



Caribbean Women in Leadership

## PRESS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Gender equality, critical to national development in a post-COVID Trinidad and Tobago**

**Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago – 17 April, 2020 (TTO):** The Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWIL), wishes to congratulate the government of Trinidad and Tobago on their strategic response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Women are largely at the forefront in the respond to COVID-19, as those caring for the sick both in public institutions and in homes. For instance, women make up 70% of health care workers, and are the primary caregivers and home educators, responsibilities which have increased in the context of the lockdown. Women are also impacted in the following ways:

1. They are 3 times more likely to engage in unpaid care work than men.
2. Women also occupy 58% of the jobs in the informal sector and are more likely to be casual/temporary non unionized workers, sole traders and entrepreneurs. The temporary yet indefinite closure of businesses mean that single income households now find themselves with restricted means of addressing the most basic needs of their families;
3. In times of crisis, women are at increased risk of intimate partner violence especially when the movement of people is restricted and less persons are likely to seek out services for mental, social and emotional support. These impacts are likely to be far reaching.

The inclusion of women's leadership and perspectives in mitigating the effects of COVID-19 is **therefore essential** to ensure an effective approach. The national response must take into account the differential impacts on women and men and ensure that gender dynamics are fully integrated.

CIWIL is therefore highly concerned that women comprise **only 3 of the 22 members or 13%** of the membership of the Post COVID-19 Recovery Committee formed in Trinidad and Tobago. We **reiterate that it is crucial that all national responses place women and girls** - their inclusion, representation, rights, social and economic outcomes, equality and protection - **at their centre if they are to have the necessary development outcomes.**



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CIWIL calls on the government to integrate gender into any recovery process/approach, which includes but is not limited to the inclusion of women's voices at the heart of the COVID-19 response representing women's issues. Inclusion means:

- 1. ensuring women's equal representation at all levels in all COVID-19 response planning and decision-making;**
- 2. focusing on transformative change for equality** – including addressing the sexual division of labour;
- 3. formulating policies and programmes that incorporates responses to the vulnerabilities** – designing socio-economic plans with an intentional focus on the lives and futures of women and girls.

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without the inclusion of women and girls. Recovery efforts will benefit from a holistic approach where gender is taken into account in response to the COVID pandemic.

**Be socially responsible, stay safe and practice protective health measures.**

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**Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWIL)** is a non-political, multi-partisan, and independent NGO established to monitor, strengthen and increase women's political participation and leadership in the region through advocacy, networking, research and capacity building initiatives. The Regional Secretariat of CIWIL is headquartered in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. For more information, visit us at [www.ciwil.org](http://www.ciwil.org) or email us at [info@ciwil.org](mailto:info@ciwil.org).

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