GENDER POLITICS

AND

POLITICAL PARTIES

THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP) AND AN AGENDA FOR ENHANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

LINNETTE VASSELL

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Prepared in collaboration with
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean

DECEMBER 2013

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Preface

The preparation of this paper, facilitated by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES Jamaica) is linked to conversations which have been taking place within the People's National Party (PNP). It is an expression of the commitment of FES to support processes of democratization which have gender equality at their core. The paper seeks to place on the table the issue of transforming gender relations of power, which deeply impact the PNP's stated goal to enable "individual party members to collectively lead the party and country to growth and success".[1] Translated into action, the commitment to transform gender relations can shape the political climate and establish a new threshold in participatory governance to mark the Party's 75th Anniversary and guide Jamaica into the next 50 years of Independence.[2]

This paper is a work in progress, which began in early 2013, designed to support a conversation that has been taking place within the PNP, mainly through the initiative of the Women's Movement, on issues of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment in the country, and by implication in the Party. Within the scope of available data, the paper will:

1. Present gender-related information with specific reference to women's participation in decision-making in the country, the Parliamentary political process and in the Party itself;

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1. PNP – **People's National Party – Being the Best We Can Be!**
2. It is noteworthy that the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), following its massive loss at the polls in 2011, has been undertaking a review/assessment. The 51% Coalition – Women in Partnership for Development and Empowerment made submissions to the Review team on the national gender equality agenda. The findings of the review have not yet been made public and it will be interesting to see what the renewal process will say about transforming gender relations.

2. Enable the Party, beginning with the leadership of the Women's Movement in Region 6, to assess the barriers to women's participation in leadership and make proposals towards addressing these;

3. Use information from the 60th Anniversary in 1998 and election manifestos since 1997, to identify commitments on gender equality made by the PNP as Government, and as a political party. This will support the preparation of a 'scorecard' measuring performance against commitments made;

4. Make recommendations to advance gender equality, women's rights and empowerment consistent with the Progressive Agenda, and broader development imperatives, drawing on practices of political parties in other countries in this context.

Methodology and Limitations of the Study

The study has faced constraints of time and resources, including data. As a result, sources for the study have been limited to material available from the author's archives and a limited internet search by FES Jamaica. In addition, sources included interim research conducted by Region 6 of the PNP Women's Movement. This research included focus group discussions with female leaders in Montego Bay and Negril, which were held as part of on-going training and capacity building to enhance the Party's "equality agenda" as it moved towards its 75th Anniversary Conference.

Judith Wedderburn
Director
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean)
December 2013

Introduction:

Towards a Reform Agenda for the 75th Anniversary of the People's National Party

Increasingly, political parties are coming to see themselves as much more than machineries for winning elections. This vision is reflected in the affirmation by the People's National Party (PNP), now celebrating its 75th Anniversary, of a process of renewal by **"Being the Best We Can Be"**. This affirmation is reflected in commitments to:

- Transform ourselves

- Transform our relationships with each other

- Transform our roles in the party – making the principles of Participation, Accountability and Responsibility (PAR) work

- Transform the Party

- Transform the Country.[3]

This commitment to transformation at the personal, inter-personal/collective and party organisational levels brings life to the principles of (PAR), which are key pillars of the PNP's 2011 *Progressive Agenda*.

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Increasingly, political parties are coming to see themselves as much more than elections machineries.

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3. PNP – **People's National Party- Being the Best We Can Be!** A Joint Presentation of the Political Education, Communications and Policy Commissions, January 27, 2013.

The Party's commitment to transformation will be tested on the depth of its proposals for legal measures for political party reform. It will also be tested on its performance in securing gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment, as embodied in Vision 2030 and the National Policy on Gender Equality (NPGE). Vision 2030 clearly commits to ensuring equity in the various spheres of our society including our institutional structures and policies, focussing on areas such as our politics and labour market where gender inequalities are prominent". Specific strategies are identified, including "a multi-sectoral and integrated plan to transform structural barriers which impede greater involvement by women and the youth in representational politics and public and private sector decision making entities"; and "a protocol to promote gender equality in all levels and stages of the electoral process".[4]

The NPGE which has been agreed since March 2011 explains: "Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of all the socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards afforded by one's citizenship. Gender equity strives for the equalization of the life chances of women and men. The NPGE aims to shift national policy-making and implementation from a gender neutral position which presumes gender equality and equity, to a gender aware position which acknowledges that barriers exists which prevent equal access and thus creates inequality."[5]

The NPGE and Vision 2030 both reflect Jamaica's obligations under international treaties, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015) which are soon to be succeeded by a Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Over the years, the Jamaican State, as well as elections manifestos of the various political parties, have made numerous commitments to the Jamaican people about 'transformation'. In the case of the People's National Party, the preparation for its 75th Anniversary Conference saw a series of conversations being organized that were designed to enable stakeholder groups, within and outside the Party, to shape practical actions that will bring the principle of transformation more fully to life.

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4. Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009. *Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan*, p. 122–123.
5. Bureau of Women's Affairs (Gender Affairs), March 2011, *Jamaica National Policy for Gender Equality*, p. 6.

Jamaican Democracy and Women's Citizenship

What is the state of our democracy? Is Jamaica really a democratic country? The issue of democracy was the first matter raised with the leaders of the PNP Women's Movement at one of the afore-mentioned focus groups held in western Jamaica in June 2013.

The answers of the women leaders supported the consensus among the two main political parties in Jamaica, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP), and among citizens in general, that one of the country's main achievements in Independence since 1962 has been the maturing of the electoral system, widely seen as one of the pillars of democracy.

This achievement is marked by the building and strengthening of electoral institutions and systems. Progress has been scored in voter registration and identification, in the application of technology to the electoral process and the use of 'best practices' in 'free and fair' elections. This progress has evolved largely through collaboration between the two political parties, each of which has one seat each on the Electoral Commission of Jamaica (ECJ), formerly the Electoral Advisory Committee. The ECJ, including the Independent Commissioners, has managed the process of electoral reform. Importantly, the reform process has been anchored in the traditional ground work and commitment of women in both political parties.

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These achievements have contributed to the generally accepted view that 'democracy' has shaped Jamaica in Independence. Democracy is usually defined in terms of religious tolerance, open political debate, free and fair elections and the rule of law. Without a doubt, these are important achievements. However, there is also a consensus that the Westminster style of democracy has not adequately addressed the core issues of development and equitable distribution of resources, rights and access to participation for all citizens. These inadequacies affect the poorer classes in particular, but women, children and the elderly are the most affected. Fundamentally, women still do not access, on an equal basis with men, full citizenship rights such as access to resources, representation, participation, voice, leadership and personal autonomy.

For example, in relation to the economy there is a sharp difference in the life chances of women vis a vis men as indicated by the following:

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- Women comprise 43.2% of the labour force and are concentrated in the lowest paying sectors of the economy.

- Women in the labour force are more qualified than their male counterparts; the percentage of females with degrees (18.3%) is more than twice that of males (8.3%)[6].

- A little over half (53%) of the female labour force has no academic qualification, compared to nearly three-quarters (71%) of the male labour force. Yet the 2011 unemployment rate among females of 16.9% was almost twice the rate among males (9.4%). Females in the 14–24 age range have an unemployment rate of 33.6%, compared to 19.8% for males in the same age category.[7]

- Data from a 2010 Inter-American Development Bank study showed that females in the labour force although more qualified, on average earn some 12.5% less than males.[8]

- Female-headed households are larger and consume 17% less than male-headed households.[9]

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6. *2010–2011 Labour Force Survey* by STATIN.
7. *Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica* (ESSJ) 2008 by PIOJ.
8. Bellony, Annele; Alejandro Hoyos and Hugo Nupo, *Gender Earnings Gap in the Caribbean. Evidence from Barbados and Jamaica*, August 2010.
9. *Survey of Living Conditions* (SLC) 2009 by PIOJ.

- Women have lower levels of access to productive resources than men; for example, they occupy only 20% of agricultural lands and continue to face more challenges in accessing credit.

- Some 35.3% of rural households rely on untreated water sources[10], experience poor sanitation, and mainly women and children spend long hours and walk long distances to secure potable water.

Women's experience of citizenship is thus negatively affected by systemic discrimination, reflected in the issues raised above.

Understanding Gender

A part of the explanation for this lies in the force of patriarchy, a system which confers on men as a group, authority over women as a group, so that men gain the power to constrain the choices and life chances of women.

Ideas are therefore perpetuated which determine the way that males and females understand their roles, responsibilities and identity as men and women, boys and girls. That understanding shapes power relationships between and among women and men. Gender relations rooted in patriarchy embody the social meanings of sexual difference and these meanings are reflected in all areas of life – economic, socio-cultural and political.

Increasingly policy makers and politicians are coming to understand how gender relates to day to day decisions which can have different implications for women and men, because of their gender roles. Some gender issues in relation to access and usage of water illustrate this point:

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Gender and Water

The gender division of labour means that women are responsible for domestic tasks such as cooking, washing, cleaning and the care and health of children and the family. These activities are deeply affected by poor access to potable water and sanitation. Research shows that in some rural communities in Jamaica, women spend over two hours daily accessing water, often from untreated sources. This time consuming chore affects women's ability to seek, acquire and retain paid employment or to pursue other livelihoods. This problem also affects the health and security of women and girls in particular since rape and even death have occurred during efforts to access water and sanitation.

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10. Ibid

In order to yield sustainable development, policies, programmes and interventions on water and sanitation at national, local or community levels need to take into account the differential impact of these resources on the lives of women, men, boys and girls. This is fundamental to effective planning, management, delivery and sustainability of water resources. However, women are not adequately represented in decision-making in the relevant institutions at the community, national, regional or global levels.

Consider that the National Water Commission (NWC), which falls under the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, has a portfolio that touches the heart of sustainable development. The Board of Directors of the NWC is made up of nine (9) men and one woman; its management team has nine (9) male Vice Presidents and one female, an Acting Vice President (author's emphasis). What are the possible implications of this gross imbalance in the composition of this Board and its management of the water sector?

Gender and Politics

Extensive research on gender and politics, in Jamaica, the region and around the world, has shown that women's marginal position in decision-making persists. Tables 1 and 2 below show that in Jamaica:

- Over the course of 69 years of Universal Adult Suffrage, women's presence in the House of Representatives reached its highest point in 1997 when women representing the PNP and the JLP won 7 and 2 seats respectively, together gaining 15% of seats.

- The PNP has a history of implementing legislation to secure women's practical and strategic interests, has had women elected to the House of Representatives more often than the JLP, and has produced the first Female Prime Minister, all of which are commendable achievements.

> ▶ **In order to yield sustainable development, policies, programmes and interventions on water and sanitation at national, local or community levels need to take into account the differential impact of these resources on the lives of women, men, boys and girls. This is fundamental to effective planning, management, delivery and sustainability of water resources.**

Table 1: Male & Female Representation in the House of Representatives, 1944–2011

Year	Total	Male	Percent	Female	Percent
2011	63	55	87.3	8	12.7
2007	60	52	86.7	8	13.3
2002	60	53	88.3	7	11.7
1997	60	51	85.0	9	15.0
1993	60	54	90.0	6	10.0
1989	60	57	95.0	3	5.0
1983[11]	60	53	88.3	7	11.7
1980	60	54	90.0	6	10.0
1976	60	55	91.6	5	8.3
1972	53	51	96.3	2	4.0
1967	53	51	96.3	2	4.7
1962	45	44	98	1	2.0
1959	45	44	98	1	2.0
1955	32	31	97	1	3.0
1949	32	31	97	1	3.0
1944	32	31	97	1	3.0

Source: *Vision 2030 Jamaica, National Development Plan*, Gender Sector Plan, June 2009, p. 27, and Electoral Office of Jamaica. Green and orange shading represent electoral victories and governments led by the JLP and the PNP respectively.

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11. "Snap Election' by JLP was boycotted by the PNP and saw only JLP MPs in the Parliament.

Table 2:   Female MPs of the Jamaica Labour Party and People's National Party, 1944–2011

Election Year	Total MPs	Female	Percent Female	Females by Party
2011	63	8	12.7	**JLP** – 3: Olivia Grange, Shahine Robinson, Marisa Dalrympole-Philibert **PNP** – 5: Portia Simpson-Miller, Lisa Hanna, Denise Daley, Natalie Neita-Headley, Sharon Ffolkes-Abraham
2007	60	8	13.3	**JLP** – 3: Shahine Robinson, Marcia Dalrymple-Philibert, Olivia Grange **PNP** – 5: Portia L. Simpson, Maxine Henry-Wilson, Lisa R.S Hanna, Natalie Neita-Headley, Sharon M. Hay-Webster
2002	60	7	11.7	**JLP** – 3: Shahine Robinson, Verna Parchment, Olivia Grange **PNP** – 4: Portia Simpson, Maxine Henry-Wilson, Aloun Ndombet Assamba, Sharon M. Hay-Webster
1997	60	9	15.0	**JLP** – 2: Olivia Grange, Shahine Robinson **PNP** – 7: Alethia Barker, Doreen Chen, Jennifer Edwards, Sharon Haye-Webster, Phyllis Mitchell, Violet Nielson, Portia Simpson
1993	60	6	10.0	**JLP** – 1: Enid Bennett **PNP** – 5: Violet Neilson, Karlene Robertson, Heather Robinson, Portia Simpson, Marjorie Taylor.
1989	60	3	5.0	**JLP** – 1: Enid Bennett **PNP** – 2: Portia Simpson, Violet Neilson
1983	60	7	11.7	**JLP** – 7: Patricia Pink, Enid Bennett, Dr. Joan Chung, Dr. Mavis Gilmour, Joan Gordon-Webley, Hyacinth Knight, Princess Lawes **PNP** – 0: (Did not contest)
1980	60	6	10.0	**JLP** – 5: Enid Bennett, Joan Gordon, Mavis Gilmour, Princess Lawes, Euphemia Williams **PNP** – 1: Portia Simpson
1976	60	5	8.3	**JLP** – 2: Enid Bennett, Dr. Mavis Gilmour **PNP**-3: Carmen McGregor, Portia Simpson, Violet Thompson
1972	53	2	4.0	**JLP** – 1: Enid Bennett **PNP** – 1: Rose Leon
1967	53	2	4.0	**JLP** – 2: Enid Bennett, Esme Grant
1962	45	1	2.0	**PNP** – 1: Iris King
1959	45	1	2.0	**PNP** – 1: Iris King
1955	32	1	3.0	**JLP** – 1: Rose A Leon
1949	32	1	3.0	**JLP** – 1: Rose A Leon
1944	32	1	3.0	**JLP** – 1: Iris Collins

Source: Electoral Office of Jamaica and Trevor Munroe and Arnold Bertram, *Adult Suffrage and Political Administrations in Jamaica*, Ian Randle Publishers, Kingston, Miami, 2006.

- In the 1993 election, Mrs. Phyllis Mitchell of the PNP was first declared the winner of the North-East St. Catherine seat but was successfully challenged by Mr. Abe Dabdoub then of the Jamaica Labour Party through an election petition which he brought to the Courts.

- In the 2011 election, there were thirteen (13) female contestants for the JLP and the PNP had five. Three of the JLP female candidates were successful while all five (5) who contested for the PNP won their seats. The research is still to be done to show the frequency and placement of women by both parties. It must also be noted that in the parties, while winning is the key outcome, women's experiences and lessons learnt through exposure to the electoral process are not to be discounted.

Looking at the overall record of women's representation in governance through Parliament, in what ways, can the People's National Party be distinguished from the Jamaica Labour Party on the matter of women's representation? Systemic barriers operate with equal force in both political parties.

Party Women's Views on the Data

Women in the leadership of the PNP Women's Movement in Region 6 noted that while the PNP had a record of more women in Parliament than the JLP, the overall picture showed few women at that level. Participants were deeply concerned that regardless of party, women had made few strides in decision-making and leadership over the 69 years since 1944, including the past 15 years since the PNP's 60th anniversary in 1998.

Women and the Political Power Structure: The Parliament

Table 3 below gives important data on the position of women in political decision-making.

Over the 15 years between 1998 to 2013, there has been:

1. A 4.6% increase in the female composition of the Senate from 24% in 1998 to 28.6% in 2013 with the appointment of a 4th female Senator by Prime Minister Simpson Miller. This is the nearest Jamaica has come to the 30% target agreed by Commonwealth Ministers of Women's Affairs in 1995

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Participants were deeply concerned that regardless of party, women had made few strides in decision-making and leadership over the 69 years since 1944, including the past 15 years since the PNP's 60th anniversary in 1998.

and set out in the National Policy on Gender Equality. However, the 30% target is below the target for which civil society is advocating;[12]

2. An 8% increase in the number of females appointed to Cabinet (from 12% to 20%), secured under the leadership of Prime Minister Simpson-Miller. There has been much pressure about reducing Cabinet size;

3. There has been a 2% decrease in the proportion of women in the House of Representatives, from 15% in 1997/1998 to 12.7% in 2013.

Table 3: Participation of Males and Females in Parliament, Cabinet and Local Government, 1998 and 2013.

Positions	Men		Women	
	2013	1998	2013	1998
House of Representatives 60 MPs in 1998; 63 MPs in 2013	55 (87%)	52 (87.2%)	8 (12.7%)	8 (13%)
Senate 21 Members	15 (71.4%)	16 (76%)	6 (28.6%)	5 (24%)
Cabinet 17 Members in 1998 20 Members in 2013	16 (80%)	15 (88%)	4 (20%)	2 (12%)
Total (Parliament & Cabinet)[13]	86 (82.7%)	83 (84.7%)	18 (17.3%)	15 (15.3%)
Local Government	190 (83%)	173 (76.2%)	38 (17%)	54 (23.8%)

Sources: 1998 information compiled from the Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ). Data for 2013 also contributed by Region 6 of PNP Women's Movement.

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12. The 51% Coalition-Women in Partnership for Empowerment is advocating voluntary quotas of no less that 40% or more than 60% of either sex in decision-making.

13. Note 2013 shows a total of 104 leaders (86 men and 18 women) in all three spaces of power; 1998 had 98 leaders in the spaces (83 men and 15 women). Between 1998 and 2013, there was an increase of 3 positions at Cabinet level and 3 seats in the House of Representatives. Sources: 1998 information compiled from Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ) data. Data for 2013 data compiled by PNP Women's Movement Region 6.

These findings are consistent with research into female participation on Boards and Commissions over the same period. The 2007 study by the Women's Resource and Outreach Centre showed that women's participation in a selected number of Public Boards stood at 29% in 1998, moving to 33% by 2007. The study found that women's presence on Boards in the private sector moved from 14% to 16% over the same period.[14]

Local Government

In 2012, there were 227 Councillors in the Local Authorities of which women comprised 16.6% (Table 4). Research shows a declining trend as follows:

Table 4: Proportion of Women Elected to Local Government Seats, 2000–2012

Period	% of Female Councillors
2012	16.6
2007–2010	18.0
2003–2007	23.0
2000–2003	27.0

The situation of female representation in Local Government needs special consideration especially since the past 15 years have seen measures and processes for Local Government Reform. The reform process addressed many legislative and administrative matters but other core issues of citizens' partici-pation such as ensuring that their day-to-day needs are addressed and their participation in governance is assured, have not been substantially met. Preliminary research on gender in local government was done in the context of a reform agenda, but findings and recommendations have not been carried forward which ensure that the promised reforms are effective for both women and men.[15]

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14. Women's Resource and Outreach Centre, 2008, Gender and Governance: Implications for the Participation of Women on Boards and Commissions in Jamaica.
15. See Pansy Hamilton & Linnette Vassell, Draft Report to the National Advisory Council on Local Government Reform, *Gender and Governance in Local Government Reform*, February 2006.

Table 5: Women in National Parliaments Globally (Regional Averages)

	Single House or Lower House	Upper House or Senate	Both Houses Combined
Nordic countries	42.0%	–	–
Americas	24.2%	23.8%	24.4%
Europe – OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	24.6%	22.6%	24.2%
Europe – OSCE member countries excluding Nordic countries	23.8%	22.6%	22.9%
Sub-Saharan Africa	21.1%	18.7%	21.7%
Asia	19.1%	13.8%	18.5%
Arab States	17.8%	7.7%	15.9%
Pacific	13.1%	38.6.%	15.9%

Information as at November 1, 2013.

Women's under-representation in decision-making is a global phenomenon as Table 5 illustrates. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, data indicate that globally, women comprise 21.3% of both Houses of Parliament combined. In the Lower House, women make up 21.8% and in the Upper House, 19.1%.[16]

Gender Barriers Affecting Women in Politics

Research suggests that barriers to women's engagement in electoral politics and representation on political decision-making bodies include the following:

1. The identification and association of politics and the public sphere as a male domain;

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16. www.ipu.org//wmn-e/world.htm

2. Women's burden of care and family responsibilities;

3. Lack of public and family support systems;

4. Women's low level of confidence in their ability to undertake political leadership and decision-making;

5. Absence of systems for training and mentoring women for leadership;

6. Challenges for women to mobilise finances to run political campaigns, linked to their lower economic status and lack of support for their candidacy by power-brokers, traditionally males;

7. Male dominated party structures and systems of candidate selection that do not create a level playing field for male and female candidates, despite women's critical and predominant role in the organisational work of the party and in electoral campaigns.

Many of the barriers to women's political leadership were fashioned by and continue to be influenced by gender norms. These norms influence the structures and operations of political parties, which are responsible for recruiting, selecting and promoting candidates. Political parties are the main "gatekeepers" of the political system, and as such are a major force affecting women's struggle for equality in political decision-making.

Discussions were held with PNP Women's Movement (PNP/WM) members and other female party activists in workshops in Montego Bay and Negril on issues of gender and politics. They were asked to identify what they saw as barriers facing women from full participation in the political process.

▶ **Many of the barriers to women's political leadership were fashioned by and continue to be influenced by gender norms. These norms influence the structures and operations of political parties, which are responsible for recruiting, selecting and promoting candidates.**

Barriers to Women Moving Forward in Politics and Decision-Making: Opinions of the Leadership of the PNP WM in Region 6, June 2013[17]

What are the three (3) main barriers?[18]

The Region 6 leaders identified a number of barriers and identified the main ones as follows:

1. Party system and structure do not support women; absence of systems and measures for training and mentoring women; male-dominated party structure and systems for candidate selection which do not create a level playing field for women and men;

2. Lack of finance and 'backative';

3. Negative political culture and lack of integrity of the political culture and women have apprehensions about being associated with the political system.

Exploring more fully the nature of the 'structures and systems' and 'culture' within political parties, it is instructive to draw on the observations made by Maxine Henry-Wilson who served two terms in the House of Representatives (2002–2011). In commenting on her experiences at the 2003 Mona Academic Conference of the Centre (now Institute) for Gender and Development Studies, Henry-Wilson said that for the general elections of 2002, there had been a decrease in the number of women seeking candidacy through the PNP. She explained this was "due to the vicissitudes of representational politics" as well as a "deeper cause":

> "In selecting women to be representatives, nothing really changed in the body politics, nor in the selection process, in the criteria that were used, in the way in which campaigning was done, and most importantly in the kind of supports that women received in becoming representatives. The situation with our women was not unique in that respect; men will echo a similar call for better supports to carry out their tasks effectively.

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**Party system and structure do not support women; absence of systems and measures for training and mentoring women; male-dominated party structure and systems for candidate selection which do not create a level
playing field for women and men**

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17. Workshops: Saturday June 29, 2013, Montego Bay and Sunday June 30, 2013, Negril.
18. See Appendix 1 for a full list of barriers that participants identified.

In the case of women, I think there were some very basic things. The conduct of politics is very male in its orientation. For example, most of it is done on a Sunday. Women's domestic lives invariably suffer while they are attending to political matters on a Sunday. The campaign trail is extremely rigorous almost to the point of being dangerous . . . the norms of the campaign trail sometimes embody experiences and behaviours that are not seen as 'feminine'. These factors work against women who can be defamed as being 'loose'."[19]

The leaders of PNP WM in Region 6 also raised issues relating to how structures operate and the culture of campaigning, specifically 'rum-bar politics'. The use of money to buy influence and votes were related matters that they identified as needing to be changed. They echoed sentiments expressed by Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller who has been active in electoral politics since 1974:

"For women, it is not very easy in politics. For one, you do not have the money and financial support. The men will get their friends to do fundraising; it's more difficult for women. It is even easier for me, because while I am married, my husband is very understanding and supportive. But for a woman with children, it is very tough and I believe this is perhaps why we do not attract more women to be engaged in the political arena because of these challenges".[20]

The PNP WM Region 6 leaders in Negril made specific recommendations for transforming the political culture:

1. Foster a culture of encouragement and acceptance of women in leadership and of the principles, values and practice of gender equality;

2. Insist on and institute a policy of "no vote buying" in and by the Party.

3. Implement measures to ensure that Party bodies operate by and live up to the standards established by the Party.

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The leaders of PNP WM in Region 6 also raised issues relating to how structures operate and the culture of campaigning, specifically 'rum-bar politics'. The use of money to buy influence and votes were related matters that they identified as needing to be changed.

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19. Maxine Henry-Wilson, "Governance, Leadership and Decision-making prospects for Caribbean Women", in *Gender in the 21st Century: Caribbean Perspectives, Vision and Possibilities*, (Edited by Barbara Bailey and Elsa Leo-Rhynie), Ian Randle Publishers, 2004, pp. 587–591.
20. Dalea Bean, "Born to Serve: The Political Life of the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller", in *Women in Caribbean Politics,* Editor, Cynthia Barrow-Giles, Ian Randle Publishers, 2011, pp. 158–167.

4. Review the selection process for candidates.[21] This suggestion was in the context of a case in which it was alleged that a female candidate who was selected to run, was later advised, without any formal explanation, that she was no longer the candidate.

Given these structural and cultural barriers, the women leaders responded enthusiastically to a proposal raised by the participants themselves in the course of discussions to mark the 40th Anniversary of the PNPWM, that there should be affirmative action to ensure that women make up 40 per cent of decision-makers in the Party. This idea was seen as a fitting framework for the evolution of the Party beyond its 75th Anniversary. The way forward could be informed by a review of the commitments made 15 years ago on the occasion of' the Party's 60th anniversary.

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Given these structural and cultural barriers, the women leaders responded enthusiastically to a proposal raised by the participants themselves . . . that there should be affirmative action to ensure that women make up 40 per cent of decision-makers in the Party.

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21. Although it was understood that the Party Leader should have the final say in selection (especially where there might be issues that the Party in general does not know of), there was a view that the process should be reviewed especially where constituencies and divisions are recognised, to ensure that women are given a fair chance, and to remove obstacles created by male networks that can operate against women.

Looking Back to the 60th to Move Forward from the 75th Anniversary of the PNP

Fifteen years ago in 1998, the PNP celebrated its 60th anniversary with a week of activities under the theme *"Sixty Glorious Years . . . and Beyond"*. Celebrations included the re-enactment of the launch of the Party in 1938, a symposium on 'Progressive Politics in the Globalized Economic Environment' and a three-day annual conference from 17–20 September. These events came on the heels of the "unprecedented third-term" won in 1997 by the PNP under the leadership of then Prime Minister and Party Leader Percival James Patterson. Buoyed by this victory, the Party saw itself as specially charged to carry the nation into the 21st century.[22] This was a time of challenges in the global economic environment and seen as a fitting juncture for the Party to engage in internal reflection. In this vein, Region 3 of the PNP tabled a position paper at the conference on a wide range of issues, including the Party's internal life.

At the conference itself, presentations were made by a number of University of the West Indies (UWI) based academics. Dr. Clive Thomas addressed the prospects of the local economy in the context of globalisation and Dr. Norman Girvan spoke to how the political philosophy of democratic social-

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22. The theme of the 1997 Party Manifesto was "For a Better Quality of Life . . . in the New Millennium".

ism would respond to the forces of globalisation. The Party seemed to be grappling to find a balance or to construct a bridge between its people-centred radicalism of the 1970s and what were seen as the political imperatives of market forces of the 1990s.

The issue of political practice was raised by politician Arnold Bertram during the discussion around a presentation, "A Progressive Agenda for State Governance" led by Trevor Munroe UWI political scientist. In speaking on this issue, the PNP leader P.J. Patterson asserted that progressive political parties would be judged "not by their rhetoric but more so by the measures to eradicate poverty". He cautioned that "progressive politics never permits stagnancy. It requires constant renewal of ideas and revitalisation of action".[23] While the direction and quality of this renewal and revitalisation were not specifically stated, they seemed to point to a seeking of new directions into the new century.

Some discussion of gender issues took place on a panel examining the role of interest groups such as labour, women, youth and civil society. UWI academic Allison Anderson posited that models of leadership based on the more consensus-oriented and collective visioning approach associated with women leaders, would add value to decision-making. She proposed that a study be done of how women had poised themselves in and for development, so that appropriate strategies could be developed to deepen their engagement.[24]

Looking at the party itself in light of her comments reveal that there was indeed much room for reform and transformation.

Representation in Internal Party Organs, 1998

For example, 1998 data on the sex composition of the four internal Party organs as revealed in Table 6 below show that of the 46 members, males held 71.7% and females 28.3% of positions.

Women's marginal position in decision-making is perhaps best reflected in the Economic and Planning Commission, the body that would lay the framework for the economic policy to guide the Party and eventually the Government. Women were similarly under-represented in the Candidates'

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23. Rt. Hon. P. J. Patterson, Symposium on "Progressive Politics in the Globalized Economic Environment", September 17, 1998. Jamaica Conference Centre.
24. Allison Anderson in "Sixty Glorious Years and Beyond". People's National Party, 1998.

Table: 6. Composition of PNP's Internal Party Organs, 1998

Party Organ	Number of Males	Number of Females	Percentage Females	Total Number – Males & Females
Candidates' Selection & Appeals Panel (1998 Local Government Elections)	4	1	20	5
Economic and Planning Commission	8	1	11	9
Policy Studies Review and Monitoring	13	7	35	20
External Affairs Commission	8	4	33	12
Total	**33**	**13**	**28**	**46**

Source: Compiled from data in "Sixty Glorious Years " and Beyond: PNP 60th Anniversary 1938–1998.

Selection and Appeals Panel. This panel is another influential body that would lock or 'fly the gate' for aspirants seeking to represent the Party in elections, once they had passed the initial selection process. The barriers encountered at this initial stage, according to anecdotal evidence, included the force of power and linkages 'on the ground' among the influential male leaders and their networks.

The place of women in decision-making is also reflected in the composition of its National Executive Committee (NEC), the main policy making body outside of the National Conference. Table 7 shows that in 1998 women held only 22.4% of seats, though acknowledged as the majority and the most dedicated activists and steady workers within the Party.

▶ **Women's marginal position in decision-making is perhaps best reflected in the Economic and Planning Commission, the body that would lay the framework for the economic policy to guide the Party and eventually the Government.**

Table 7: Composition of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the PNP, 1998

Area	Total Members	Number of Males	Percent Males	Number of Females	Percent Females
Region 1	17	12	70.6	5	29.4
Region 2	23	18	78.3	5	21.7
Region 3	49	36	73.5	13	26.5
Region 4	45	37	82.3	8	17.7
Region 5	27	21	77.7	6	22.3
Region 6	30	25	83.3	5	16.7
Executive	49	39	79.6	10	20.4
Women's Movement	6	–	–	6	100.0
PNP Youth Organisation	6	6	100.0	–	–
Senators	4	3	75.0	1	25.0
Life Members	14	11	78.6	3	21.4
National Workers Union	11	10	90.9	1	9.1
Total	**281**	**218**	**77.6**	**63**	**22.4**

Source: Compiled from data in "Sixty Glorious Years" and Beyond: PNP 60th Anniversary, 1938–1998.

Four of the Party organs sent 80% to 100% male delegates to the NEC. It is noteworthy that the workers' delegates were 91% male, while the youth arm did not have one female delegate (author's emphasis). The limited opportunities for women to participate in the NEC were reflective of a wider marginali-

sation of women from leadership in the political parties.[25] The 1997–1998 data also show that of the 49 members of the PNP's Executive, 79.6% were male, 20.4% were female. So while women were in the majority at the Conference, they were not equitably represented in the decision-making structures of the Party.

On order to present a comparative assessment, efforts were being made to collate the data for 2012 but the task was not completed. Indicative data show that at the annual conference, the highest decision-making body, women comprised some 60% of delegates and came to hold 20% of seats on the National Executive Council, NEC.[26]

Concerns and Commitment to Gender Equity in Leadership, 1998

The position paper tabled by Region 3 at the 1998 Conference to which reference has already been made addressed the issue of women's leadership directly:

> "The imbalance of females in the leadership of our party at all levels is totally unacceptable, particularly in light of women constituting the majority of election workers and members in the party. The issue must be addressed and the region remains committed to establishing gender equity at the second tier leadership level of the party".[27]

It is not clear what steps were taken to carry forward these concerns into concrete action either by the region or other by women as a special interest group in the PNP/WM.

Concerns of the PNP Women's Movement

The PNP Women's Movement raised a number of issues at the 60th Anniversary Conference as follows:

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25. See Linnette Vassell (2000), "Power, Governance and the Structure of Opportunity for Women in Decision Making in Jamaica", in *The Construction of Gender Development Indicators for Jamaica*, Sector Studies, PIOJ/UNDP/CIDA. Editor, Patricia Mohammed, pp. 83–95. The Vassell study showed that in the Jamaica Labour Party, women were 17% of the Central Executive and 19% of members of the Standing Committee. The National Democratic Movement then had 24% females and 16% on the National Council and the Executive Council, respectively.
26. Region 6, 2012. Gender and Leadership in the PNP, Incomplete.
27. "Gender Equity": *Region Three's Position Paper to the PNP's 60th Annual Conference.*

1. Absence of funds to do its work and reliance on external sources;

2. Absence of "structured integration of the Women's Movement into Party programmes and activities, despite submitting names for Commissions, only a few advise members of meetings, times, venues";

3. Women's Movement not asked to make recommendations to any Board. "We believe that these Boards take decisions that impact women, and therefore our ideas and opinions should be represented";

4. Failure of the Movement to increase its membership in any appreciable way to activate and maintain existing units;

5. The "extremely large number of our members, including those in leadership level who are unemployed", and have not been assisted by their constituency into self-employment;

6. That women are the first to lose their jobs through redundancy in either the private or public sector;

7. Fewer women are being employed than men, despite "the outstanding achievement of women in educational institutions";

8. Absence of implementation of the report of the Gender Commission[28];

9. The removal from the legislative agenda of the Incest Law, the Offences Against the Person Act and the Family Property Act;

10. That "women are still being battered in their homes, and that the law seems unable or unwilling to protect them."[29]

The Women's Movement, responding perhaps to the cynicism that often accompanies the call for gender justice, assured the 1998 Conference that women were not being "hysterical or sectoral", but wanted to ensure that half of the population was not ignored "because they are women". The Women's Movement affirmed that it would continue to work towards the "acceptance that Women's Rights are Human Rights" and that "the marginalisation of women will result in the continued marginalization of the majority". An appeal was made for assistance from Members of Parliament.

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28. It would be important to see this Gender Commission report and to assess it's implementation.
29. "The PNP Women's Movement", in *Sixty Glorious Years and Beyond.*

Children in Lock-Ups: the 1998 Resolution

A resolution moved by Marjorie Taylor and seconded by Maxine Henry-Wilson was brought to the 1998 Conference and was to have been tabled before the NEC. It called for the fundamental rights and freedoms of children to be included in an expanded Bill of Rights in an updated Jamaican Constitution, and resolved that a child:

> 'should not be detained except as a measure of last resort, and in such a case, only for the shortest appropriate time and kept separately from detained persons over 14 years of age; should be treated in a manner and kept in conditions that take account of the child's age.'

It is not clear whether the PNP/WM had any hand in this resolution. Given that the issue is still unresolved and pressing, tracking this issue could yield important lessons on governance within and from the Party to the Government and the State. The process of completing a 'score card' on the Party's performance on gender equity issues as set out by the Women's Movement in 1998 and in the Party's subsequent elections manifestos could yield interesting insights for moving forward on the gender agenda. In this process, it would be instructive to include an analysis of the gender composition of four critical internal organs of the Party in 2012.

Table 8:   Gender and Leadership in the People's National Party (PNP), 2012

Organs	Total	Women	Percent	Men	Percent
Annual Conference (public session)	31,500*	18,900*	60*	12,600*	40*
National Executive Council (NEC)	293	60	20	233	80
Executive Committee	58	13	22	45	78
Officers	14	2	14	12	86

*Estimated participation at the 2012 Annual Conference.

Some 2013 Issues from Female Leaders

The matter of the Party's accountability to its female members, as well as to the wider community of women and men, is at the heart of the discussions with female leaders on the barriers to leadership which face women. It is a strongly held view that more women in decision making will increase attention to issues that are of particular concern to women and to the welfare of their children and families. Female leaders at the Negril meeting identified some key concerns that they would wish to take to the forthcoming Women's Movement Annual Conference and/or PNP Annual Conference:[30]

Issue 1: The high unemployment among women. The projects expected to employ many women had not come off the ground.

Proposal: Implement special measures to create opportunities to reduce unemployment among women. Reserve a certain percentage in every project for young unemployed women in order to respond to fact that unemployment among women is twice that among men, and women are responsible for nearly 50% of households.

Issue 2: In the annual budget, no special sum is put aside to deal with women's issues yet women face several systemic gender barriers.

Proposal: Implement gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that the national budget addresses in a targeted way, particular gender issues facing women and men.

Issue 3: Mature women are subjected to age-discrimination. For example, in recruitment for employment, women over 50 years are pushed aside. This violates their right to access jobs. Reference was made to the recruitment process used by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for overseas workers. The fear of onset of lifestyle diseases is used to discriminate against older women.

Proposal: This concern should be addressed immediately by the Party and Government and remedies put in place.

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30. This question was not raised in specific terms in Montego Bay.

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It is a strongly held view that more women in decision making will increase attention to issues that are of particular concern to women and to the welfare of their children and families.

Lessons of the Past, Questions to Shape the Future

Female leaders in the focus groups were encouraged by the Party's track record of advancing the rights of women. They knew about the Maternity Leave Law of 1979 and many had heard of other social legislation around workers' rights and children's rights. This gave them a sense of confidence in past progress.

Reflecting on the period of the 1970s which is viewed as a highpoint in the PNP Women's Movement (PNPWM), several issues and questions were raised.

The Identity of the PNP Women's Movement Then and Now

Founded in July 1973, the PNP Women's Movement evolved from being an 'auxiliary' to the PNP, to seeking in 1977, to build its identity as an 'independent' grouping within the Party with progressive leadership that addressed a wide range of issues facing women. Beverley Manley, now Beverley Duncan, PNPWM President in the 1970s reflecting in 1987, on how to push for gender equality and women's rights, stated: "Most importantly, we need to recognise the importance of organising women as an independent lobby or pressure group capable of transforming itself into an agency for fundamental change".[31] At that time, a certain ideological clarity linked women's struggle

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31. Beverley Manley, "Politics and the State: Male Political Leadership – Female Political Participation", Women and Development Studies, UWI, Mona, First Inter-disciplinary Seminar , 8–9 June 1987, p. 12.

against oppression and discrimination with what the self-identified democratic-socialist state sought to achieve.

The question was asked: how does the Women's Movement see itself today? How does the PNP Women's Movement define its mission and goal? To what extent can one now speak of a broader women's movement in Jamaica?

There was not much feedback on this question, but persons spoke about the problems of leadership in what is seen as a very challenging time in the society.

The appeal to leadership had been one of the central messages of Prime Minister and PNP Leader Michael Manley when, in 1978, he addressed the annual conference of the PNP Women's Movement and had made a call for clarity and boldness of leadership:

> "It is a time when we have to deal seriously within our own Movement with the most careful attention to the democratisation of our Movement, to ensure that we ourselves are an example of a working democracy in the People's National Party. All these things take effort, and care and discipline".[32]

Thirty five years later, the appeal seems as relevant as ever.

What can be learnt from how the Movement did its work then, back in the 1970s?

Building partnerships with women outside the PNP was a key strategy, it was stated. For example, the PNP WM's formal collaboration with the Committee of Women for Progress (CWP), linked to the Marxist Workers' Party of Jamaica, was pivotal in securing maternity leave, and in building a progressive women's movement with the broad support of many women's organizations.

The Movement's collaboration with the Joint Committee for Women's Rights (JCWR) in 1978 strengthened advocacy around the high prices of food. This Committee advocated for stronger government pricing policy and for price inspectors, who would work with the Prices Commission to ensure that food prices were regulated.

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32. "Main Address by Prime Minister Hon. Michael Manley at the Public Session of the PNP Women's Movement, Ward Theatre, July 16, 1978, in "The Report on the 5th Annual Conference of the PNP Women's Movement, July 14–17, 1978".

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Another question: What is the relationship today of the PNP Women's Movement with other women's groups? What factors shape these relationships?

No answers were put forward, only more questions.

With the configuration and operation of leadership in the present period, to what extent do women in the PNP at all levels have the boldness, freedom and discipline to join the lobby for women's rights, to strengthen it inside and outside the Party? How are women's rights understood today?

Question: how real is the "male back-lash?"

A number of anecdotes were narrated by women who said that while there were without a doubt, men who were supportive of deeper participation of women in decision-making, there was in many instances strong resistance to women becoming politically active. Instances were cited of women having to 'put down their feet' to leave home to attend meetings when their spouses had strong objections. More broadly, it was felt that women's talk about rights has induced a certain aggressiveness from men and defensiveness among women, and a level of retreat in the women's rights' struggle. Much of this back-lash is linked to men's fear of *"losing control over their women and of generally having less collective power in a society, where women would gain access to positions and roles which were previously the exclusive domain of men"*[33].

To what extent is the back-lash showing itself in the current reality of PNP Party life and relations? Can the country, poised between a treacherous abyss on one hand, and a high mountain ridge on the other,[34] be led into realising a positive outcome by any party and government, if the epochal task of building a partnership in leadership between men and women is not embraced and vigorously pursued?

Moving towards gender equality requires a huge effort and the PNP has proposed many resolutions for renewal and transformation of the society and

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33. Nira Yuval-Davis (1997), *Gender and Nation*, Sage Publications, pp. 121–122.
34. This image of Jamaica poised between the abyss and the high mountain comes from a paper by Keith Miller, "A Great 'Patriotic' Enterprise", presented at the SALISES 50/50 Conference in August 2012.

economy. The words of Michael Manley in 1978 (quoted above) resonate with those of P.J. Patterson in 1998 and find expression in *The Progressive Agenda . . . statement of principles, policies and pathways for the twenty-first century'*, under Portia Simpson Miller launched in 2011. The Progressive Agenda grounds the Party in the principles of PAR – Participation Accountability and Responsibility[35] and commits it to embrace "the challenge of inequality of persons". The actions needed to realize this Agenda will also propel positive actions on the gender equality agenda.[36]. This direction will require authentic dialogue between women and men, between women and women, and men with men across the generations. Collective commitment to actions that will bring positive outcomes for all is what will be needed to reconfigure and rebuild relationships in the family, community, political party and nation. At the heart of moving this large agenda forward, the women in the conversations affirmed a commitment by the political party to seriously pursue its own reform and transformation.

▶ **Moving towards gender equality requires a huge effort and the PNP has proposed many resolutions for renewal and transformation of the society and economy.**

35. PNP, "A Progressive Agenda for Jamaica" . . . A Statement of principles, policies and pathways for the twenty-first century". This established Participation, Accountability and Responsibility as the "hub" of the pillars of the Agenda and the "hallmark of "the modern governance system".
36. Ibid, p. 34.

Issues for Consideration and Recommendations

The overarching recommendation to the PNP, in light of its stated commitment to recognize women's rights as human rights, is to build on current initiatives and implement an integrated, coherent and sustainable agenda that will increase women's leadership and decision-making in the Party and the country as a whole. This will require measures in relation to:

- Statutes and Internal Party Re-organisation
- Recruitment and Training
- Electoral System Reform
- Financing for the Gender Agenda
- Government Plan of Action
- Inter-party Collaboration
- Relations with Civil Society
- Media and Communications

Statutes and Mechanisms for Internal Party Re-organisation

Certain questions must be asked to guide actions, such as:

1. **Does the PNP's Constitution declare equality between men and women?**

2. **Is there a statement on gender equality in any statute, by-law, regulation or other key document of the Party?**

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The overarching recommendation to the PNP, in light of its stated commitment to recognize women's rights as human rights, is to build on current initiatives and implement an integrated, coherent and sustainable agenda that will increase women's leadership and decision-making in the Party and the country as a whole.

Many political parties include such statements, for example in El Savador as well as in Costa Rica where the Citizens' Action Party addresses gender equality in its statutes and regulations.

The PNP's Progressive Agenda does not explicitly commit to promoting equality between men and women.

3. **Are there specific measures in place to ensure that women are represented in decision-making structures, on boards and/or on any other oversight body of the Party?**

4. **Are there measures to appoint women to working groups of the Party?**

Women's under-representation in political leadership raises the question of quotas. Since the 1980s, quotas have increasingly been implemented around the world as one measure to address this persistent gender imbalance. It is instructive to note the following:

i. The use of quotas is recommended by the United Nations under CEDAW as a Temporary Special Measure (TSM) and Jamaica's National Policy on Gender Equality recommends quotas as a TSM for appointments to the Senate.

ii. Political parties have been encouraged by the CEDAW Committee to "ensure that women have an equal opportunity in practice to serve as party officials and to be nominated as candidates for election". The CEDAW Committee recommended "setting aside for women, a certain minimum or percentage of positions on party executive bodies."[37]

iii. The system of gender quotas most frequently used by political parties is one in which the parties voluntarily establish rules around nomination and selection of candidates, and staffing of internal decision-making bodies. These apply in majoritarian systems (first past the post) such as in Jamaica as well as in other political systems.

iv. Data published in 2009 indicated that some 169 political parties in 69 states in Africa, Latin America and Europe were using internal voluntary quotas to include women in party organs and on candidates' lists.

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37. See *Gender Equality: Dimensions of Women's Equal Citizenship*. Edited by Linda C. McLain and Joanna L. Grossman, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 185.

v.   Two categories of electoral quotas are in use: **Candidate Quotas** and **Reserved Seats**. Pre-election candidate quotas are used during the candidate selection stage, and can be a **legal** requirement or **voluntary**. Left-leaning political parties have tended to opt for voluntary candidate quotas.

vi.   Guyana is the only CARICOM Caribbean country with a legislated Candidate Quota system, introduced as a Constitutional measure.[38] On each political party list, one third of candidates must be women.

vii. The system of **Reserved Seats** sets a certain number of seats for women in the legislature. These seats are filled through elections either on a geographic basis or based on the proportion of seats the party won. India was among countries that reserved 15% of seats for women at the local government level.

viii. Some countries are moving towards gender parity in this regard, that is, a similar proportion of women and men. Costa Rica has achieved parity in the composition of positions and candidate lists. Even though Chile does not have laws on quotas, the Party for Democracy stipulates that neither men nor women can occupy more than 60% of elected positions,[39] and requires parity in the selection of candidates for vice-presidential positions.

Quotas are controversial, and there are arguments against and great arguments in their favour. Quotas are not a panacea for gender imbalance. They need to go hand in hand with other measures such as training, mentoring and capacity building, so that women and men can respond in partnership to the urgent need for growth with equity.

Recommendation 1: The PNP is encouraged to implement voluntary quotas for internal organs and for candidates for elections.

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38. Guyana has 30% women in its National Assembly.
39. In Jamaica, the 51% Coalition: Women in Partnership for Development and Empowerment is proposing that Boards and Commissions (and by implication party organs) should be composed of no more than 60% and no less than 40% of either sex.

Internal Gender Mechanisms

- To what extent has the Party promoted women among the senior ranks?

- To what extent has the Party promoted women in public positions?

- Is women's leadership promoted through training and mentoring?

- Are resources directed to developing the work among women?

In Costa Rica and Panama, there are examples of bodies established specifically to develop and implement a gender strategy which is integrated into party development frameworks:

1. National Commission for Women: Citizens' Action Party, Costa Rica

The mandate of the Commission is to promote women's participation at all levels, on internal decision-making bodies and in elected positions. The Commission works with the Political Commission and is ratified by the National Assembly. Its duties include:

– Training for women in citizenship and empowerment.

– Training for party women and men on the impacts of policies and programmes on women and men.

– Promoting the involvement of women in party bodies and activities.

– Proposing mechanisms and action to overcome the obstacles that prevent women's effective involvement in party life.

2. Secretariat for Women (SENAMUP) of the Panamenista Party, Panama

The SENAMUP was introduced as a Secretariat as part of the Party's reform process. The Secretary General of the Secretariat sits on the Party's National Political Commission and is an elected position. The Secretariat conducts training to strengthen the women's political involvement. The duties of the National Secretariat include:

- Promoting the active participation of women in all the Party's internal processes, including internal elections at all levels;

- Promoting reflection and discussion of gender issues and reviewing any women's issues under consideration by the Party;

- Developing strategic plans for the women's sector including strategies to increase Party outreach to, and recruitment of women.

> **Recommendation 2: The PNP is encouraged to establish an Internal Party Gender Commission.**

Recruitment and Training

1. **Does the Party have differentiated strategies to attract women activists?**

2. **Are specific training courses being considered and or conducted for the promotion and political preparation of women?**

3. **Are Party members, female and male, being sensitized and educated about equity issues as part of the Party's development programme?**

Based on discussions so far, the answer to each of these questions is 'no'. It is one thing to declare the intention to include more women, but intention must be given life by strategic recruitment and training of women for leadership and candidacy. Examples of such programmes include:

• Targeted recruitment at community level, in colleges, and universities

• Campaign promotion activities which target women

• Inclusion of equity issues in Party education and development programmes

• Training for the promotion and political preparation of women

The Jamaica Women's Political Caucus trains women for political campaigning, hence the possibility exists to expand partnerships with civil society initiatives.

> **Recommendation 3: The Party is urged to systematize recruitment, training and mentoring of women for leadership at all levels, including for candidacy in elections.**

Electoral System Reform

1. **Does the PNP see itself today solely as an election machine or as an organisation with a wider mandate for development and transformation of society?**

Political parties in Jamaica increasingly are leaning towards a new definition of purpose, which includes, but is not solely confined to, winning elections. This thinking has influenced the process of registering and financing of political parties and the financing of political campaigns. The Electoral Commission of Jamaica (ECJ), a permanent, autonomous body reporting to Parliament, states that the reform process is "premised on the thesis that political parties in a small growing democracy perform important public services in representing general and specific interests of people"[40]

Consequently, in preparing its 2011 report, the ECJ invited and received submissions from stakeholders in the private sector and civil society, including women's organisations. The ECJ report was approved by Parliament and sets the stage for the draft Bill on "Registration and Financing of Political Parties", which the government undertook to debate in 2013. When passed, the new legislation will invest political parties, which are not currently mentioned in the Jamaican Constitution, with a new sense of their broader mandate for sustainable development and good governance. Electoral system reform should take into special consideration the need for the system to be more enabling of the participation of women in political leadership.

2. **To what extent, if any, does the PNP take steps to address the financing challenges faced by female candidates?**

The Parliamentary debates on the Bill must take account of the issue of financing as a major barrier for female candidates, and examine the submissions made by local women's organisations. In addition, the PNP Women's Movement should itself make specific recommendations.[41] Attention should

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40. Report to Parliament: Political Party Registration and Financing, July 2010. www.eoj.com.jm/cms/uploads/Political%20party%20Registration%20and%20Financing%-%20July%202010.pdf, p. 9.
41. Submissions were made by the Women's Resource and Outreach Centre (WROC) and the 51% Coalition to the Electoral Commission of Jamaica. The matter of gender sensitive/sex disaggregated data and electoral information is also under discussion between the Electoral Office and the 51% Coalition. See also Women's Environment and Development Organisation, 2007, *Women Candidates and Campaign Finance.*

also be paid to international best practices that ensure that public financing of political parties is linked to the promotion of gender equality. Here it must be noted that:

- In Costa Rica, the statute on the promotion of social equality "obliges political parties to employ a portion of government funding for electoral campaigns for measures to promote the political education and participation of women".[42]

- In France, the Act on Financial Transparency of Political Life "links the allocation of public funding to the number of women candidates a party nominates for election".[43]

> **Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the PNP links political party registration and campaign financing to the promotion of the political participation of women.**

Party Financing of Gender Equality

Does the PNP currently make any provision for the financing of measures to advance gender equality in the Party?

Several political parties in Latin America make specific provisions for the bodies and programmes that are established to advance gender equality. The Citizens Action Party in Costa Rica, for example, assigns no less than 20% of contributions and state funding to training and organisational initiatives among women.

> **Recommendation 5: That the PNP provides financing towards the implementation of the gender agenda.**

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42. McLain & Grossman, op. cit, p. 198.
43. Ibid, p. 198.

Government Plans

The National Policy on Gender Equality (NPGE) sets out goals, objectives, strategies and activities which are consistent with the Gender Sector Plan of Vision 21 and the many international commitments made by the Jamaican State. Initiated by the PNP Government in 2004 with support of international agencies, the Policy was adopted in 2010, and has been endorsed by the administrations of both political parties. It embodies many of the recommendations made over the years by the United Nations CEDAW Committee to the Government of Jamaica.

• To what extent is the Party as a whole familiar with the NPGE?

• To what extent are Government ministries and departments guided by the Policy to address critical issues such as the gender achievement gap in education[44] which is linked to the persistence of gender based violence, among other factors?

• What are the considerations and the timetable for the strengthening and streamlining of the Bureau of Women's/Gender Affairs, the body responsible for ensuring the implementation of the NPGE?

> **Recommendation 6: It is recommended that the Party informs itself on the National Policy for Gender Equality and its implementation.**

Inter-Party Agreements

Inter-party agreements are effective for discussions, consensus-building and approving measures to advance gender equality. Good practice shows that this goal can be pursued through dialogue and collaboration between female parliamentarians and political activists, and between party activists and civil society.

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44. The 2012 CAPRI Report, *Prisms of Possibility, a Report Card on Education in Jamaica*, observes that while schools and projects are taking initiatives to address the teaching of boys, the Ministry of Education has not developed a policy to deal with this deficit.

Examples of best practices include:

- In Bolivia, the Union of Women Parliamentarians (current and retired)

- In Uruguay, the Bi-Camera Feminine Block (women from all parties)

- In the Dominican Republic, the National Forum of Women Politicians.

To what extent is the PNP supportive of initiatives such as female parliamentary caucuses and/or other measures that could reduce the divisiveness embedded in the political culture?

What practical steps can the Party take to give effect to inter-party collaboration around this objective?

> **Recommendation 7: It is recommended that the Party states its support for, or encourages, initiatives to foster collaboration among women in and across parties and with civil society to strengthen the gender equality agenda.**

Relations with Civil Society

The PNP's Progressive Agenda speaks to the role of civil society and the values that shape the Party's relationship with this sector. This is very encouraging given the many collaborations with civil society that are taking place on the ground in communities, and also developing at the national level.

In relation to the Party:

- What are the potential barriers and enablers for collaboration?

- How can these relationships be managed to create a framework for improved collaboration?

> **Recommendation 8: The PNP should encourage the strengthening of the Bureau of Women's/Gender Affairs to promote collaboration between the Government and civil society, and itself take steps to deepen collaboration with a wider spectrum of civil society organisations.**

Media and Communications

The influence of the media in perpetuating negative ideas about politicians, male and female, is well known. Female politicians are particularly subject to negative media images and commentaries.[45] Best practices speak to the need for internal-party as well as 'external' communications strategies to:

- Spotlight female politicians/candidates and communicate their agendas.

- Publicize women's thinking in general and their opinions on different issues.

Strategies have been diverse but the overall aim has been to give visibility to women and their contribution to the political process and to national development.

> **Recommendation: 9: It is recommended that a communications strategy be developed and implemented to build public awareness and support for the Party's thrust and commitment to gender equality, women's leadership and empowerment.**

Conclusion

The agenda for transformation is wide ranging. On the journey towards change, men, as the gatekeepers of the political process, have the opportunity and responsibility to utilise data and information about the entrenched barriers that perpetuate gender inequality. This transformative agenda calls for broad and deep conversations in the PNP which will resonate with the nation, challenging citizens, and men in particular, to make the fundamental shift in thinking in order to move commitments from words to action.

The transformative agenda calls for, and must be linked to, a real determination to deepen democracy in governance. As the CEDAW Committee has said, "the concept of democracy will have real and dynamic meaning and

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45. Taitu Heron. "Political Advertising and the Portrayal of Gender, Colour and Class in Jamaica's General Elections 2007" in *Gender and Governance, Working Paper Series, No. 5*, Institute of Gender and Development Studies, Mona Unit and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, (Jamaica Office).

lasting effect only when political decision-making is shared by women and men and takes equal account of the interests of both".[46]

This is indeed the time and season for action and for effective partnerships to nurture transformation. The women of the PNP have taken a bold step to move this process forward. Beginning with the PNP Women's Movement in Region 6, conversations led to the tabling and approval of a resolution on women's leadership and decision-making at the 2013 Annual Conference of the PNP Women's Movement. Following further discussions, the following resolution[47] was tabled and approved at the private session of the 75th Annual Conference of the Party in September 2013.

RESOLUTION ON GENDER PARITY

WHEREAS, available research shows that 51 per cent of the Jamaican population and 52 per cent of the electors are female; and

WHEREAS, data provided in the Vision 2030 National Development Plan and the Electoral Office of Jamaica indicates that of the 835 persons elected to Parliament in the sixty-nine years since 1944, only 67 have been females; and

WHEREAS, numerous systemic barriers, including financial, cultural and social barriers have been identified as preventing women's full involvement in the political process; and

WHEREAS, at the level of the PNP, there are 63 females on the NEC compared to 218 males; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that when there is a balance between male and female decision makers, better policies are formulated, corruption is less pervasive and there is less aggression resulting in less violence; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that policies that are not engendered are endangered; and

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46. McClain & Grossman, op. cit, p. 187.
47. Presented to the 75th PNP Annual Conference by the PNP Women's Movement, September 20, 2013.

WHEREAS, the PNP Women's Movement believes that the PNP must lead the society in progressive and transformational changes;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the PNP Women's Movement calls on the Party to institute a gender commission to ensure representation at all levels of the decision-making processes of the Party;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the PNP clearly indicates to Jamaica that it is prepared to take special measures to ensure that there is greater gender balance in all areas of governance for sustainable development; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the PNP re-affirms its commitment to the CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the National Gender Policy of Jamaica and institute implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the Government of Jamaica complies with the requirements of the various conventions of which it is a signatory.

Moved by: Jennifer Edwards
Seconded by: Joyce Perry-Jacobs

This call for action laid the basis for the tabling of the following resolution* in the Senate and is awaiting discussion and approval.

*Tabled in the Senate in October 2013 by Senator Imani Duncan-Pryce

GENDER EQUITY:

MOTION TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN POLITICS AND DECISION-MAKING.

WHEREAS there is conclusive evidence that gender inequality contributes to community insecurity and losses in economic efficiency, and affects the effectiveness of relationships between both women and men adversely;

AND WHEREAS measures which support gender equality in all spheres lead to inclusive growth, development, poverty reduction and security;

AND WHEREAS over the past fifty years of Independence, women have made progress particularly in the public sector and education, and a number of legal and other social reforms now address some of the specific gender interests of women and their families;

AND WHEREAS women's participation in leadership and decision-making in the political parties and political process, the Houses of Parliament and in the local authorities has lagged significantly over the years despite the election of the first female Prime Minister;

AND WHEREAS historically women have been the foundation on which political parties have organized and won elections although at no time since 1944 have women held more than 13% of seats in the House of Representatives, except in 1997 when it was 15%, albeit women constitute 51% of the population;

AND WHEREAS there is recognition of the persistence of the cultural, social, economic and politically entrenched barriers to women's leadership, including barriers within the political parties themselves;

AND WHEREAS there is recognition of the stated commitment to Vision 2030 and the National Policy on Gender Equality (NPGE) by governments of the two major political parties;

BE IT RESOLVED that a Joint Select Committee be convened to consider and make recommendations that would:

1. Seek to identify, address and correct the systemic gender inequalities which result in women's under representation in Parliament and local authorities, in the organs of political parties and on public boards, including through the use of "temporary special measures", as recommended under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);

2. Seek to ensure that the legislative process affords meaningful opportunities for dialogue between Parliamentarians and those they represent about proposed laws and how they will affect their families, livelihoods and community, recognizing that women and men will have different needs, interests and responsibilities, which are relevant to effective and responsive legislative policies.

Presented by: Senator Imani Duncan-Pryce

Moving the discussion towards practical measures and concrete actions will require energy, commitment, coordinated work and on-going advocacy, inside and outside the Party.

‣ Appendix 1

Barriers to Women's Participation in Politics and Decision-Making as Identified in Focus Group Discussions, June 2013

1. Older women do not support younger women/Women support men but tear down women/Lack of support from other women.
2. Women do not believe in themselves/Women lack confidence.
3. Commitments to family and partner/Lack of partner support/Women's burden of family responsibilities.
4. Men under-rate women, give them little support, and generally do not believe that women have the capacity/they under-estimate women's capacity.
5. Lack of finance and 'backative'/lack of financing and network skills therefore cannot match the Boy's Club and networks.
6. Conflict within relationships, lack the courage to deal with male ego, end up sleeping with 'the enemy', have difficulty weighing the risks to the relationship versus doing what you want to do as a woman/leader in politics.
7. Some women do not want to be associated with the negative side of the political culture.
8. Absence of systems and structures for training and mentoring women for leadership in the PNP/Party structures do not support women/Male dominated party structure and systems for candidate selection do not create a level playing field for women and men/Candidate selection process is not FAIR, and is FLAWED.
9. Dependency among women.
10. Women put the men ahead (they buy into the system that men must rule).
11. Men do not like to see women rise above them, and they do not like to take advice from women.
12. Lack of integrity of the political culture.

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