

GENERAL

LC/CAR/G.179

20 March 1986

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Tenth Session
Havana, Cuba
7-12 April 1986

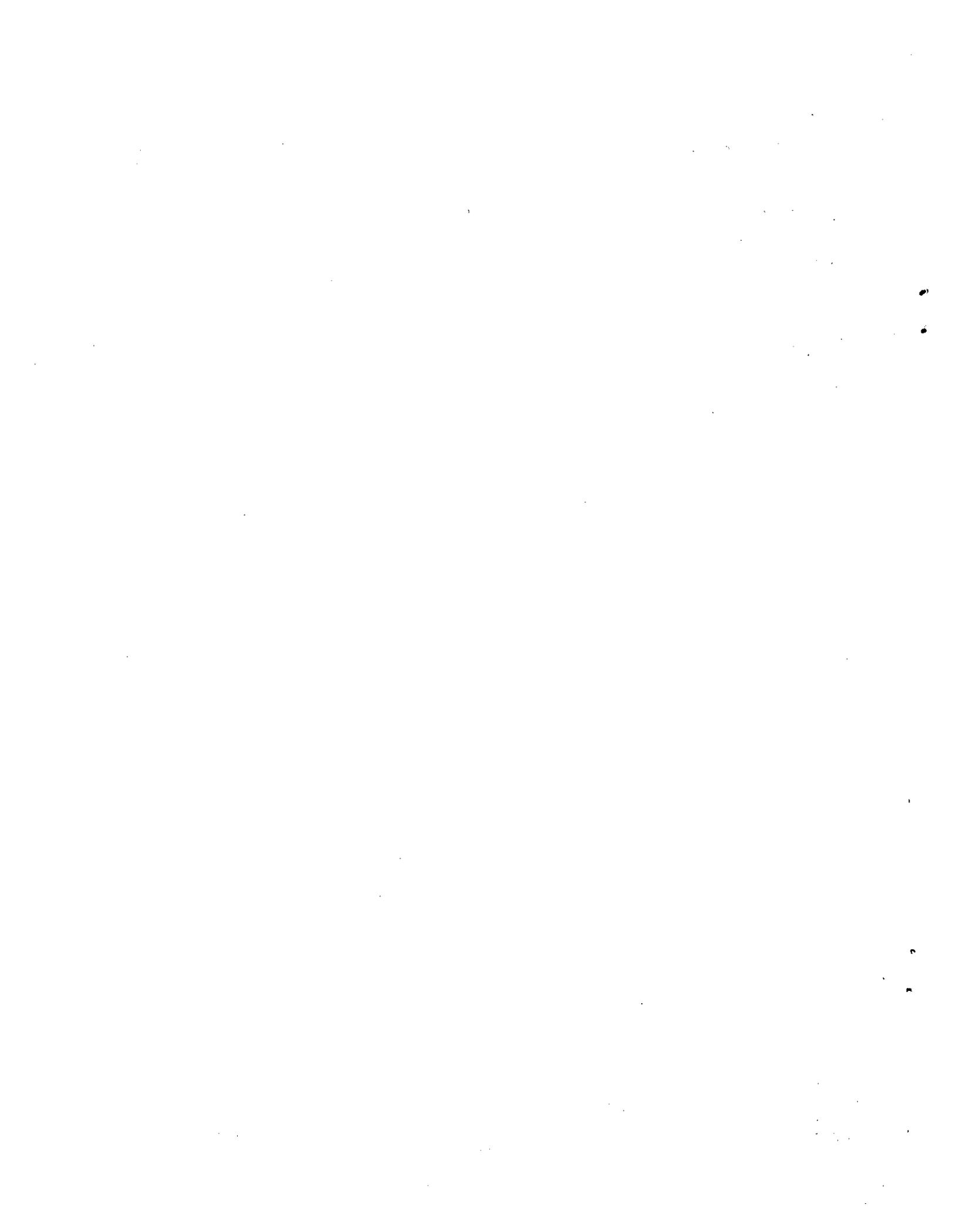


TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:
THE CDCC EXPERIENCE



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean



TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:
THE CDCC EXPERIENCE

1. The promotion of activities in the field of technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC), relative to CDCC member countries and between them and other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, has acquired increased importance with the advent of the global recession and the constraints which the recession has imposed upon them. A particularly severe constraint has been the increasing difficulty in obtaining resources for developmental purposes from multilateral donors, a fact which, when combined with the general downturn in export earnings, has encouraged efforts to seek an approach through TCDC for solutions to development problems within these countries.

2. A primary feature of recent mandates given to the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) has been the need to strengthen the promotion of TCDC activities within the Caribbean subregion and with other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. That mandate, to identify and explore TCDC solutions for developmental problems, was emphasized during the Eighth and Ninth Sessions of the CDCC in 1984 and 1985 respectively. It has also been stressed in deliberations in other regional and international fora. One consequence of this common call has been a profusion of TCDC activities and programmes within the region with an unfortunate tendency towards replication.

Role of CDCC

3. The CDCC was established, in 1975, as a body designed to promote the unity and co-operation of its member countries in the execution of joint activities in order to enhance the economic and social development of the subregion. Its stated function was to maximize the potential of the member countries, to complement national economies and achieve joint policies in several important

sectors. That policy was intended to give impetus to co-operation among member countries through the implementation of joint projects, the exchange of experiences and mutual aid and mechanisms geared to achieve that end. The CDCC provides a mechanism for the promotion of horizontal co-operation. Its work programme reflects that reality although a coherent framework and functional mechanisms for the operation of TCDC programmes and activities within the Secretariat need to be further developed.

4. The promotion of its TCDC activities in the Caribbean is enhanced because the Subregional Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) provides the Secretariat for the Committee. As a result, the CDCC is able to act as a conduit for relationships with the wider Latin American and Caribbean region, with the United Nations system, and through those contacts, with other international and extra-regional developmental agencies. ECLAC can also serve as a point of contact with countries and country groupings within other Regional Commissions.

5. Since its inception, the CDCC has functioned both as a mechanism for promoting TCDC activities and as a vehicle for the facilitation of such activities. In addition, the member countries of the CDCC have often explored, and pursued, TCDC activities among themselves. TCDC could be enhanced if there was a more co-ordinated approach allowing for the maximization of possible opportunities and the concomitant benefits.

6. In accordance with its recent mandates and indeed, in pursuance of the mandates given to subregional and regional entities by the Buenos Aires Conference on TCDC in 1978, the CDCC can help strengthen the promotion of TCDC activities by focusing on such areas as the following: identifying and analysing needs and capacities of its member countries; identifying other organizations for co-operation, where those needs and capacities go beyond the CDCC membership;

compiling directories of professional and technical organizations within its membership, which can contribute to the process of fostering TCDC; disseminating information on existing TCDC activities and programmes, within the United Nations system and other multilateral agencies. In the latter two respects, the work of the Caribbean Documentation Centre could provide an initial basis for the compilation and dissemination of information, through increased co-operation with other regional bodies.

Existing mandates and responses

7. The Ninth Session of the CDCC issued specific mandates in the area of TCDC to the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, through the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. In resolution 18(IX) on the Programme of Support for Small Island Developing Countries, the CDCC had requested the identification of "TCDC solutions for problems which hinder the development of the small island developing countries of the CDCC" and the promotion of "TCDC activities both among the CDCC member countries and with other countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region which support the development efforts of the small island developing countries".

8. The Executive Secretary was also requested in the same resolution to "organize and facilitate cross-regional interchange of information and experience in full co-operation with regional and subregional organizations".

9. In its resolution 20(IX), the CDCC requested the Executive Secretary "to identify TCDC solutions for problems which hinder the development of the countries of the CDCC and to promote TCDC activities both within the CDCC subregion and with other countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region which support the development efforts of CDCC countries".

10. Several initiatives have been taken by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, in accordance with the mandate, to identify and promote TCDC activities in respect of small island developing countries. These have included the promotion of co-operative ventures within the subregion as well as the exchange of technical expertise between such countries. In an effort to organize interchange of information and experience, the Subregional Headquarters was instrumental in bringing together the Government of Argentina and the Secretariat of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

11. The Subregional Headquarters of the Caribbean has also planned a subregional workshop on TCDC, particularly for the OECS member countries, which is scheduled to be held in Barbados. The Workshop, in addition to focusing on the dissemination of information on possible mechanisms for TCDC activities, will also provide an opportunity for discussions between the countries of the subregion and other countries of Latin America.

12. In response to the mandate of resolution 20(IX), several initiatives have been pursued at the level of the United Nations system: attempts have been made by the Secretariat to obtain assistance from the Special Unit for TCDC within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), also there have been efforts to encourage inter-agency co-operation within the United Nations system. In the field of science and technology, there has been greater contact with the Latin American Economic System (SELA). Sectoral activities have also been pursued, both among CDCC member countries and with other countries of the wider region.

13. The Ninth Session of the CDCC mandated the Secretariat to prepare a portfolio of regional projects in technical co-operation and economic co-operation among developing countries (TCDC/ECDC) to help foster co-operation within the CDCC and with other Latin

American countries. The Secretariat has written all CDCC member countries seeking information on existing activities. There has been a poor level of response to this enquiry.

Recommendations of the Review Committee

14. The Review Committee, established by the Ninth Session to review the implementation of the mandates and decisions of the CDCC, held its first meeting in November 1985 in New York and proposed a series of recommendations, relating to TCDC, for the consideration of the Tenth Session of CDCC.

15. The recommendations include the following:

(a) TCDC - the Secretariat should compile information on the requirements of member countries, by correspondence or by visits, as well as a list of possible donor countries; the areas in which they could assist and a roster of experts and other inputs for TCDC in the subregion;

(b) Action-oriented activities - the Secretariat should attempt to identify activities and/or projects with positive multiplier effects to be executed by two or more countries and circulate this list of projects to member countries for consideration and subsequent approval by the CDCC; financial resources for such activities should be sought, by the Secretariat, from the United Nations system and elsewhere;

(c) Regional co-operation - the CDCC should serve as a vehicle for promoting regional co-operation; it should engage in policy studies on topics of interest to and affecting the development efforts of member countries and should implement projects given to it by member governments as part of its work programme;

(d) Benefits from the United Nations system - the Secretariat should continue to advise member countries, upon request, on how to derive benefits from the system as a whole and from other development agencies;

(e) National co-ordination - member governments are urged to give effect to the establishment of CDCC focal points where these do not yet exist and to strengthen those that exist in order to facilitate a two-way flow of information and exchange of ideas.

16. These recommendations are presented in document LC/CAR/G.175 for the consideration of the Tenth Session but it should be noted that some of the recommendations are related to ongoing work programme activities already underway or envisaged, based on previous mandates. The compilation of information from member countries was undertaken but, as mentioned earlier, has not been fully successful due to poor response from member countries. Contacts with potential donors have been undertaken together with efforts to determine areas in which they could assist.

17. As part of its sectoral programmes, the Secretariat has attempted to identify action-oriented activities with potential for "spin-off" and multiplier effects. Similarly, the Secretariat, through its co-operation with the Commonwealth Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the OECS and SELA, has helped in the promotion of regional co-operation. Within the United Nations system, reference has been made earlier to the role of the CDCC in assisting member countries to obtain benefits from the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC. Efforts have already been made to meet the recommendations of the Review Committee, as a part of the regular activities of the CDCC, and these efforts will be continued.

Matters for consideration

18. If the process of promoting TCDC activities is to be strengthened, then all parties, the CDCC, the member countries and the specialized agencies should contribute.

19. For its part, the Secretariat could enhance its contribution to the promotion of TCDC activities by strengthening its capacity to disseminate information on TCDC. Such a role could include

improving the awareness of member countries of possible opportunities for TCDC through more regular information on existing activities; through a greater involvement in identifying countries and sources, which offer technical assistance in the area of TCDC both within the United Nations system and elsewhere; through the deepening of relationships with professional and technical bodies within the region; and through the further establishment of co-operative arrangements with integration groupings and regional bodies. The Secretariat could also assist countries in better utilizing special arrangements such as the transfer of knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme within the UNDP.

20. There is also a greater scope for the Secretariat to strengthen its capacity to assist Governments to identify, develop and implement initiatives in TCDC. In order to execute that role successfully, the Secretariat will need to increase its analysis of needs and capacities. The CDCC can assist the process of promoting TCDC activities by utilizing fully its relationship within the United Nations system and, through those relationships, its links with other developmental agencies involved with TCDC programmes.

21. The member countries, in turn, can play a most important role in deepening TCDC within the subregion. It is suggested that a priority consideration be given to the establishment of regular communications between the countries and the Secretariat on existing areas of technical co-operation as well as on needs and capacities in TCDC. Such information forms a critical base upon which the Secretariat could build its programme for the dissemination of information as well as upon which to attempt to identify sources of possible co-operation.

22. It should be noted that the process of TCDC involves the participation by both donor and recipient country. The pursuit of a TCDC activity, thus, involves the provision of services or resources by the donor as well as the provision of services or resources by the recipient. One common method of satisfying these

requirements is for the particular service or expertise to be provided by the donor while the recipient country meets local cost requirements. For the activity to be viewed as a valid TCDC exercise, it is essential that donor and recipient both contribute, in some form, to the activity.

23. Member countries must also ensure, as much as possible, that projects and operational activities identified within the CDCC work programme conform to priorities for technical co-operation so that subsequent approaches by the Secretariat to agencies for technical assistance are viewed as legitimate exercises.

24. One immediate practical measure by member countries is worthy of consideration by the Tenth Session of CDCC. The United Nations system, and particularly the Special Unit for TCDC, offers a valuable service in assisting countries to identify consultants/experts, from other developing countries, for participation in projects. Such consultants/experts are usually less expensive than traditional sources. In order to benefit from such access, under TCDC, countries which seek such assistance must indicate their willingness to provide their component of the technical co-operation. Two options are suggested.

25. First, within the national Indicative Programming Figure (IPF) of UNDP, a specific element should be identified for TCDC and be geared towards meeting that TCDC component requisite for application to the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC and hence access to lower-cost experts from the developing world. Secondly, an element for TCDC in each project proposal within the Country Programme already exists. Such an element should be identified as the national component for TCDC in the application for assistance from the Special Unit. Either option should involve the same resources. Little use currently appears to be made of the element for TCDC included in project proposals.

26. The multilateral agencies, including those within the United Nations system, can benefit from the efforts of the member countries and the Secretariat, in making more effective use of their resources for technical assistance. The awareness of national programmes and priorities could help enable agencies to become better informed on the priority needs and possibilities within the region. Such an accumulation of national experiences would also help agencies co-ordinate their TCDC programmes more efficiently avoiding possible duplication. The agencies could also channel information through the CDCC which they might gather on activities or possibilities for TCDC initiatives. The CDCC, as a subregional body, offers a valid mechanism for the dissemination of such information.

Recommendations for future action

27. The Tenth Session of the CDCC might wish to consider the following:

(a) The passing of a Resolution requesting the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, through the Director of the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, to implement the recommendations relating to TCDC, by the First Meeting of the Review Committee as outlined above and in document LC/CAR/G.175;

(b) Take note of the proposed Subregional workshop on TCDC, scheduled for Barbados, and seek to participate, at a sufficiently representative level, in order to benefit from the opportunity for information and discussion with possible sources of co-operation;

(c) Carefully consider the possible benefit of allocating an element, within national IPFs, for TCDC or of utilizing the existing component within project proposals so as to obtain maximum benefit of national allocations through the services of less expensive consultants from developing countries;

(d) Co-ordinate activities through national focal points, so as to submit, as early as possible, information on needs and capacities for the provision of TCDC;

(e) Reiterate its request to the Secretariat to exercise its role, as a body of the United Nations system, to employ TCDC modalities to facilitate projects and activities within the United Nations system and with other developmental agencies.

