report states about a deficit of our democratic system with a poor representation of women in politics in Mauritius, and today it has fallen down to 5.6 % of women representation in our National Assembly.

Is this to start with not a result of Gender Violence in politics?

Gender violence can be understood as human rights violation resulting as a brake on development and thus we still find countries lagging backwards. There is no democracy if political parties keep politics only as a man's world or a boy's club. Therefore its prevention will necessarily involve and benefit all of us. Ending violence against women is not merely a matter of enacting laws and programmes, we need to have changes in attitudes by drawing attention on unequal roles and relationships. These are very difficult to achieve specially in male dominated societies such as ours.

I can here state my personal experience and involvement for the 13 years that I shouldered ministerial responsibilities. Inspire of coming with new laws to eliminate discrimination against women, the ministry for W.R has been continuously giving attention for implementing its information and sensitization programme island wide with emphasis on "Campaign for changing of attitudes and mentality". A 13 years non-stop campaign. If there is no change in attitude, not much can be achieved in our fight against Gender Violence. And at this point the role of the media is of utmost importance. The use of media to counter images showing women like commodities and men who accumulate or export them is very much felt and needed.

The new trend as it is seen today is to strengthen new partnership between men and women in politics. But in many countries women obviously suffer immensely because of men's gender violence against them. Men need to be part of the solution to combat Gender Violence not only as individuals but also in groups, working to change prescriptive social norms for masculinity and femininity and to build male solidarity for new choices.

Coming straight to the subject, gender violence differs in many ways and has always been felt on the political scene. Luckily it is no so much of physical violence but most of it is verbal, psychological and men's behavioural patterns disregarding and discrediting women. The use of cheap and vulgar language and comments causing damage to one's femininity are most of the things, which I observed. The treatment and consideration to be given to women in politics needs to be questioned from its roots. My personal observations of the prevailing situation are as follows just to quote a few examples:

Gender violence seems to exist both from within the functioning and structure of political parties, from government machineries and the private sector too. Women are more often being marginalized.

At hierarchy level, women always appear to be among the last. Rarely have women been given ministerial duties other than women affairs. Why not Finances, Industry or Foreign Affairs?

It is to be mentioned that the Attorney General, Labour and Industrial Relations and Civil Service affairs have had the chance to have a woman as a responsible minister and excellent end results have been achieved.

The Ministry for Women's Rights has always been among the last of all the other ministries. It is not perceived as a senior ministry and this is a proof of wrong attitude and mentality.

Budgetary consultations with ministry of Finance for approval of programmes and projects is always a tough time for the ministry of W.R to persuade male responsible civil servants to grant appropriate budgets.

Many of the male colleagues in the National Assembly rarely take a woman MP intervention as something serious. Not always much attention is given when a woman MP has the floor. Whatever issue and is considered as "affaire femme".

In media and press reporting, I must confess that actually we do witness a slight change in giving some more space for press reporting on women issues, but quite often women are marginalized and not given full coverage. The tendency in the media is that female journalists are mostly asked to attend press coverage on events organized by women, while the final vetting is always left in the hands of male editors. You do have women journalists discrediting women political figures too and that is the worst violence among all. I have myself been a victim of these.

Today while Mauritius is being taken as a model for its economic development, is it not a shame that when one looks at its Cabinet there is only one lady minister and always the same portfolio. Women, this is pure cosmetic. Fortunately these women ministers are committed to their responsibilities and to the struggle for the fight of a human cause. Psychologically this is gender violence affecting women and they have no say not only on important national issues but also on issues pertaining directly to women's life. We are still being trapped in a man's world where men still maintain control and have to decide on women's faith and future.

The most disgusting experience for any woman in politics is when she is being attacked on her person, her private life and attacks on her family on a public platform. She remains a vulnerable human being in the hands of her male political opponents and is discredited. What is the role of the media in such prevailing situation?

These are only a few examples which I have tried to highlight as behavioural attitudes towards women in politics and which results in gender violence. Many of these attitudes cannot be easily changed, as they are inborn in our system of a male dominated society. And women will still have to face it for long. And at this point it is only the media who can play a preventive role to it. It is high time to create better conditions for women involvement in politics.

Today we have in front of us the report of Albie Sachs on electoral reforms. Let us hope that his recommendations, if implemented, will give way to a new dimension, a new impetus for more women to come forward and share the same rights as men in politics. This has been a long overdue "revendication" from women movements in their struggle for equality in Mauritius. But more women must be ready to get involved un the game, it is not a question of mere quota, but they must be women of conviction and commitment.

Women will have the chance to prove themselves as prominent women politicians. Barriers will be pulled down. Our democratic system will be strengthened and Mauritius will benefit considerably with more women serving their country with pride, honesty and respect. This will be one big step forward in struggle to combat gender violence.

### **Gender Violence and Politics**

Ms. Shireen Aumeruddy Cziffra  
Ex Minister

#### *Definition of gender violence*

There is no single agreed definition of gender violence. Articles 1 and 2 of the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* refer to gender based violence as being "violence which results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".

We can also refer to the definition that prevailed in 1993 at *the UN World Conference on Human Rights* when gender violence was defined as being "violence which jeopardises fundamental rights, individual freedom and women's physical integrity".

In Mauritius, the term has been defined in the Protection of Domestic Violence Act of 1997.

But it is not important to dwell too long on definitions except to mention that the concept of gender, of course includes men and there can be gender violence against a man. But when analysing the subject that is before us today, it will become clear that in fact, this, if it occurs is only on an individual basis and is very rare. Whereas, there is a form of violence which is practiced against women as a class of persons. This form of violence is structural and if states are willing to change this kind of attitude they must show clearly that any form of discrimination against women will be illegal.

In this context we are pleased that in Mauritius, it permeates the whole of society and may be termed anything from discrimination to abuse, but, can in fact be considered as a form of violence. This is of the utmost importance if we are to discuss the subject of gender violence and politics. Otherwise, we will be stuck thinking that gender violence is only physical abuse and conclude that in that case the type of violence that concerns politicians is rarely obviously gender based. It can affect men and women alike. But, in fact, there is a very clear but often subdued, subtle and almost invisible form of violence that affects women who may want to go into politics.

## *Politics*

Of course the very term politics needs to be defined. Most people think only of candidates

to elections, whether local or general. But, everyone who is engaged in a political struggle, whether as an activist of a political party or of a trade union or of a pressure group or of any movement which is struggling for rights, need to be included in our debate.

The very structure and organisation of society debars women from participating actively in politics. The fact that maternity is still seen by most people as being solely the responsibility of women who wish to found a family, rather than as a social responsibility is one example. The fact that it is easy to tarnish the image and reputation of women is another. The fact that most men refuse to see women as equal partners both in private and public life is central to our debate.

The very essence of the power game, which is even stronger in politics than anywhere else, makes it terribly difficult for most women to hope that they can freely enter into the political arena, at whatever level. When the scramble for power becomes important, we know that there is many parameters that come into play and women again find themselves in an unequal position. It is not a secret that men still control political parties and trade unions and they will often only allow a few women to reach positions of responsibility. Often, this happens only because of public pressure and because it would otherwise be politically incorrect.

In fact, from all research that has been made up to now, it seems that violence is the last resort if nothing else has worked, and it can range from the spreading of rumours especially on the sexual life of the women concerned, or in some cases intimidation ranging from insults, like calling women names, sometimes practiced even by other women, to threats purely and simply. We know that in other countries women are sexually abused but I know of no cases here.

## **State violence**

Sometimes, the violence is practiced by the state itself and in many countries we know that women are not at all allowed to participate in public life or even to work, and even be seen uncovered in public. Women in some countries are stoned to death if they are suspected of having committed adultery. Sometimes women who are raped are punished and are not considered as victims. In such countries, how can one imagine that women can play an active part in politics or in the development process?

But, even in democratic countries, the state can put pressure on women to deny them free access to politics; sometimes, on the grounds that discriminatory practices form part of tradition, culture or religion. Sometimes, this is more of a societal kind of pressure condoned by the state. Sometimes it is legal and official.

Let me give you one good example of the kind of pressure that can be exerted even in a country like Mauritius. I have, as most of you know been a victim of that kind of abuse at the beginning of my political career, when the Immigration and Deportation Acts were amended in 1977. I was asked to leave the country and to leave politics.

Indeed these amendments, which were so obviously tailor-made to fit a few of us who were too active at the time, removed overnight the right of residence of our foreign husbands who had previously by marriage obtained the automatic status of residence. In my case, my husband lost his job as obviously his work permit was not renewed and we applied for a residence permit under the new law but our case remained pending from 1977 to 1982.

In the meantime, we went before the Human Rights Committee of the UN and had a favourable opinion in April 1981, but the laws remained unamended until the change in government. I consider this as a form of gender violence as it was a constant threat hanging on my head as a Damocles sword. Of course, a male citizen who had married a foreign wife was totally unconcerned by these laws.

If States are willing to change this kind of attitude, they must show clearly that such laws will not be adopted any more. Indeed in Mauritius, the Immigration laws were amended in 1983 to restore the fundamental right of Mauritian female citizens to freely marry without losing their other rights. Later, the Nationality laws, then all other laws related to foreign spouses were amended. More importantly section 16 (3) was amended to ban to a certain extent discrimination based on sex. In this context, we are pleased that in Mauritius, a Sex, Discrimination Bill is now in circulation. No doubt, a lot will have to be said on the text itself and how far it will really manage to combat discrimination and what we have termed as gender violence. But we are definitely moving forward.

### *Media*

Since today's workshop is organised by the Media Trust, I want to say a word on the use of the media as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of other strategies and as a specific focus for anti-violence advocacy, as the media has a key role to play to stimulate public debate. Often however, even if there are more and more women in both the print and the electronic media, the gender issue is relegated to specialized magazines, or is completely lost in the profuseness of other so-called more important news items. This is due mainly to the very structural inequalities that we mentioned as well as lack of capacity and knowledge of gender related issues. This is why such workshops are so useful and should be multiplied in the future.

At the MBC, you must have learnt that we have created specialized units; one of which will concentrate on gender issues. We are encouraging our young journalists to address the issue as much as possible. But, it will take time until the approach of news itself

changes so that we do not become, ourselves, consciously or unconsciously perpetrators of gender based violence.

Thank you.

## **SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT**

Ms. Premilla Patten  
Head of Task Force  
Barrister-at-law

Thank you for inviting me here to talk to you today. I appreciate the opportunity to speak about a subject, which is of fundamental concern to women namely Sex Discrimination Law.

Sex Discrimination is an issue that goes to the heart of enhancing gender equality. I wish to congratulate the organisers for their initiative in organising this workshop. It is always good to stimulate debate about various aspects of women's human rights.

In the past decade, women from all over the world have launched an unprecedented international movement for women's human rights. At the 1985 UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya, human rights began to emerge as a key issue for women although it was hardly mentioned in the Conference's official declaration.

By the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, human rights had been taken up by thousands of women and became the framework for the entire government Plan of Action.

At intervening world conferences in Vienna, (Human Rights), Cairo, (Population and Development) Copenhagen (Social Development), women's rights activist challenged the neglect of women and their rights in all those areas and argued that the improvement of women's status anywhere depends on advancing their rights everywhere.

We all agree that the effect of this activism has been remarkable, particularly at the international level. For the first time, governments have committed themselves to protect and promote women's human rights as a "high priority".

Yet, despite these and other promising changes in law and policy, women the world over still face a day to day reality that is characterised by the denial of their fundamental rights.

They too often lack the tools and training needed to shape and use the human rights system to combat abuse and advance their rights. Many women are unaware of their human rights, and see the human rights system - to the extent they are aware of it at all - as something abstract and beyond their reach.

While activism over the last decade has clearly made women's human rights more visible, the challenge now is to make them more accessible. The challenge is also to

shape the human rights system and make it more responsive to women's concerns, to secure concrete changes in women's everyday lives.

Women are entitled to the enjoyment of all human rights, including those relating to sustainable human development. However, women's gender roles have an impact on their ability to access rights, resources and opportunities, and to be treated on an equal basis with men. Not only is the enjoyment of rights - including the right to access resources on an equal basis - an end in itself but also it is an essential ingredient in achieving the empowerment of women, social justice and overall social and economic development.

In March 2000, the Human Rights Committee adopted a comprehensive new General Comment on gender equality, which thoroughly updated its earlier General Comment on Article 3 (adopted in 1981). Gender equality is an overarching principle that applies to the enjoyment of all rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social. The Human Rights Committee is very clear that the right to gender equality is not merely a right to non-discrimination. Affirmative action is required. States parties are under an obligation to take all necessary steps to enable every person to enjoy the rights provided for in the Covenant "on an equal basis and in their totality" (para.2).

In the Task Force report, which I submitted last year to government, emphasis is placed on substantive equality and to that effect the enactment of a Sex Discrimination Bill has been recommended. The Draft Sex Discrimination Bill has already been approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and will be presented before Parliament next month.

In Mauritius despite our Constitution, which enshrines a philosophy of equality, despite the fact that there is very little de jure discrimination in our laws, women suffer systemic and systematic discrimination, which results in deep patterns of inequality and disadvantage.

Many women experience multiple barriers in gaining access to rights such as employment, housing and social security. Customs, traditional roles, family responsibilities, attitudes and stereotypes provide women with fewer opportunities and place them at a disadvantage when they seek to access opportunities.

In spite of the provisions in our Constitution which clearly prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex, a Sex Discrimination Act will not be an exercise of futility. It will, on the contrary, amount to a clear acknowledgement of women's right to equal protection of the law. The objects of the Act will be to give effect to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, to combat gender discrimination and to promote substantive equality.

"Gender discrimination" means: -

(a) Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex, pregnancy, marital status, domestic or family responsibilities which is aimed at or has the effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women or men, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field;

(b) Any act or conduct which has the effect of creating or sustaining systemic forms of domination and disadvantage which perpetuate and re-enforce unequal gender relations and prevent women from being able to develop to their full human potential and participate fully in society.

### **Scope of the Sex Discrimination Act**

The Sex Discrimination Bill shall relate to discrimination on the ground

of:

sex,

marital status,

pregnancy,

potential pregnancy or

family responsibilities.

The Act shall also prohibit sexual harassment.

The Act will help to affirm that every individual is equal before and under the law, and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law, without discrimination on the ground of sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy. The aim of the Act is to increase women's access to employment opportunities at all levels.

Young women may not realise/appreciate the importance of anti-discrimination laws. It is true that nowadays more women are investing in their careers; they identify themselves with their work, they invest money and time in training and education. They assume the right to participate in the paid workforce.

Many of those women especially professional women move through their working lives free from discrimination until they get married and start a family. Then to the shock of many of these bright and confident young women, who thought all this anti-discrimination stuff was old hat and that the war was won, reality hits.

They did not realise that their brains are assumed to shrink in direct relation to the growth of their pregnant bodies; they are often sidelined and careers stalled. Others are sacked. When they come back to work it is often assumed they want light duties and light responsibilities. Some do, others do not. It is of course a dangerous assumption.

Under the Sex Discrimination Act, discrimination on the ground of sex, marital status or pregnancy shall be unlawful in specified areas of public life namely employment, education, health care, accommodation, disposal of land and property, insurance, pensions, provision of goods, services and facilities, association and partnerships, clubs and sports, professions.

The Sex Discrimination Act shall prohibit both:

Direct and  
Indirect discrimination.

Direct Discrimination is any policy or action, which discriminates overtly on the basis of sex, marital status or pregnancy.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when an apparently gender-neutral rule or policy has very different effect on women and men and one group is disadvantaged by the operation or effect of the rule.

### **Sex Discrimination**

Sex Discrimination is treating an employee differently because of their gender. Whenever this discrimination affects the "terms or conditions of employment", it is illegal.

Terms or conditions of employment means just about anything relating to someone's job: their position, pay, title, and hours, vacation. Whether or not a person is hired is also considered a term or condition of employment. There are two types of sex discrimination namely disparate treatment and disparate impact.

*Disparate treatment* is straightforward discrimination; put simply; it is treating a person differently because of his/her sex.

*Disparate impact* is more complicated - It is where some type of company policy excludes certain individuals from the job or from promotions. The policy may not have been designed to exclude them; that could have just been the unfortunate result.

One example arose in fire departments. The fire departments had various strength requirements for job applicants and women were frequently unable to meet these requirements. The Courts found that although in most instances, the requirements were absolutely necessary to ensure the fire-fighters were qualified, in a number of instances, the requirements were simply too high, they were more than necessary. Qualified women were therefore being excluded unnecessarily, although it could not be said that the Fire Dept were necessarily trying to exclude women; that was just the result of their policy. It had a disparate impact on women. Because the policy was not sufficiently job related (too much strength was required) there was discrimination.

Stereotyping - It is also illegal to make employment decisions based on stereotypes regarding gender.

Gender roles - It is illegal too to make employment decisions based on gender roles.

Example - An employer did not hire women with very young children, whilst it did employ men with young children. Although most of the people the employer hired were women, the Court found there was discrimination.

The employer did not think women with young children should be working outside the home. The Court held that the employer is entitled to this belief, but he could not let it affect his employment decisions. When his beliefs did influence his hiring decisions, he broke the law.

### **Pregnancy discrimination**

The Sex Discrimination Bill covers pregnancy discrimination, potential pregnancy discrimination i.e.; discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions.

Accommodating pregnancy is often cumbersome for employers. As a result this form of discrimination is very common. Employers have a number of responsibilities to employees who become pregnant, for example if a woman becomes pregnant, and with the advice of her doctor asks for a position that is less strenuous or hazardous, the employer must transfer her to another position if it has one, or can make one without being unduly burdened.

### **Discrimination based on family responsibilities**

Women's disproportionate share of family care reduces workforce participation, interrupts progression and affects training investment by women and employers. It is sometimes argued that women choose lower paid positions for the non-financial trade offs such as flexibility to allow for family responsibilities.

It is true that many women who work part-time while raising a family are happy working less than full time. However, women should be penalized because they continue to bear the greater responsibility for raising a family to the benefit of society as a whole. And by penalised, I mean spending the rest of their time in the workforce struggling to catch up in seniority, unable to take advantage of training or promotional opportunities because employers consider the ambitions of part time workers as secondary.

This whole issue of work and family balance needs a big rethink. Part time work, so apparently ideal for parents, nevertheless still requires skills upgrading and training.

### **Discrimination based on marital status**

The Sex Discrimination Bill also addresses the question of discrimination on the grounds of marital status. Under the Sex Discrimination Bill, marital status means the status or condition of being:

- single;
- married;
- married but living separately and apart from one's spouse;
- divorced;
- widowed; or
- the de facto spouse of another person.

The Act shall also prohibit sexual harassment in certain areas. There is also discrimination by way of victimisation, which the Act should address.

The Sex Discrimination Act shall define 'employment' broadly. It shall cover:

Part-time and temporary employment (including trainees and casual workers).  
Work under a contract for services (e.g. an independent contractor).  
Work as an agent paid by commission.

The Sex Discrimination Act shall also specifically cover employment agencies and recruitment companies, and their provision of services. It shall prohibit all unfair discrimination in employment.

For the purposes of the Sex Discrimination Bill, services include:

- (a) services relating to banking, insurance and the provision of grants, loans, credit or finance;
- (b) services relating to entertainment, recreation or refreshment,
- (c) services relating to transport or travel;
- (d) services of the kind provided by the members of any profession or trade; and
- (e) services of the kind provided by a government, a government authority or a local government body.

The Sex Discrimination Act shall also cover discriminatory advertisement in the field of employment. Where there are contravening advertisement published in a newspaper, several persons or corporations may be deemed in breach of the Sex Discrimination Act, for example, all newspapers that publish the advertisement, the employer that authorises the terms of the advertisement and the employment agency or recruitment company that drafts and places the advertisement.

The Sex Discrimination Act shall contain a general prohibition of discrimination in accordance with Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, (CEDAW). The definition of discrimination in CEDAW should be adopted. This would tie the Sex Discrimination Act more closely to the provisions of CEDAW and would ensure that women's rights are seen as human rights. It would also give effect to Article 2(b) of CEDAW, which calls for the prohibition of all discrimination against women.

A Sex Discrimination Commission shall be established by the Act. A Sex Discrimination Commissioner shall be appointed under the Act. The Act shall contain provisions for the investigation and conciliation of complaints of unlawful conduct. Complaints of discrimination must be made to the Sex Discrimination Commission who may inquire into the matter and try to effect a settlement by conciliation.

The Sex Discrimination Act shall include provisions concerning systemic discrimination. Often sex discrimination is based on assumptions and stereotypes about the appropriate role of women in society and the maintenance of an ideology of subordination. It is pervasive and it is harmful because it reflects attitudes and prejudices towards women as a group and which cannot be addressed solely through individual anti-discrimination

remedies. Systemic discrimination refers to practice, which are absorbed into the institution and the structure of society and which have a discriminatory effect. It describes a series of directly and/or indirectly discriminatory (or subordinating) practices, which operate to produce general disadvantage for a particular group.

The power of the Sex Discrimination Commission shall include a power to investigate systemic discrimination on her own initiative without the need for a formal complaint. In exercising this power the Sex Discrimination Commission shall have all the powers of discovery that are currently available under the Sex Discrimination Act to deal with a complaint.

The Sex Discrimination Act shall provide that special measures to assist women to achieve de facto equality are not unlawful. Special measures and affirmative action policies are necessary to achieve equality. Special measures must be seen and understood as an expression of equality rather than an exception to it. Adopting such an approach affirms a primary commitment to the remedying of widespread, deeply entrenched and identifiable group-based patterns of inequality.

I was reading an article published recently in a US magazine for accountants where they were referring to lawsuits for sexual harassment, discrimination and unlawful termination as being one of the fastest growing areas of litigation. In the article the writer mentioned that there is hardly a public company or governmental agency that has not been sued for sexual harassment, discrimination or unlawful termination. The advice given to employers as a first step in protecting their firms and their clients from the risk of litigation was for management to understand the law.

As part of the strategies for compliance with anti-discrimination laws, employers must learn to understand their obligations under these laws. They must select and train key administrative personnel. In order to minimise the risk of liability resulting from sex discrimination, institutional disruption and expense, they have to opt for a "management control system" and design and disseminate a policy of sexual equity.

Above all there is a need to educate women about the need for them to enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination.

Changing the current workplace cultures and assumptions that perpetuate discrimination in these areas are also challenges.

The time has well and truly come to rid our workplaces of archaic attitudes and practices that fail to respond to the realities of work and family life today.

### **Glass ceiling**

Cases are becoming quite common in the United States as class action cases. They are primarily proven by statistics. If all women cannot rise above the position of supervisor, then all women are being discriminated against in promotion and hiring.

The corporation is seen as a pyramid. At the top is the Chairperson of the Board, then

the Executive Director, Managers, Supervisors and then one gets to the large number of workers who do the day-to-day work. The workers - Suppose this Company has a thousand workers who are comprised of fifty percent male, 50% female, the Corporation can claim that they don't discriminate against women, as a "protected group".

The glass ceiling exercise

See where these workers are located in the pyramid.

Draw a horizontal line in the pyramid at the manager's level, approx. 2/3 up the pyramid.

Above that line are the managers and executives of the Corporation.

When you look at that imaginary line, you find that 100% of people from managerial positions to Chairperson of the Board are males.

The imaginary line is the glass ceiling below which is found the groups of females who cannot rise.

### **Advertising that demeans women or is offensive**

Respect and sensitivity are paramount if we are to nurture a society that dignifies, rather than devalues on the basis of gender. I encourage you to speak out when advertising offends.

### **Sources of obligation prohibiting sex discrimination**

The principle source of legal obligation to avoid sex discrimination is the Constitution - Section 3 & 16.

The Protection of Human Rights Act  
The Human Rights Commission

### **Sex discrimination commission**

Processes complaints.

Exhaustion of administrative remedies.

Before a person can file a lawsuit, he or she must file a complaint with the sex discrimination commission.

## **GENDER AND HIV/AIDS**

### **Mr. Nicolas Ritter President of PILS**

Mr. Ritter set up an HIV/AIDS non-governmental organisation in 1977 and in 1999 set up a Youth center. He is an actor and he publicized his HIV status. He is playing Chest La Vie.

In 1996, there was a total denial of AIDS as a problem in Mauritius. The government did not support any Ngo's but the media was sympathetic. I did not hide that I was HIV positive. I had taken the decision to wait until I was ready to publicise my status and I was respected for coming out. The press now asks me about my health and well being. AIDS is a subject that needs to be addressed and people are frightened of it. However, it attracts people in the media so we have to use the media to advocate for it. The press was the one to inform the public about the availability of anti-retroviral drugs for people living with HIV AIDS for free starting from next month.

In Mauritius there are 189 men living with HIV, 97 women living with this virus and 5 or 6 children who have been infected with the virus. It is low in prevalence but from 1999, all pregnant women were systematically tested for the virus and only forty out of the fifty women tested were positive. 49 % of the women living with this virus are housewives but they do not want these figures to be published. They associate this virus with prostitutes.

There is a need to have HIV/AIDS training workshops for journalists so that they will be sensitized to the issues surrounding the disease. For instance, we have one couple where one spouse is HIV positive and the other is negative. This does not mean that the one will automatically be infected as well. Such issues need to be publicized. Out of two men, one woman will be infected and most infection is heterosexual. This pattern will change for it did change internationally. Women are more vulnerable both biologically and socially. Women have difficulty in asking their partners to put a condom on and society, as a whole needs to work on this.

For a year, the government has been providing nevirapine to pregnant women and the risk of transmission is reduced to 2 % if the women are taking the drugs. Children as well as their parents should be treated. For five years people have given interviews to the press. I can't image how many people are living with HIV virus and in fear. Since my announcement, people have been very positive and supportive.

What about his effect as a public figure? No one has tried to contact me. It is not about education but about love. There is misinformation about HIV/AIDS, which should be rectified by the media. We do not have figures of rape, which perhaps may tell us a lot about the rates of infections in women. It is different for a woman to disclose her status.

# DAY TWO

## SEXUAL OFFENCES

**Sheila Baguant**

**President, Shelter for Children and Women in Distress**

I am here today talking to you as a voluntary social worker, working with grassroots and needy people for the past thirty years. As I help to run a Shelter for Women and Children in Distress, I get the opportunity to come across different cases of sexual offences.

The shelter was set up in 1991 to provide temporary shelter free of charge to women and children who are victims of domestic violence and/other family conflicts/ victims of sexual offences with a place to stay on a temporary basis. We also provide assistance such as marriage counseling and legal advice. We believe that it is very important that our residents leave the shelter aware of their rights. We deal with residents having family, social and personal problems such as:

Physical abuse due to family violence and problems associated to alcoholism.

- Victims of broken families.
- Sexual abuse/incest/attempt upon chastity/harassment/rape/sodomy and other sexual offences.
- Conflicts between stepparents and children.
- Abandoned children.

The process of allowing new residents to adjust at the shelter is treated very delicately. Upon first arriving, the new resident is taken in charge by the staff and warden; he/she is given clothing, his/her own meal and assigned her own room. The children stay in a warm, family atmosphere and loving environment where they feel happy, loved, understood and listened to. Privacy and confidentiality are very important. The residents must feel at ease, secure and not judged.

To date there are 3100 women and children who have benefited from this project. The main aim of this paper is to alert this new generation of journalists that sexual offences are not only sensational but is rather a source of distress, pain and sorrow. It should not only be a taboo subject anymore and the basic legal concepts must be the concern, and must be within the knowledge of each and every one of us. With these overriding issues in mind, we can now start with the basics. I have noted with concern that inaccurate reporting of sexual offences far too often causes serious prejudice to the victims, their parents and their immediate family environment.

Naturally, there are different types of sexual offences. It can be rape, attempt at rape, attempt upon chastity, and intercourse with a girl under the age of 16, intercourse with a handicapped girl, marital rape, prostitution/child prostitution, sexual harassment at work and sodomy. I shall try to approach the subject in a very practical manner in order

to help you to appreciate the difficulties we face at the time a sexual offence is reported to our office. The first question that we have to ask ourselves is:

How old is the victim?

What is his/her profile, his/her family background and most important is the story he is relating to us, is it sufficiently credible not for us as social workers but in the eyes of the law? This is why I am forced to assume role of the lawyer at times.

In my view the law in this field do not answer the needs of alleged victims or even the accused.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is usually linked to the abuse of children by adults – often parents, stepfathers, or other relatives. Such acts are considered criminal offences, and the adult, if convinced, faces the possibility of imprisonment. In reality, however, those acts if ever brought to light, mostly result in probation with the stipulation that the offender seeks counseling. In addition, contact with the victim is forbidden for a specified period of time, at times indefinitely. Needless to say, when a parent or stepfather sexually abuses a child, the marriage is usually in serious jeopardy.

### **Rape**

The unlawful sexual intercourse by a man with a woman without the latter's consent. The prosecution beyond reasonable doubt must establish the following elements. Remember if there are some doubts, irrespective of how traumatic the experience of the victim may be, the accused would be acquitted. The act must be unlawful meaning that there must be intercourse without the victim's consent anything short of intercourse would allow the prosecution to charge the accused either with attempt upon chastity (which is commonly known as indecent assault or attempted rape).

### **Marital rape**

As a society, we have to acknowledge that rape in marriage does occur. Rape in marriage is an act of violence – an abuse of power by which a husband attempts to establish dominance and control over his wife. Research carried out in other countries has so far portrayed the husband-rapist as jealous, domineering individuals who feel a sense of entitlement to have sex with their property. Marital rape mostly occurs in relations characterized by other forms of violence. Marital rape is indeed just one extension of domestic violence.

### **Prostitution/child prostitution**

Any person who solicits or importunes another person in a public place for an immoral purpose commits an offence. Prostitution is becoming more and more industrialized and is taking new forms such as sex tourism and mail order brides. Prostitution remains the use of a woman's body as a commodity to be bought, sold or exchanged. Men who buy sex and bodies of women or young adolescents and children must be punished with impunity. The child is treated not only as a sexual object, the adult does not only sexually abuse him but also there is some remuneration in cash or in kind. It is, so to say, developing into a trade. It is poverty, in the largest sense of the word that pushes children into prostitution. Family disintegration, weakening of moral values and naturally the demand in the sex market are causes leading to this illness of society. The result of all these lead to threatening consequences on the children including, threat of

early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. These children are stigmatized as social outcasts with little chance of living a healthy childhood and a dignified life later.

### **Sexual harassment**

A person sexually harasses another person.

- The person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the person harassed,
- Engages in other unwelcome conduct of sexual nature in relation to the person harassed,
- Often at work the harassment emanates from colleagues of some grade, junior workers or clients.

Sexual harassment is a term defining an old problem. Women have suffered from unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment was considered as part of the usual behaviour that working women had to endure.

### **Recollection of events**

In Mauritius, the law has been amended to allow victims of sexual offences to give their testimony in camera that is, to give evidence in private. While we appreciate the initiative of the legislature, I believe this measure should be taken one step further; victims of sexual offences must be able to give their testimony via a live video link.

The victim has to undergo a cross examination which very often turns her into an accused. While the victims try to bury this sad, traumatic experience, they are forced to recollect an event that may have lasted for ten minutes or for over an hour. She has no choice but to answer the questions. The statements that victims of sexual offences give to the police are not admissible before the court of law on their own. The accused of sexual offences are sometimes tried five years after the alleged offences, meaning that the ordeal of the victims would not be over before this specified five-year period.

Journalists should deal with the following aspects when drafting their stories:

- Is there an offence in the first place?
- Was there consent or was there only submission?
- What barriers do we have to overcome in order to rehabilitate a girl who has been raped by her stepfather or a close relative of the family?

While we appreciate that the accused have rights, we should also recognize the psychological impact of these offences on young children. It is high time that we started talking about the rights of victims.

### **Effects of rape and other sexual offences**

It causes trauma, low self-esteem and self-respect. Those that are violated do not respect nor trust others and become aggressive, hyperactive and unco-operative. They have poor reasoning ability and a low attention span. Poor schooling history and school achievements have long lasting effects for the victims.

### **Recommendation**

New laws and enforcement mechanisms must be enacted and put in place to protect workers against sexual and other forms of harassment in all workplaces. Employers must be encouraged to develop a written policy concerning sexual harassment and

create an effective complaint or grievance procedure for employees and victims of sexual harassment.

### **Suggestions and preventive work**

We should create community awareness of the problem. Educate parents thereby creating parental responsibility prevention and rehabilitation. Prevention should begin in the family because parents have the most powerful influence on their children's development. Social welfare support services should be given. There should be creation of family therapy and a child guidance clinic. Schools should be involved in identifying child abuse. Children should be made aware of their rights so as to inform them of the various mechanisms that exist to protect them. Professionals should be trained to work with abused children and their families. Mauritius should develop foster care on a professional basis for children in need of care including those that are HIV positive and orphans of AIDS. Various actors can set up shelters and crisis centers, which will constitute a major source of potential support for the victims. All schools, colleges, universities must have a welfare section managed by a social worker, psychologist or doctor.

The reviewing and updating of criminal codes should not be the business of lawyers only. All those involved in counseling or rehabilitation of victims of sexual offences must sit together to address the issue of investigation of these crimes. Clear-cut procedures must be established and a time frame within which a case must be disposed of.

### **Representative of the Commissioner of Police**

From the law and the police perspective, government set the laws and the executive implements them and the judiciary adjudicates them. There is a substantive court procedure that is followed. There are also several sections of the law namely: rape, chastity, under age of 16, specified persons, sodomy and indecent assault. This act as guidance for police.

There are six police divisions. The divisions that deal with sexual intercourse with persons under age of 16 and the one that deals with chastity have the highest statistics. The highest rates are those under the age of 13 years then followed by the 13-18 age group. There are a number for the 18-40 year age group and very few statistics for the 40-80 age group. In 50 % of the above cases, the accused is a relative. It is either the boyfriend or the neighbour. These crimes are often committed by a person known to the victim. These incidents occur mostly near the beach or at home. Some take place in the sugar cane fields, which is mostly unoccupied land.

The police try to give special treatment to the victims of sexual violence because an intrusion into the victim has occurred. By the victim reporting the incident she is further victimized and traumatized because she has to relate this crime to a male police officer. This is known as a secondary victimization. Reporting a sexual offence is not like reporting a robbery whereby the police are called and arrive to help you. You give a statement and identify exhibits. When one's property is found, they are happy.

All the police officers are men and it is difficult for the victim to relate to them. The police normally ask the woman to produce the clothes she was wearing when the incident happened. After that they tell her to go for an examination. If the perpetrator is arrested the victim has to identify him. There is a need to deal with sexual offences in a different manner and approach. Our services exist but we need to train our police to take a more sensitive approach.

The family protection unit is in the Northern Division and we work with the Ministry of Domestic Violence and the intervention unit.

Police perception is repressive but they can't deal softly with hardened criminals. There has to be major changes in social psychology and police need to be trained in court procedures. Gender mainstreaming needs to take place within the police forces and stations. There are a few cases of battered men. Women commit fewer crimes and are less violent.

How do the police deal with vulnerable groups?

From the police perspective there is a wide range of mechanisms that we use. Police are aware of the factors and nature of vulnerability. The position of relative weakness is the greatest vulnerability. Slowly the police are moving towards change and are being trained. There are three types of vulnerability from our point of view:

- suspects and offenders have been found to be mentally vulnerable. This is important for police officers to know about mental disorders.
- Vulnerable witnesses that has learning disorders. In this case, children are the easy victims. It becomes difficult for the police to get evidence and the well being of the child is the main concern. This is where second injury occurs.
- Victims of crime are subjected to insensitive interviewing.

If we don't get the person in, they will commit crimes again. Feminist victimology says women are victimized and at times this hidden. Rape of women results in psychological trauma. Yet when men are assaulted, they lose their confidence and they are culturally socialized to be strong, but when they are socially assaulted, their strength is questioned.

Journalists are pressure groups that should constructively criticize. Relations of police and victims need to improve as well as the role of journalists. There should be support services readily available in police stations. Journalists should try to improve the perception of police. If the public sees horrific pictures, they are reluctant to come forward and view the police as part of the problem rather than the solution. The public should be able to trust in the police and be confident of their role in society.

## **Testimony of sexual offences survivor**

"Our father raped my sister and no one believed her. I went to a shelter while the case was being investigated and whole the whole family used to visit her and said it was not normal for her to stay at the shelter. Furthermore we did not believe her. When my sister turned eighteen, she got married. I was raped continually till the age of seven without saying anything. It was then that I thought of my sister. We often thought that two cases in the same family would not be accepted. We are human beings and most people that help us look at these cases from an intellectual point of view and from a psychological point. They want to know what happens in the future.

When a woman at forty cannot consummate her marriage, she feels like an object and her husband feels like raping like because she is not collaborating. I used to hate myself and I thought it was best that I should get a divorce. A shopkeeper sexually assaulted me when I was eleven. As a victim you keep this to yourself and you tackle it on your own and learn to live with it. Society likes to ask why we stay silent? The reason is that we don't talk about sex, more than that we have learned to be helpless. It is a chain because we try to run, we come back then ultimately we learn to stay silent and bear the assault. An experiment showed that human beings would learn to be helpless and let us to be abused. We are so conditioned that we do not believe when people want to help us.

Secondly, we don't often look like look like victims. We are often well dressed, manicured yet aggressive in a way. Why do we behave in a sexualized manner afterwards? It is because of the effects of abuse. Women who have been abused often let themselves be abused by more than one man

Why do they let themselves abused by more than one man? Experiment. Left home. Lock house. Not sure. Yes. Reach home- open, go inside all upside down. How feel? Do you feel abused? How many nights sleep peacefully. Become afraid. Imagine victim body invaded, not house, body, most sacred, private place.

Today, media not only inform but also educate. Start talking about rape, what is it, short and long-term effects. Encourage coming forward. Societal silence breeds silence in the victims. If they felt understood, they would come forward."

## **MEDIA REPORTING AND ETHICS**

Chair – Ms. Manda Boolell  
British Council

**Patricia Day**  
**Managing Director of CCL**  
**Chairperson for High Level Committee on Gender Responsive Budgeting**

### **Sex versus Gender**

Sex refers to the physical, biological difference between women and men

Gender refers to the expectations people have of someone because they are male or female

Gender is about:  
    roles  
    power  
    status

Gender is about unequal power relations

Rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence: the forms of gender violence that usually get attention in the media

Gender inequality and gender violence lead to increased vulnerability to poverty and economic abuse

### **The Extracts from the Mauritian Press**

#### *The headline*

*Réussite: Dans son entreprise, c'est elle qui porte la culotte*  
*Madame la chef d'entreprise: une révolution en jupons*

Success story: In her firm, she wears the trousers  
Madam, the MD: a revolution in petticoats

Blatantly sexist vocabulary that would be illegal under normal sex discrimination laws, such as in UK  
Diminishes the impact of the success as a business professional

#### *The Cartoons*

♦ *Fête de la femme* par Deven T

Le 8 mars!! Aujourd'hui, tu ne fais rien, ma chère! Pas d'lessive, pas de repassage, pas de ménage ... enfin rien!! Rien!!  
Faudra me lever tôt demain pour rattraper tout ça!!

8<sup>th</sup> March!! Today, you do nothing, my dear! No washing, no ironing, no housework ... nothing, nothing at all!!

I'll have to get up early tomorrow to catch up with all that!!

This cartoon is making fun of a common gender stereo-typing that is still prevalent in Mauritius

*Humour par S Benoît*

Mais ... d'habitude c'est moi qui tape!  
8 mars Journée internationale de la femme  
C'est pour te préparer à la future loi antidiscrimination!  
Hey ... I'm the one who usually does the hitting!  
8<sup>th</sup> March International Women's Day  
It's to get you ready for the coming anti-discrimination law!

This cartoon was published in the Sunday supplement of a major daily newspaper. Another example of gender stereotyping that reinforces the negative image of conflictual relations between men and women. This is all the more serious as the supplement will be seen by adults and children.

#### *Presentation of a Hindustani film*

The film 'Daman' is a serious film about marital rape. The comment in the TV magazine described the film as being *a film about the status of women that teaches men a lesson. But the tone is so serious and the violence is almost sadistic.* Either the writer had not seen the film and so did not know what s/he is talking about or if s/he had seen the film, s/he could not handle the fact that marital rape is so violent. In any case, this comment is misleading the reader, and diminishes the seriousness of the issue being portrayed. The film itself does justice to the issue.

#### **Overall Comment**

With such a degree of gender stereo-typing in the reporting of ordinary events and the presentation of TV films, how can we expect objective, sensitive handling of full-blown gender violence, such as rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence?

Just thirty years ago in Mauritius, married women could not be employed. Coming from the swinging sixties and through the pill in the United Kingdom this was a shock.

University opens doors for one and at times you could not get a job because you were more qualified than the Managing Director. This experience stayed with me and I now share it with the younger generation.

After thirty years there is still no progress. I have been involved with the UNDP and the Ministry of Women's Rights in preparation for the Beijing Conference. Women are seen only in high-level committees that are engendering the budget. Government says it is trying but people still say why bother because women constitute 51 % of the population and half of them are not fully educated. Unemployment is twice as high when compared to men. 60 % of the women do not have secondary education and are not aware of their basic rights. That is the reason they cannot address the violence issue. Gender is about roles, power, status and equality in treatment.

The media portrays this as the other way around. Rape, domestic violence sells gutter press and morbid curiosity. Women are the pivotal point of the family and they are the ones who transmit culture and religion. There are four big religions in this country and not a single one has women priests let alone talk about having them.

A French girl of sixteen years was raped at around 11 pm and the media said she asked for it because she was at the wrong place at the wrong time. The perpetrator is not condemned at all. There is gutter press and there is a press. The latter abides by the code of ethics and conduct and they are consistent with freedom. Their duty is to maintain the highest standards of public reporting.

### **Nashaud Ramolly Barrister-at-law**

I work on media ethics. I must say I was disappointed that mostly women turned up for this workshop because it is not a woman's issue.

Across Africa, we are witnessing the freeing of the airwaves. Uganda has 55 radio channels. Media technology is moving at a breathless pace- we are witnessing the industrialization of the media.

The gutter press won't disappear. The intellectual press won't disappear. But a more specialized press will appear one that is integrity centred.

Laws are not enough. We need Codes of Ethics. Sixty countries have a Code of Ethics, but Mauritius does not. This is where gender could come in.

**Maggie Maurel**  
**Advertising Agency**  
**Deputy Managing Director**

Better information can protect consumers. Advertising should reflect the evolving nature of women's places in society. Women should be portrayed in diverse activities and not confined to household duties. When I answer the phone at our office, I am always assumed to be the managing director's secretary not the MD.

The code of ethics should not denigrate women and use them as subjectives compared to men. It should stress the dignity of women even if they are housewives. It should represent them as sexual objects like you find in magazines where a bikini clad woman is advertising a car. If women are used in advertising, they should have a relationship with the product. We have to see some men advertising soap.

There are two adverts for telecomputers, email for a mobile with a woman wearing a bikini. The camera focuses on her breast. What is the relevance of this advert? The second shows crystal water and there are thousands who get one with half a breast. The public reacts. When women advertise cars they are given an awful script with no meaning. No one complains because men like it. If people don't complain then nothing is done. It shows the narrow mindedness of society. People react only if there is a complaint.

Another advert of a blonde woman in a swimsuit with a strap falling, no one reacted and when Guy saw it after two weeks, he was shocked and spoke to the President about it. Even he had not seen it. Cyclone removed that particular advert.

The code of ethics does not stand on its own; it has a set of procedures for reactions. Structures should be set in place to enforce such kinds of things. The Press Complaints Commission has done enough damage. Media is an industry with its own code of ethics. There are religious and socio-cultural norms and we have to deal with them. All journalists think they are working alone yet they work for an organisation, which has a code of ethics. At MBC if one's work is accurate then they do not attack anyone. Gender is not something that can offend.

The majority of some socio-cultural groups are extreme and how much voice is given to them? There is a strong civil society. Muslim Radio was established by Muslims themselves and was well organized and this goes to show that where there is strong civil society, a country moves better. Many non-governmental organisations have a strong code of conduct. They also have a social mandate in the upbringing of children. NGO's feel that there is no gender mainstreaming in the home that is why gender bias is reinforced. They argue that if the issue is not addressed at home then nothing will work. Media can play a large role in starting the process.

The way to address this issue is give a controversial topic the largest spectrum for criticism. If someone talks about something, get him or her on the programme and make everyone talking. The job of the media is to facilitate all views. At the same time it is the biggest enemy of women for it isolates them. Yet when women get together

they have common issues and this cuts across communities. There are different manifestations of the same problem. There is a need for strong lobby of the code of ethics.

Every sports programme has three quarters of male presenters while women fill the rest. Women directors should be asked to give their perspectives on business for they are running businesses not tea parties.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE VIOCELESS**

**Ms. Radha Gungaloo**  
**President of SOS Femme**

What is Domestic Violence? The definition adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) now widely used as a useful framework. "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private." UNIFEM has called it "a global epidemic that kills, tortures and maims – physically, psychologically, sexually and economically."

Domestic violence is an international problem. It affects a large number of women all over the world, in developed as well as developing countries. Women as women are battered, irrespective of age, social class, ethnicity, religion, and cultural or educational background. Most studies have shown that:

- the perpetrators of domestic violence are almost exclusively men.
- Women and girls are most at risk within the family, by intimate partners.
- Government institutions put in place to protect citizens too often blame the battered women and hold them responsible for the violence.

### **Types of violence**

Physical – kicking, pushing, pulling of hair, twisting of arms, breaking of limbs, burning, throwing acid and murder.

Psychological – insults, humiliation, swearing, derogatory remarks about one's physique, their family.

Sexual – marital rape, insertion of objects or vegetables into a woman's private parts, forcing a woman to perform certain sexual acts against her will or forcing her to watch pornographic films.

Economic violence – the taking and control of a woman's wages.

### **Why do women stay?**

They stay because they think it will get better. The cycle of violence continues in the form of violence-honeymoon-violence-honeymoon.

### **Extent of the problem**

The problem of domestic violence is widespread even in religious and cultural groups. Research has shown that women are not safe even after they leave their violent homes. Domestic violence is the least likely violent crime to be reported to the police. According to a British survey carried out in 2000, by the Home Office, on average a woman will be assaulted by her partner or ex partner thirty-five times before reporting it to the police. In 1993, the World Bank estimated that violence against women was a serious cause of death and incapacity among women of a reproductive age as compared to cancer and a greater cause of ill-health than traffic accidents and malaria combined. (World Bank, World Developmental Report 1993)

### **What are the causes?**

A combination of various factors: cultural, religious and economic. Beating up a woman to 'give her correction', a 'punishment' is condoned by cultural and traditional norms. In a British court, a judge ruled that a man was allowed to beat up his wife provided the stick was not thicker than his thumb. Under Section 242 of our penal code, a man gets away if he kills his wife *prise en flagrant delit d'adultere*. The real cause of domestic violence is the unequal power relationship that exists between men and women.

### **What are the effects of Domestic Violence?**

Domestic violence is a human rights issue, a health issue, an economic issue as well as a human rights issue. Lives of women are broken because they have to run away or are chased from their homes. They become depressed and suicidal. At times they are absent from work or have to change jobs because of bruises, broken limbs, oeil au beurre noir, etc. Domestic violence violates women's rights to life, safety and security. Landlords in Mauritius are reluctant to rent premises to women who live alone thus depriving them of housing. This is another factor that forces the women to go back to their abusive relationships.

Studies from the United States, Zimbabwe and Nicaragua show that women who have been physically or sexually assaulted use health services more than women with no history of violence. Children live in constant fear of being abused and are also depressed. Furthermore the children learn this abusive behaviour.

### **What has to be done?**

The law has to enforce the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, 1997. It is our responsibility to eliminate domestic violence because we are talking about women and children's lives. Feminist organisations from all over the world have been organizing, writing and lobbying for laws to take a more punitive action against perpetrators of domestic violence. These organisations have opened shelters and provide other services to survivors of domestic violence.

The media has a most important role to play. In her book *News Coverage of Violence Against Women: Engendering Blame*, Meyers Marian writes "The predominant problems

with news about violent crime against women – such as blaming the victim and reinforcing harmful cultural stereotypes and myths- lie not with individual journalists but with the social structures and values that deny male violence against women is a serious, systematic problem rooted in misogyny and patriarchy. By reflecting this cultural blindness, the news reinforces it—and thereby contributes to the perpetuation of violence against women.”

### **Domestic Violence Survivor’s testimony**

She is 31 years and her husband is a civil servant and a heavy drinker. They have two children. She always attempted to leave him but he always fetched at her parents home. She went back for the sake of her children and to try and save her marriage. On a few occasions her husband stopped drinking but he started going out with his friends and stayed out the whole night. When he came back, she gave him dinner, he then started insulting her parents, and he spit on her and pulled her hair. He also hit her with books. That is when he started abusing her again. It got worse and one night she ended up in hospital.

She got to know about SOS Femme from watching television. On the 24, her husband came home late, had dinner and started swearing and beating her. She could no longer stand it then she decided to take her two-year old son and run. She went to the hospital and then went to the police station. It was not easy, she was alone with a child at night with no policewoman to assist her. The policemen stared at her in her nightdress. Furthermore they doubted her and said she must forget what had happened. They told her to leave her child and run away alone. It was only after telling them where she worked that they started to listen. Her husband was arrested. She is still living with SOS Femme. She thought about committing suicide but thought of her son. This seemed like a movie for her. It was a real nightmare. On the 18 March, on her way to work, her husband followed her to the bus stop threatening to beat her up.

Fortunately SOS Femme helped her. Her son went to spend a week with his father and while he was asleep, her husband took him and left him at the side of the road and the son walked to the shelter carrying his bag of books. The son will stay with the mother until the court takes a decision. She says she has two options, either she returns to her husband and suffer for another fourteen years pretending that things will change for the better or divorce him and lead a life free from violence. She chose option two – a life free of violence though she is not educated and has no savings. If had chosen option one, she would have subjected herself to the will of her husband.

### **Second survivor**

Her husband used to burn her with cigarettes and candles and she would not go to work because of the scars. The man was not working but took all of her money and sold things from the house. He was always drunk and beat up the children to provoke her. She could not say anything for he was the man, the boss. After two years, she heard of SOS Femme and decided to run away though she was very scared. She took her children with. At SOS Femme, she found other women that were just like her. She stayed there for weeks and then her husband came looking for her. He promised to

change and she returned with him because of her children. The first day was okay but the second the husband started beating her saying she had left without his permission.

She went back to SOS Femme five times and on the fifth time, she was pregnant. Her husband came for her and the children. She returned home with him. He immediately started abusing her, beating her, saying she was a prostitute because she was pregnant. As a result of the beatings, she had a premature child and tried to commit suicide. She had a number of health complications. Her husband wanted to burn her and the children alive. When she gave him his food, he used to throw it back at her saying it was cold or he would force her to feed him. Her family did not want to hear anything about it for she had married this man.

She is now staying at SOS Femme and is happy. She says the organisation even celebrated her child's birthday. She says it is the first time in her life she has celebrated Christmas and New Year. Her children never went to school but SOS Femme organized applications for them to go to school. She says SOS Femme is her family now. Her husband still tries to convince to come back home and when she refuses, he insults her. He come with a knife and assaults her even though they have divorced. The husband insults the officers at SOS Femme as well and they have gone to the police who say there is nothing they can do because they do not know where he lives. Even on the day she made this testimony at the workshop, her husband was standing in front of Radha saying he wants to see her and the children. She has protection from SOS Femme but she cannot walk in the streets for her husband is continually harassing her.

## **DAY THREE**

During the day participants went off on field trips that led to the supplement carried by Le Express that accompanies this report. The panel discussion on the role of men took place in the afternoon.

### **THE ROLE OF MEN**

Gender violence starts with words, how you talk and write. Satish Boolell said that it was a system of hidden agendas with no statistics. Very often it is fuelled by alcohol and counseling is inadequate. There is a need for equalization of opportunities through the use of a gender desk. All three panelists agreed that the men need to be helped. They need to be treated right after the violence. Ibrahim Sheik argued that Creole is the most important way of reaching people. Civil education should impart life skills and parents must be taught how to teach their children. Men's group awareness programmes should also teach men how to think about women. Hotlines are important for helping women who are in need for they provide 24-hour family counseling service. The Chair of this panel suggested the provision of home based counseling service as well.

There were suggestions that the Ministry of SOS Femme work with the men groups. Women should have the courage to speak out thus ensuring the support of other people. Men can be good sources of fighting the violence.

## **DAY FOUR**

Writing, production and editing of stories.

## **DAY FIVE**

### **Way Forward**

President of Media Trust, Mr Finlay Salesse

Thanked Colleen Lowe Morna and Ruth Ayisi and congratulated Colleen on the designing of the course. Thanked all participants for all the interaction. There cannot be any workshop without participants and there cannot be a good workshop if participants are not interactive. They all have the access we must now see about the outcome.

A representative of the police was present and re-iterated her support to work with the journalists. Representatives of NGOs expressed their gratitude for having been taught (their words) on how to write articles.

The supplement is proof of the good work done and participants agreed that for the sake of vulnerable women this work must continue. Participants agreed to write two more articles to be published by 15<sup>th</sup> May before certificates are issued. Participants will be kept informed.

NGOs participants expressed worries of getting articles published. Loga promised to look into the matter. Their articles will therefore be sent to Loga.

Talked about the positive response of Editors' Lunch. First time that so many editors are present in a lunch and one of them even told his journalist to write regularly on gender issues. Due to pressure of work we did not choose a representative of participants to the lunch but Marie Annick kindly agreed to be present and to talk on behalf of all participants. She said how important it was to leave the office and to meet and discuss with other journalists. This is the only way to broaden the horizon and to learn.

Talked about radio programme. Talked about the interest of the 25 students who came on Thursday.

All participants agreed:

1. That an organisation be set up
  - (a) The name of the organisation will be discussed during the first meeting at the end of April.
  - (b) Mr. Naushad Ramolly will be asked to attend the first meeting and to help with the setting up of the organisation.
  - (c) NGO participants can bring their draft articles that will be vetted before publication.
  - (d) British Council and UNICEF will be kept informed of the work of this organisation and their help might be sought.
  - (e) To discuss a code of ethics that will be sent to editors.
  - (f) Organisation will be a media watch – an eye opener. Organisation wills other journalists on good reporting.
  - (g) Get resource persons to talk on important issues.
  - (h) Training is very important.

Meera Vayapooree spoke on behalf of the participants and thanked Colleen, Ruth and Loga on the fantastic job. Constable Mooniapa expressed the desire to be part of the gender and media watch to be formed in Mauritius.

## **ANNEX A: PARTICIPANTS**

### **Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (State controlled)**

**Ms Meera Vayapooree**, holder of a BA (Hons) from Sussex University and a Diploma in Broadcast Journalism from Wales, worked as a journalist for the past 11 years of which she two years in the United Kingdom. She is News Editor at the MBC television as well as part-time Lecturer in Mass Communication Studies at the University of Mauritius. She has attended journalism workshops both in Mauritius, England and Kenya. Contact details 674 0131, fax 675 7113, [mvayapooree@hotmail.com](mailto:mvayapooree@hotmail.com)

**Mr. Anand Boolaky**, the holder of a City & Guilds Certificate for Telecommunications Technician was Cameraman at the MBC before being appointed Technical Producer. Contact details 675 7110, fax 674 0488

### **Week-End**

**Ms Marie Geraldine Sabrina Quirin** who holds a Diploma in Journalism, a Certificate in Mass Communication and a Certificate in Public Relations was proof reader at L'Express before joining Week-End Scope and Week-End as journalist. She has 10 years experience in journalism. Contact details 208 7808, fax 208 7059, [reda@intnet.mu](mailto:reda@intnet.mu)

### **Le Mauricien**

**Mr. Nasseem Auckbarally** is well known journalist with 15 years experience. He is a general reporter. Contact details 208 7808, fax 208 7059, [ashnas@intnet.mu](mailto:ashnas@intnet.mu)

### **L'Express**

**Ms Joseph Marie-Annick Savripene** holds a Diploma in Journalism from "Ecole Superieure de Journalism" of Paris. She has followed several short courses on gender in Nairobi, the United States and Mauritius. She has been working for L'Express for the past 10 years responsible mainly for articles on social and gender issues. Contact details 202 8274, fax 208 8174, [sentinelle@intnet.mu](mailto:sentinelle@intnet.mu)

### **Le Defi Plus**

**Ms Annick Danielle Rivet** who holds a Diploma in Journalism and a Diploma in Mass Communication worked at the newspaper "Le Dimanche" writing mainly on social issues before joining the Defi Plus as journalist responsible for articles on education and news in general. Contact details 212 4820, fax 211 5173, [ledefi.plus@intnet.mu](mailto:ledefi.plus@intnet.mu)

**Ms Emma Ramsamy-Chelumbrum** who has attended courses in tourism and investigative journalism has been working as a journalist at Le Defi Plus for the past two years. Contact details 212 4820, fax 211 5173, [ledefi.plus@intnet.mu](mailto:ledefi.plus@intnet.mu)

## **5-Plus Dimanche**

**Ms Melhia Paulette Idania Bissiere** has been working for 5-Plus for the past two years. Contact details 454 3353, fax 454 3420, [5tele@intnet.mu](mailto:5tele@intnet.mu)

**Ms Marie-Christine Nadine Bernard** has been working for 5-Plus as a general reporter for the past two years. Contact details 454 3353, fax 454 3420, [5tele@intnet.mu](mailto:5tele@intnet.mu)

## **La Vie Catholique**

**Ms Daniele Babooram** holds certificates in general nursing, Mass Communication of the University of Mauritius, Media Management by the Nordic SADC Journalism Centre of Rhodes University. She also attended a training course in writing techniques at the Centre de Formation (Ecole des Metiers de L'Informations). She has been working at La Vie Catholique for the past 14 years. Contact details 242 0975, fax 242 3114, [stroumpfs@intnet.mu](mailto:stroumpfs@intnet.mu)

## **Government Officials and Non Governmental Organisations**

### Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare

**Ms Amreeta Aujayeb** who holds a Master in Clinical Psychology was part-time Lecturer at the University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Institute of Education. She was also Counsellor at Clavis Primary School and in a private practice. She is now Psychologist at the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and family Welfare. Contact details 240 1359, fax 240 7717, [amaujayeb@ifrace.com](mailto:amaujayeb@ifrace.com)

**Ms Christine Tan Hoo** joined the press in May 1996 working as a general reporter before joining the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation as sports news editor for both radio and television. She also acted as general reporter from time to time. She joined the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare in October 2001 as Adviser on information matters, she is responsible for press relations, release of information to the press. She also writes and edits speeches and interviews for the Minister. Contact details 256 7440, fax 240 7716, [kocachel@hotmail.com](mailto:kocachel@hotmail.com)

### Prime Minister's Office

**Ms Jayanty Rogbeer** worked as News Editor at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation for three years before joining the Government Information Service as Information Officer. She has written articles on arts, culture and gender in general.

**Mr. Lutchmeeparsad Ramdhun**, Information Officer, holds a Diploma in Journalism of the London School of Journalism and a Diploma in News Agency Journalism from New Delhi.

### **Mauritius Council of Social Services (MACOSS)**

(the umbrella organisation of NGOs)

**Ms Homa Mugapen** has a long experience in rural development projects and community development in the Republic of Congo, Burundi, Central Republic of Africa and Madagascar. She sits on a variety of committees dealing with social problems in Mauritius. From September 1996 to February 2002 she was on the air for a 20 minutes monthly programme on Family Development and Child Education. As Chairperson of the Communications Committee of Macoss, she is responsible for the monthly publication of MACOSS Info. Contact details 212 2179, fax 2111212, [cyhoma@intnet.mu](mailto:cyhoma@intnet.mu)

### **Association des Femmes Mauriciennes (AFM)**

**Ms Myriam Narainsamy** is the President of AFM and of the Mauritius Girls Guide Association. She is an active member of MACOSS and other NGOs. She sits on several non-governmental and governmental Committees and as such works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Rights, Family Welfare and Child Development. She attended quite a few workshops, seminars and conferences on gender both in Mauritius and internationally. She also attended the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women at Beijing as well as the post Beijing Conference. She has contributed to several reports on domestic violence, sexual harassment, the elderly, feminisation of poverty and women in politics. She also wrote a report on sexual harassment in public transport. Contact details 464 5616, fax 464 5616

### **SOS Femmes**

**Ms Ambal Jeanne**, worked as Executive Officer in the Government Service before joining the SOS Femmes as the Director of the Moka Centre. Contact details 433 3371, fax 466 0470, [sos.femme@intnet.mu](mailto:sos.femme@intnet.mu)

**Ms Cherieanne Savrimuthu-Carta** taught Psychology to adolescents in France before joining SOS Femmes as Project Coordinator. Contact details 467 9999, fax 466 0470, [c.nirmala@caramail.com](mailto:c.nirmala@caramail.com)

## **ANNEX B: RESOURCE PERSONS**

### **Gender Violence and Politics**

#### Chairperson

**Ms. Loga Virahsawmy**, short story writer, gender activist and freelance journalist writing mostly on social and gender issues. Loga forms part of the Communications Committee of MACOSS and contributes to MACOSS Info. She participated in the SADC Gender and Media Training Workshop on Covering Violence Against Women, which was run by Gender Links and now forms part in the network SADC Gender and Media. She also collaborated in the Southern Africa Gender in Media Handbook edited by Colleen Lowe Morna.

#### Presenters

**Ms Lindsey Collen**, author, women's rights activist, political activist and commentator, is the founder member and pioneer developer with others of a variety of community projects in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Seychelles, England and Mauritius. Participated in public forums, debates and symposiums in South Africa, the United States and Mauritius. She has a wide social and political experience in South Africa where she won the runner-up of the annual Witwatersrand University Best Speakers' Debate. She won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize and was long listed for Orange Prize for her novel "The Rape of Sita".

**Ms Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra**, Chairperson of Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation qualified as barrister-at-law in 1973. She has been an active Human Rights defender and feminist for the past 26 years and has co-founded several NGOs locally, in the African continent as well as in Europe and the United States. She was a member of the National Assembly for 15 years and Municipal Councillor and Mayor. She was the Attorney General (the first woman in the Commonwealth to occupy the post) and Minister for Women's Right and Family Affairs. She represented Mauritius as Ambassador to France, Italy, Spain and Portugal and was the permanent representative to UNESCO in 1995. While posted in Paris she chaired the political arm of the "Conseil Permanent de la Francophonie".

**Ms Sheilabai Bappoo**, who was Minister of Women and Family Welfare for 13 years is the most senior woman in the political arena with over 30 years experience. She is a great advocate of Women's Right and Human's Rights. She is the Vice-President of the Labour Party where she is also the President of the Women's Commission. She was Municipal Councillor and Deputy Mayor of the Town of Beau-Bassin/Rose Hill.

### **Sexual Discrimination Law**

**Ms Premila Patten**, Barrister, is the Adviser to the Ministry of Women's Rights Child Development and Family Welfare. She is the Chairperson of the Task Force on

Discrimination Laws against Women and member of the Executive committee of the African Centre for democracy and Human Rights Studies, Gambia.

## **HIV/AIDS and Mauritian Women**

**Ms. Nicolas Ritter**, President of PILS (Prevention Information et Lutte contre le SIDA) started to militate for AIDS sufferers since January 1996 when he was in Reunion before creating PILS in November 1996. PILS is the first NGO, which started a national crusade on HIV/AIDS. The first NGO to cater and to give support to HIV/AIDS sufferers started their first support group in January 1997 and in March 1997 a centre was created to welcome, inform and assist AIDS sufferers. In May 1999 a youth section of PILS was created. Nicolas has attended international conferences on HIV/AIDS in Africa, Geneva, South Africa, United States, Reunion, and Trinidad & Tobago. Nicolas won the hearts of all Mauritians when on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PILS he informed the whole Mauritian nation that he is an HIV positive. Nicolas is also well known for his major roles in musicals, plays and soaps.

## **Sexual Offences**

### Chairperson

Ms Satinder Ragobur, is an associate professor in Social Work Studies at the University of Mauritius. She worked as a Child Welfare organiser and an assistant research officer in India. She now teaches Social Work Practice, Social Work with Children, Ageing and Society and Social Services in Mauritius at undergraduate and postgraduate level at the University of Mauritius. She initiated, developed, coordinated and managed a variety of courses at the University. She has organised a wide variety of seminars and has presented papers at international and national seminars/conferences. Satin has provided her services to a NGOs, parastatal as well as government institutions. She is Chairperson as well as member of several Committees dealing mostly with vulnerable groups. In September 2001 Satin was awarded a medal for contribution to social services.

### Presenters

**Ms Sheela Baguant**, O.S.K, C.S.K, voluntary social worker and adult educator for the part 35 years, has always been working with grassroots and was involved in several projects. She is now the Chairperson of the Shelter for Women and Children in Distress Trust Fund, the Probation Home for Girls and the Women Self Help Association. She is a Board member of the Trust Fund for Integration of Vulnerable Groups. She has also been nominated by the President of the Republic to sit on the Board of the Prerogative for Mercy.

**Ms Amreetaa Aujayeb** is Psychologist at the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare. She was Counsellor at Clavis Primary School and in the private practice as well as part-time Lecturer at the University of Mauritius.

**Woman Police Corporal Doolaree Moonipah**, works for the Family Protection Unit of the Police Department. She followed a wide range of courses on Child Protection,

Domestic Violence and Human Rights. She is also a part time lecturer on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse at the Mauritius Institute of Education.

**Inspector Vijay Appadoo**, who is a qualified Barrister, works in the administrative section of the Police Headquarters. He has a broad experience in the police force and was in charge of part of a criminal branch. Mr. Appadoo is also part-time Lecturer at the School of Law and Management of the University of Mauritius.

### **Media Reporting and Ethics**

**Ms Patricia Day-Hookoomsing**, Fellow of the UK Institute of Supervision and Management, Council member of the Mauritian Institute of Management and Council member of the Association Mauricienne des Femmes Chef d'Entreprise, is the Chairperson of the High Level Committee on Engendering the Budget. She is the Managing Director of CCL Management Consultants, Mauritius. Her main fields of activity are customer service, communication skills, supervisory techniques, training of trainers and Business English. She also writes texts for corporate brochures and translates business documents from French to English. She has participated in several international Conferences in Madagascar, Reunion, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Africa and the United Kingdom where she has presented papers on the status of women in the Mauritian economy, women entrepreneurship and adult training in Mauritius.

**Mr. Naushad Ramolly**, Barrister practices mainly in the field of intellectual property law and media law. He is legal advisor in media law and his clients include media organisation. He is also part time Lecturer in Media Law and Ethics at the University of Mauritius. He was a freelance journalist and freelance radio producer and presenter at the MBC. He was the keynote speaker at the IFPI world Anti Piracy Enforcement Conference in Cape Town. Mr. Ramolly was awarded the Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship in 2001 and had the opportunity to work with various Head of organisations and as well as the Head of the Commonwealth.

**Ms Maggy Maurel**, the Secretary of AAA (Association of Advertising Agencies) is the Deputy Managing Director of Maurice Publicite. She has 24 years professional experience in the advertising industry both locally and internationally. She works in close collaboration with international advertising agencies.

### **Domestic Violence**

**Ms Radha Gungaloo**, barrister, tireless advocate of women's rights. She created SOS Femmes and is President of this first Non Governmental Organisation to give support and shelter to women in distress. Several of her articles and reports on gender issues have been published nationally and internationally. She has attended conferences, Seminars and Workshops both in Mauritius and overseas. She sits on several NGOs both regionally and internationally and is also the President of the Southern African Network on Violence Against Women and Children. She is short story writer and has published a collection of poems.

## **The Role of Men in Combatting Gender Violence**

### Chairperson

**Ms Audrey D'Hotman de Villiers** is the Counsellor at the Centre de Solidarite where she is in charge of the therapeutic programme for drug abuse as well as the training of staff. As School Counsellor, she counsels children, advises teachers, provides psychological training to teachers as well as mount, administer and monitor programmes. She has a broad experience in Family Therapy, Psychiatric Counselling, Camp Counsellor, and Child Life Intern in the Untied States.

### Presenters

**Father Gerard Sullivan** has been working in several Mauritian Parishes for the past 32 years. He is well known for his work with vulnerable children and adults through his various and regular radio, television and theatre programmes. He also presents and directs religious, cultural and social programmes on radio and television. He has produced and directed a wide variety of musicals and plays in Mauritian and in French. For the past 20 years to date, he has been working with couples on pre-marital and post-marital programmes.

**Mr. Ibrahim Sheik-Yousouf**, Managing Director of Pro-Medical Diagnostic Laboraty Servers, is the co-author of two medical papers published in England and in Oman. He has also written several articles in the local press on health matters. He is the Board member of several NGOs and is the Vice-President and Trainer of Befriender Mauritius, an NGO on suicide prevention. He has attended a wide range of seminars and conferences both nationally and internationally. He has also mounted monitored and coordinated programmes for couples.

**Dr. Satish Boolell**, Police Medical Officer has won two national distinctions, the OSK and the National Unity Award for his national contribution as a voluntary social worker. As President of MACOSS, he is responsible for quite a few social projects. He sits on the Board of the National Committee on Poverty, the President's Education Trust as well as several NGOs.

## **ANNEX C: EDITORS' LUNCH**

L'Express	Denis Ythier
Le Mauricien	Gilbert Ahnee
5 Plus Dimanche	Finlay Salesse
La Vie Catholique	Father Georges Cheong
Week End	Daniel Apave
Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation	Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra
SOS Femme	Ambal Jeanne
Rep of Participants	Marie Annick Savripene
Local Coordinator	Loga Virahsawmy
Facilitators	Ruth Ayisi Colleen Lowe Morna

## ANNEX D: PROGRAMME

TIME	EVENT	WHO INVOLVED	Remarks
<b>DAY ONE: Monday 25 March</b>			
8.30-9.00	Registration/Introductions and Icebreaker	Gender Links	
9.00-9.30	Opening	President Media Trust/President of the Republic of Mauritius	
9.30-10.00	Tea		
10.00-11.00	What is gender equality? Why is it important to the media	Gender Links	
11.00-12.00	Sharing of examples of coverage of gender violence in the Mauritian media	All participants Gender Links	All participants must bring examples
12.00-13.00	Coverage of gender violence in the SADC context	Gender Links	
13.00-14.00	LUNCH		
14.00-15.30	Gender violence and politics	Ms. Arianne Navarre, Minister of Women and Family Welfare, Ms. Sheila Bappoo and Ms. Shireen Aumeruddy Cziffra, Ex Ministers  Chair: Ms. Lindsay Collen	
15.30-15.45	TEA		
15.45-16.45	PANEL DISCUSSION Sexual Discrimination Law  HIV/AIDS and Mauritian Women	Ms. Premila Patten, Head of Task Force  Mr. Nicolas Ritter, President PILS	
<b>DAY TWO: TUESDAY 26 March</b>			
8.30-8.45	Eyes and ears; recap	facilitator	
8.45-9.00	Group discussions based on training manual	Facilitators	
9.00-10.00	PANEL DISCUSSION Sexual Offences	Rep of the Commissioner of Police, Rep of Ministry of Women, Ms. Sheila Baguant, President,	

		Shelter for children and Women in Distress  Chair: Ms. Satin Ragobur, Assoc. Prof. Univ. of Mts	
10.00-1030	TEA		
10.30-11.30	Media Reporting and Ethics	Ms. Patricia Day Hookoomsing, Managing Director, CCL Management Consultants Mr. Naushad Ramolly, Barrister-at-law Ms Maggie Maurel, of AAA  Chair: Ms. Manda Boolell, British Council	
11.30-12.00	Group discussions based on training manual	Facilitators	
12.00-13.00	LUNCH		
13.00-14.00	PANEL: Domestic violence and the voiceless	Ms. Radha Gungaloo, President, SOS Femme and two Survivors	
14.00-14.30	Tea		
14.30-15.00	Group discussion based on training manual	Facilitators	
15.00-16.00	Sexual harassment video	Gender Links	
<b>DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY 27 March</b>			
<b>TIME</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>WHO INVOLVED</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
8.30-8.45	Eyes and ears; recap	Facilitator	
8.45-9.15	Briefing on field exercises	Facilitators	
9.15-13.00	<u>FIELD EXERCISES</u>	facilitators	
9.15-10.30 10.30-12.45	Women Prison SOS Femme Shelter for Women and Children in Distress		
13.00-14.00	LUNCH		

14.00-15.30	PANEL: The role of men in combating gender violence	Father Gerard Sullivan Dr. Satish Boolell, President of MACOSS, Mr. Ibrahim Sheik Yousouf of Befrienders  Chair: Ms Audrey D'Hotman, Centre de Solidarite	
15.30-16.00	TEA		
16.00-16.30	Group discussion based on manual	Facilitators	
DAY FOUR: THURSDAY 28 March			
8.30-16.00	WRITING, PRODUCTION AND EDITING STORIES  (with tea and lunch breaks)	Facilitators	
DAY FIVE: FRIDAY 29 March			
8.30-8.45	Eyes and ears, recap	Facilitators	
8.45-10.45	Feedback on stories	facilitators	
10.45-11.45	Way Forward/Closure/Tea	President Media Trust/Gender Links	

## ANNEX F: EVALUATIONS

13 Evaluation forms were received. Participants made the following comments.

	<b><u>EXCELLENT</u></b>	<b><u>GOOD</u></b>	<b><u>FAIR</u></b>	<b><u>POOR</u></b>	<b><u>VERY POOR</u></b>
<b><u>1.PROGRAMME DESIGN</u></b>	8	5			
<b><u>2.PROGRAMME CONTENT</u></b>	8	4	1		
<b><u>3.FACILITATION</u></b>	7	6			
<b><u>4.GROUP WORK</u></b>	2	8	2	1	
<b><u>5.OUTPUTS vs. EXPECTATIONS</u></b>	5	8			
<b><u>6.LEARNING OPPORTUNITY</u></b>	6	6	1		
<b><u>7.NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY</u></b>	5	7		1	
<b><u>8.ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS</u></b>	5	8			

### **COMMENTS**

1. Which session did you find most useful? Why?
  - 1= Media reporting and ethics, it was relevant for the course itself.
  - 1= Sharing of examples of gender violence by Colleen. It showed bad coverage of gender violence.
  - 1= Women in Politics
  - 1= Domestic violence
  - 4= the testimony session of domestic violence survivors. It showed the practicality of domestic violence and that there is a high need for action.
  - 5= All sessions were useful.
  
2. Which session did you find least useful? Why?
  - 1= Sex Discrimination, there was not enough discussion on the Bill itself such as what are the benefits of society at large.
  - 4= The Role of Men was not focused enough. It had no constructive solutions to the problem of gender violence.
  - 8= None
  
3. Suggestions for follow up action.
  - Allocate more time for questions.
  - Invite more male participants so that they will encourage change.
  - Have a lobby or a pressure group that will help speed up the process of change.
  - Follow course to make us aware of the latest developments in the gender field.
  - Include more practical exercises in the training manual.
  - Invite those who are high on the press hierarchy.
  - Establish a watchdog organisation – gender watch to keep the momentum of advocacy.
  - There should be a local coordinator with whom participants can liaise.

4. Suggestions for making workshops of this nature more effective in future.
  - The days could be extended.
  - Panelists should know more about their subject and be prepared.
  - Invite police to talk about their work and to be more involved in workshops of this nature.
  - Men should be encouraged to debate on issues of gender.
  - Invite more journalists.
  
5. Suggestions for online training.
  - It will broaden our knowledge.
  - It is highly needed and Mauritian media should publicise so that other people that are interested can take part in it.
  - Include suggestions on writing style for non-journalists.
  - It must provide ways and means of being more sensitive when writing about gender violence.
  
6. Any other comments
  - Follow up workshops.
  - It was a great workshop for it encouraged the sharing of different views.

