

GENERAL

LC/CAR/G.237

28 September 1987

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Tenth Session
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
28 September - 1 October 1987



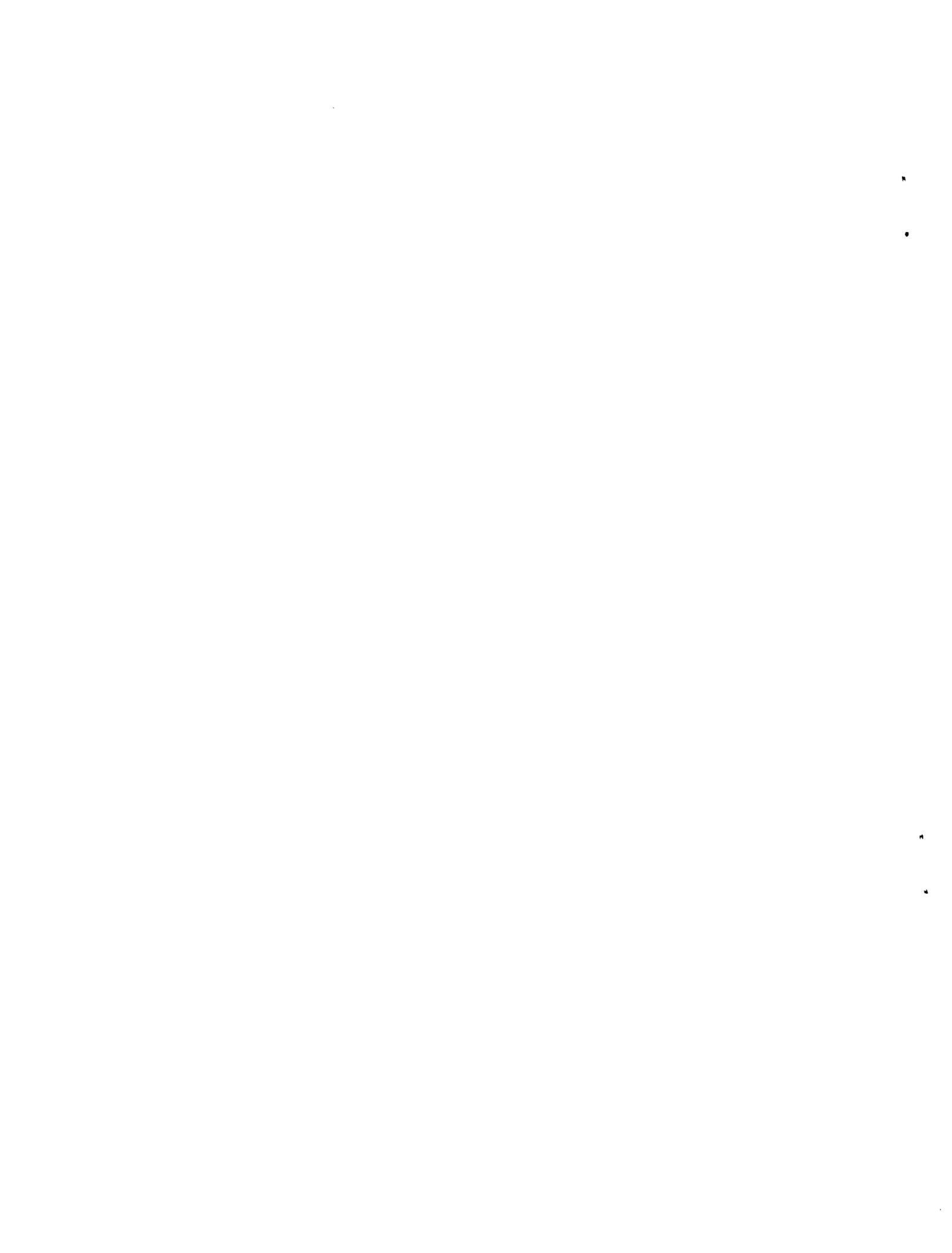
REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP TO DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION
FOR THE SMALL ISLAND STATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

Castries, Saint Lucia, 24-28 August 1987



UNITED NATIONS

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1. Pursuant to Resolution 18(IX) of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) adopted in Port-of-Spain, 1985, the mandated workshop on the development of a Plan of Action for the Small Island States of the Caribbean was held at the La Toc Hotel, Saint Lucia from 24-28 August 1987.
2. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Donatus St. Aimee, Secretary of the CDCC, who is also responsible for the programme on small island developing countries. The workshop was sponsored jointly by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United States Man and the Biosphere Program (US-MAB). A list of participants is attached at Annex B.
3. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Wilfred Whittingham, Deputy Director of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Office in Port-of-Spain, and by the Honourable Neville Cenac, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saint Lucia.
4. Mr. Whittingham outlined briefly ECLAC/CDCC's role in the development efforts of its member states, indicating that the meeting was a further attempt by the Secretariat to deepen that role, giving special consideration to the less developed countries.

5. Minister Cenac noted that despite the work of UNCTAD on small island developing countries, the response by the international community had fallen far short of the piousness of its resolutions. It was, therefore, gratifying to note that ECLAC/CDCC had taken up the challenge and was seeking to highlight the special needs of those small island developing countries of the Caribbean subregion falling within its mandate.

6. For this reason, he argued, workshops and seminars such as the current one were important, since there must be a sustained and continuous effort to sensitize the international community to the specific problem of small island developing countries. International cooperation, starting at the regional level was crucial to the process of reducing vulnerability to economic stagnation for there were courses of action which small island developing countries, by their very nature, could not undertake by themselves.

7. The Minister expressed the hope that the workshop could provide a cross fertilization of ideas which would result in the evolution of a specific programme of action in favour of small island developing countries.

8. The meeting received reports and presentations from representatives of agencies and organizations and from some donor governments on their activities in relation to small states and the kinds of assistance which could be offered in that context.

9. Presentations on the following five specific areas were made:

(a) Agriculture, by Mr. David Demacque, Director of Agricultural Science, Saint Lucia;

(b) Trade and Industry, by Mr. Herman Rohlehr, Chief, Industry, Technology and Tourism Section, CARICOM Secretariat;

(c) Tourism, by Mr. Luther Miller, Tourism Development Specialist of the Caribbean Tourism Research and Development Centre;

(d) Co-operative Credit Unions and Community Development, by Mr. Patrick Develtere, Associate Expert, Co-operative Training and Management, International Labour Organization; and Mr. Melvin Edwards of the National Development Foundation of Saint Kitts and Nevis; and

(e) Science and Technology, by Mr. Donatus St. Aimee, Economic Affairs Officer of ECLAC, Port-of-Spain, on behalf of the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST).

10. A number of other papers were circulated at the meeting, including the following:

(a) Some aspects of Aruba's Development Policy, by the representative of Aruba;

(b) Maritime Safety, by the International Maritime Organization (IMO);

(c) OECS projects and assistance requirements by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Secretariat;

(d) Technology transfer and contractual negotiations by representatives of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC); and

(e) Development in agro-industry by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

All papers are available upon request.

SUMMARY OF PAPERS PRESENTED

Tourism

11. The tourism paper recognized that tourism plays a vital role in economic development by providing employment, by creating linkages with other sectors of the economy, and by earning foreign exchange. It suggested that the public sector should complement and stimulate the activities of the private sector in this area by:

- (a) providing basic infrastructure;
- (b) promoting tourism on a country basis;
- (c) facilitating the entry and exit of tourists;
- (d) overseeing and facilitating tourism financing mechanisms;

and

- (e) protecting natural resources and the environment.

12. It proposed further that incentive policies to potential investors should be a key strategy to develop the tourist sector with the aim to:

- (a) reduce required initial investment;
- (b) reduce operating costs; and
- (c) guarantee investment safety.

These incentives, however, should be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

13. The paper recognized that marketing and promotion activities were vital to the success of the industry, and should be undertaken on an ongoing basis either jointly or singly, and that training from the craft to managerial levels was also necessary. Attempts should be made, therefore, to provide such training on a "hands-on" basis in the Caribbean.

14. In the discussion, it was agreed that there was a need for comprehensive tourism policies, and that training in the tourist sector was vital. Aruba extended the offer of the use of its training school to other Caribbean nationals, and noted the existence of other training schools in the region, in the Bahamas and at the University of the West Indies (UWI). The question was raised as to whether they are fulfilling the needs of the sector.

15. It was suggested that tourism be incorporated into the regional scheme for harmonizing fiscal incentives and that lobbying for the inclusion of tourism within the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) would make a significant impact on the sector. The need for a regional promotional policy was recognized in an effort to foster multi-stop packages.

16. Emphasis was placed on the need to create linkages between tourism and other sectors, in particular, agriculture and light manufacturing.

17. Adequate and timely data are needed to support national and regional tourism policy. Effective co-ordination of information networks and data collection agencies on the industry, especially in respect of economic conditions in regions where most tourists originate was therefore needed. It was proposed that programmes and projects envisaged within the context of the Plan of Action should address these and other points raised on this sector.

Co-operative Development in the Caribbean

18. The papers suggested that the co-operative movement suffered from several problems, including the following:

- (a) uneven development;
- (b) a negative image; and
- (c) limited share of the formal national economy.

19. The potential to contribute to development was, however, significant as the co-operative movement was already a major force in savings mobilization and lending for productive purposes.

20. The paper argued that co-operatives could produce considerable economies of scale, given the small scale nature of many businesses and farming units in the Caribbean, and could also be a vehicle for employment generation. Unemployed persons could start small scale income generating activities through joint undertakings of the co-operatives and credit unions.

21. In the discussion it was agreed that:

(a) Training of personnel was vital, and that a media blitz to disseminate information on successful co-operatives and credit unions should be undertaken;

(b) Co-operatives as a philosophy and way of life should be part of school curricula, and efforts should be made to introduce co-operative practices into the school system;

(c) Fiscal incentives, such as tax rebates for saving in credit unions, might also encourage the development of co-operatives and domestic savings.

22. It was recommended that co-operatives be established to provide:

(a) an exchange of experience;

(b) financial support of credit unions to other co-operatives;

(c) associations of co-operatives as useful tools to assist in marketing, training and product development;

(d) a regional approach to training and co-operative education, in order to enable the movement to realize its full potential in the development process of the states, based on the points raised above; and

(e) improved services by credit unions, co-operatives and community development activities in the rural areas.

Agriculture in Small Island States

23. The paper noted that the present international economic crisis had resulted in:

- (a) a deterioration in the terms of trade for primary commodities;
- (b) curtailment of the inflow of capital;
- (c) curtailment of the inflow of investments; and
- (d) increasing protectionism.

24. It recognized that agricultural development was vital to the economies of some Caribbean states, especially when the earnings of other export sectors and tourism were affected.

25. Agriculture could contribute in the following ways to developing:

- (a) food security;
- (b) foreign exchange savings and earnings;
- (c) employment generation;
- (d) creation of economic linkages; and
- (e) improvement on income levels and on its distribution.

26. The constraints facing Agriculture in small states were nevertheless many, including:

- (a) size of land mass;
- (b) climate and topography;
- (c) land tenure patterns;
- (d) resource management with respect to erosion and conservation;
- (e) un-organized production patterns;

- (f) archaic technology;
- (g) the rural urban drift; and
- (h) the entrenchment of the export subsector.

27. The following policy issues should be addressed in order to overcome some of the problems outlined above:

- (a) political and economic integration;
- (b) integrated rural development;
- (c) changing land tenure patterns, where necessary;
- (d) diversification of output in the face of increasing protectionism and oversupply of commodities;
- (e) organization of agriculture production to take into account the varieties and types of commodities, production, volume and quality, etc.;
- (f) the rationalization of marketing boards whose operations could be made more effective by removing the middle-man effect; and
- (g) a system of market intelligence and monitoring, to take advantage of new production opportunities.

28. In the ensuing discussions, the following points emerged:

- (a) Positive results from this sector could be achieved by linking extension with research, so that farmers could see immediately and dramatically the need for changing traditional production patterns;
- (b) The need for marketing boards to be more efficient and serve as an incentive to young people to see the viability of farming as a profession;
- (c) Diversification was considered to be important at the national level, and specialization at the regional level, to allow for optimal use of natural resources;

(d) A home economics programme to support agriculture and agro-industrial production was necessary to reduce the high food import bill in the region;

(e) The high cost of production with respect to agricultural and manufactured products was a serious problem for small states, but the question was how to reduce these high costs so as to compete with cheaper imported goods;

(f) The lack of attention being paid to fisheries was noted as well as the need to upgrade technology so as to exploit sea resources which were abundant when compared to land space and other natural resources;

(g) The need for proper soil and water utilization and management policies within the framework of a land capability survey was recognized as vital to the long-term development of the sector. The development of linkages between agriculture and other sectors, such as tourism were necessary along with manufacturing to provide a base for the industrialization process;

(h) The Plan of Action should give particular attention to the Agriculture sector in its programmes.

Science and Technology in Small States

29. It was noted that since science and technology had not been a part of national planning, there was a clear need for a science and technology policy, both at the national and regional levels, and there was a need to integrate this "sector" with other ongoing sectoral activities, such as, in agriculture, health and so on.

30. While there were various organizations responsible for science and technology in the region such as the CCST, UNESCO, OAS and CARICOM, there was a need to consolidate these activities to allow for complementarity and collaborative work.

31. It was further observed that while most organizations were structured on a regional basis, there were no strong national focal points to provide support for activities and to provide inputs into national policy.

32. Since a paper on Regional Science and Technology policy was to be discussed shortly within CARICOM, the following points were made for consideration:

(a) Science and technology should be used as a tool for development, technology policy should be oriented, therefore, to solving problems, rather than to just keeping pace with developments in the area of science and technology;

(b) At the national level, development goals should be clarified in detail and the appropriate technology sought to obtain objectives, for example, what is the activity to be changed, when, and by what amounts?;

(c) Small states should seek to increase information bases and establish interlocking directorates and linkages between ministries and other units or agencies involved in scientific and technological applications and acquisition;

(d) There should be an extension service in the science and technology unit to disseminate information on science and technology to the community;

(e) Where possible investment should be made in multi-purpose plants to allow for maximum use of resources;

(f) The importance of science teaching was stressed, and the need for a more "hands-on" approach, especially in laboratory work in the schools, was recognized, for instance, some equipment could be constructed by students rather than bought from outside;

(g) In order to bring science and technology to the rural areas a programme of home economics could be introduced into schools and villages in subjects such as food preparation and nutrition; and

(h) The concept of the community colleges at the national level should be encouraged to stimulate science for technological applications among the general population.

33. The meeting also considered that regional and international institutions should facilitate national seminars/workshops and multidisciplinary projects in an effort to assist states to integrate science and technology into their development plans. They should also provide assistance in negotiating the acquisition of technological packages.

34. There was a need to popularize science and technology at all levels. Final exams in schools reflected low grades for high school students taking theoretical and applied science courses, and so there appeared to be a diminishing pool from which to draw future technicians. Popularization of science and technology needed to begin at the primary school level and on to the high schools and tertiary levels. Technological investigative centres which sought to improve upon traditional technologies should be established and encouraged. The production of audio-visual materials and a well-developed media programme could be used to support the popularization policy.

35. The need to document advances in science and technology was said to be necessary, and where this already existed, dissemination of the information needed to be facilitated. A laymen's guide explaining the application of simple technologies could also facilitate its reach into the grassroots community, and should be started.

36. The meeting felt that there was a need to tap Caribbean scientists worldwide as they could provide a valuable source of information on the more advanced technologies.

37. The importance of apprenticeship for "in-house" training in use of traditional and new technologies was also discussed, as well as the importance of applying technology, mindful of local conditions. The importance of such topics as patents, information on equipment, and simple technologies available, was also stressed and efforts needed to be made to address them within the context of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) or other modalities.

Trade and Industry in Small Island Developing Countries:
A review of Some Problems

38. Some problems of industry in the subregion as outlined by the presenter were as follows:

(a) Small size, in terms of land space and population and a scarcity of mineral resources;

(b) Energy was critical for industrial development and service in the region, attempts were being made to develop alternative energy systems, and to promote energy conservation;

(c) Limited human resources presented a further constraint such as the non-availability of sufficient skills to support industrial expansion; training was limited, as was the manpower for applied technological research. A broader range of other skills is also limited.

39. The paper also stated that some domestic policies had affected industry adversely, the traditional import substitution model had discouraged exports and the lack of national and sectoral planning had reduced the efficiency in resource allocation.

40. The current levels of diversification and annual growth in the industrial sector were insufficient to generate sufficient employment or export earnings, or make a significant contribution to national income. While domestic investment had been limited, there were serious constraints to getting financing from abroad, especially since most countries had now graduated from concessionary funding from international lending institutions.

41. Equally, manufacturing contributed a low percentage of GDP and exports, since this sector comprised a small range of low value products, while imports consist of larger range of high value industrial goods.

42. Because food and consumer durable products had a high import content, the long-term growth of those sectors was closely tied to the ability to import.

43. High cost production in both manufacturing and agriculture affected the competitiveness of these products in the export as well as in the domestic market. Small island developing countries are also faced with insufficient production capacity to respond to increased demand.

44. In the face of all these difficulties, the author stressed that a successful export diversification programme is dependent on:

- (a) continuance of preferential agreements, and creation of new ones in other parts of the world;
- (b) softening of rules of origin requirements;
- (c) facilitation of domestic savings to augment investment;
- (d) improving production cost efficiency.

45. In order to increase trade, policy initiatives would be needed on both the domestic and international fronts.

46. Domestic policy would require, among other things:

(a) an active policy to promote non-traditional exports;

(b) the creation of a policy environment which is highly conducive to capital inflows;

(c) reorganizing the export sector to allow for exports on non-traditional products since their export marketing requirements seem different from traditional agricultural and mineral exports; and

(d) deliberate planning to develop the export infrastructure with or without external assistance, since exports are essential for long-term growth and material welfare.

47. On the international side, there was a need for:

(a) UNCTAD/GATT to evaluate the Generalized System of Preferences to determine whether it takes the special disadvantages of small states into account; and

(b) for a review of existing preferential schemes, to evaluate the origin rules to be satisfied by small island states, as a condition for their entry.

48. In the current international economic environment, trade, finance and technological developments now make necessary a great deal of action and adjustment from the governments and peoples of the small island states, especially the need to develop expertise in export marketing strategies, crucial to a successful export-oriented development strategy.

49. In the discussions, the following issues emerged:

(a) it was recognized that there was a need to examine ways of increasing domestic savings for investment, in a series of products having limited imported raw material requirements, and which use local by-products;

(b) Benefits could also be reaped from collective marketing of regional production;

(c) Transportation needed to be organized on more efficient lines, since it is basic to facilitating the flow and expansion of trade;

(d) Greater use should be made of local imports for local assembly industries, such as brake shoes, filters, springs, and so on, in the automobile assembly process;

(e) The possibility of including marketing costs as part of value-added under CBI, should be explored, and the need to stress market access was important since small production from the Caribbean could not threaten the national economies of those larger countries providing markets for them;

(f) Stress was placed on the importance of quality control and market intelligence if the region was to capture market niches in the face of stiff competition;

(g) The need for backward and forward product linkages was recognized as one way of reducing production costs; and

(h) The need to educate the consumer as to the value of local products was recognised as being important and could be achieved through buy-local campaigns, exhibitions of local products, dissemination of local success stories for advertising, ensuring that packaging is as attractive as possible, while at the same time the use of negative lists to encourage the utilization of local products should be explored.

50. Following discussions on the major topics other representatives presented some points for discussion and consideration. The representatives of the UNCTC presented short statements relating to Direct Foreign Investments, Technology Transfer, and Technology Negotiations with Transnational Corporations (TNCs). They pointed

out that foreign investment, especially for the larger hotel chains could be beneficial to the region, but that the agreed package must include provisions for training, local purchasing and so on. The Centre on Transnational Corporations (TNC) would be willing to assist countries in dealing with TNCs by providing information on negotiations relating to the acquisition and transfer of technology.

51. The representative of the Indian High Commission in Trinidad and Tobago reiterated his Government's offer of technical assistance to the Caribbean, and suggested that ways and means should be explored to facilitate taking up these offers, primarily in the form of scholarships that are available.

52. The representative of UNDP, along with ECLAC, explained the use of the TCDC methodology for obtaining technical assistance and urged delegates to use this method where possible as it helped to ensure that the right kind of assistance was obtained, at relatively lower cost.

53. It was agreed that a separate meeting should be convened, following the preparation of the Plan of Action to address the question of resource mobilization and requirements, which was not taken up at the meeting.

54. A number of project ideas were discussed at the final session and these are attached for consideration at Annex A. It is envisaged that they will be developed into project documents following consultation with other interested agencies and organizations.

55. It was agreed also that an outline of the Plan of Action would be presented to the Tenth Session of CDCC for consideration, and that further elaboration should take place following discussions with other agencies and organizations with a view to developing a comprehensive Programme of Action for Small Island States in the Caribbean.

ANNEX A

List of Projects

1. Hotel classification and registration scheme for Small Island Developing Countries
2. Tourism training and education
3. Assistance to Non-Independent Caribbean States (NICs) in programmes and activities of the United Nations System and its Specialized Agencies
4. Establishment of co-operative training unit for OECS Countries:
(a) clearing-house function; (b) development training material;
(c) organization training courses
5. Development of promotional and educational film material for co-operatives
6. Strengthening and establishment of trade network in co-operative sector of region (involving Co-operatives of other Regions)
7. Improving market access of Caribbean Small Island Countries (CSICs) to USA and Canada
8. Development of technology information system for Eastern Caribbean subregion
9. Development of technological capability and organization of a subregional workshop on Technology Management, Acquisition and Development
10. Curriculum development (overall educational system) for Grenada
11. Apprenticeship training (on job and classroom instruction) for Grenada
12. Land capability and management survey techniques
13. Investment and technology planning for Eastern Caribbean subregion
14. Public administrative structure and public policy implementation processes in micro states

ANNEX B

List of Participants

Countries

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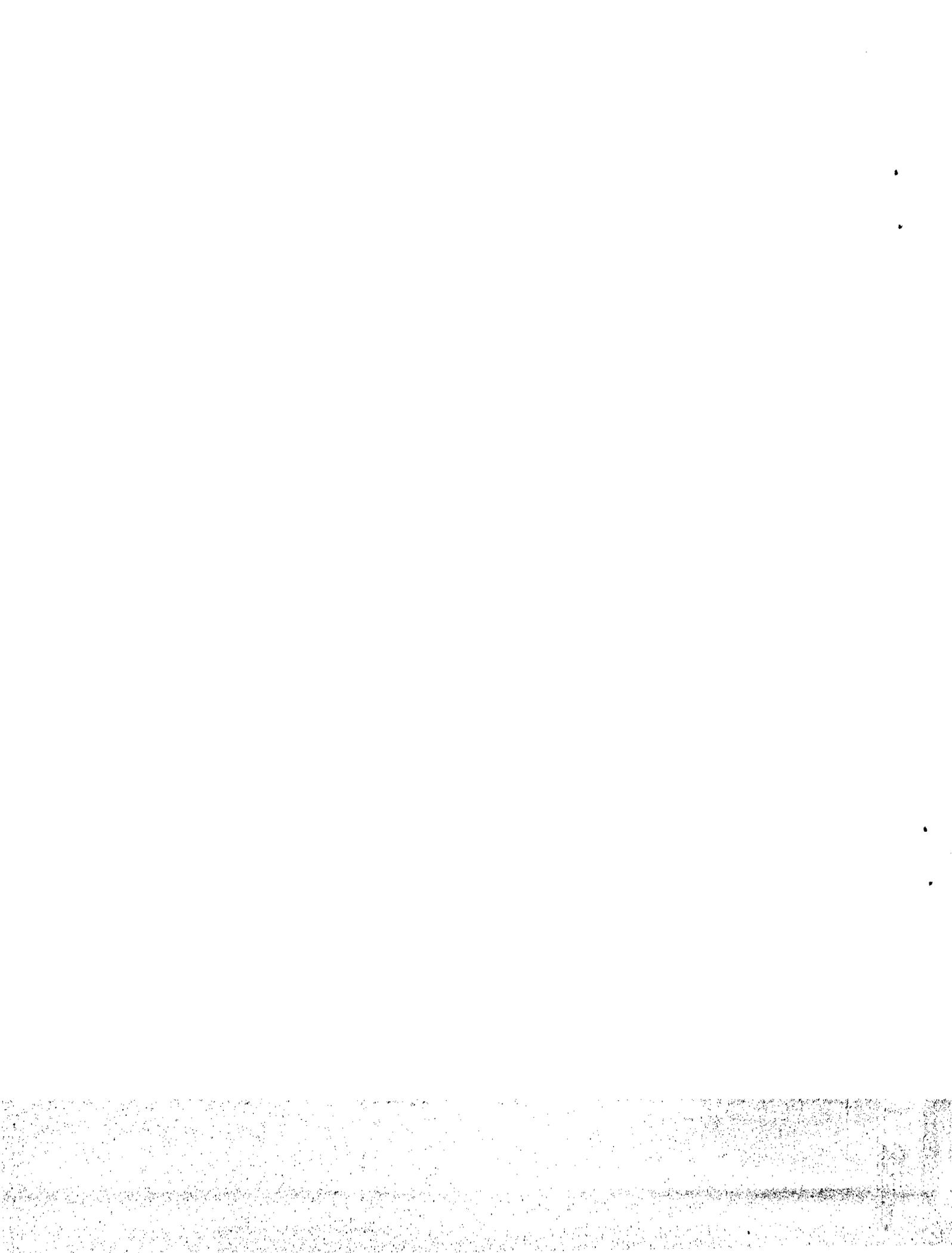
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