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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



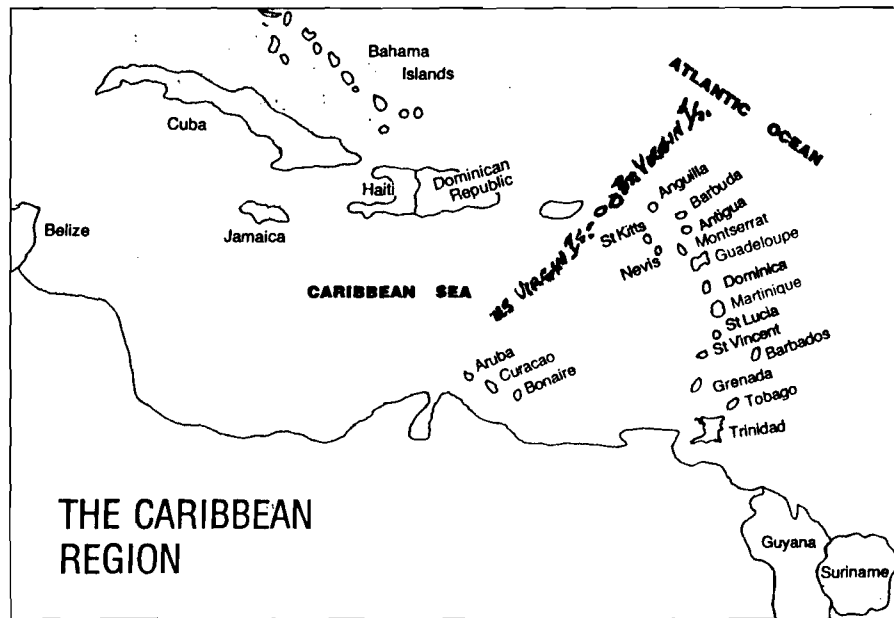
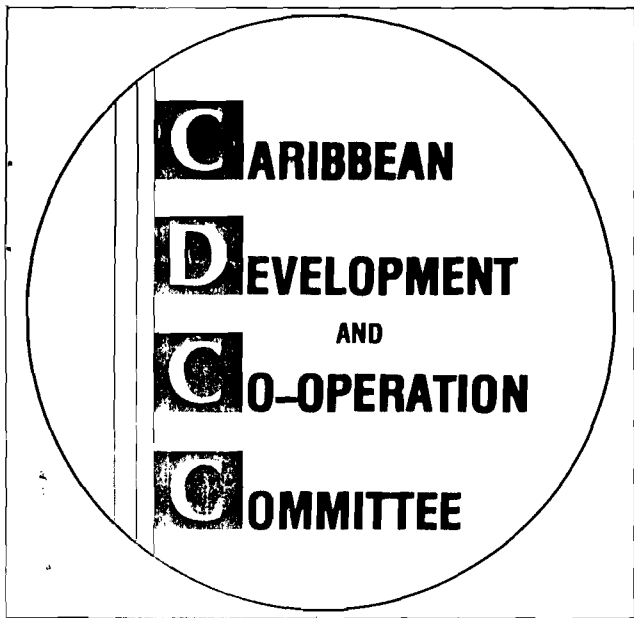
MINUTES OF THE SIXTH PLENARY SESSION
OF THE
CARIBBEAN COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



UNITED NATIONS

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CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

CARIBBEAN COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Sixth Plenary Session
St. George's, Grenada
10-12 December 1986

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MINUTES OF THE SIXTH PLENARY SESSION
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St. Georges, Grenada, 10-12 December 1986

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

1. The Sixth Plenary Session of the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST) was convened in St. Georges, Grenada from 10-12 December 1986. The meeting was hosted by the Government of Grenada in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Opening Session

2. The meeting was declared open by the Honourable George McGuire, Minister of Education of Grenada. The meeting was also addressed by the Chairman of CCST who presented his report (Annex I) and a vote of thanks was given by the representative of Jamaica.

Attendance

3. Representatives from the following CCST member countries were present: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Suriname.

4. The following Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) members and associate members were also present as observers: Barbados, the Netherlands Antilles and the United States Virgin Islands.

5. The following institutions and organizations with interest in science and technology activities also attended as observers: the CARICOM Secretariat, Sistema Economico Latinoamericano (SELA), the Windward Islands Banana Association (WINBAN) and the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC). The list of participants appears at Annex II.

II. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Adoption of the agenda

6. The agenda proposed in document CCST/86/4 was amended and adopted. The agenda is given at Annex III.

Minutes of the Fifth Plenary Session

7. The Minutes of the Fifth Plenary Session which had been circulated previously to all member countries were presented to the meeting.

Minutes of the Eighth Executive Committee Meeting

8. The Minutes of the Eighth Executive Committee Meeting were presented and noted.

Annual report and balance sheet for 1985-1986

9. The Fifth Annual Report and Balance Sheet (1985-1986) (document CCST 86/7) was presented to the Council. The secretariat was commended on the work that had been accomplished during the year, given the constraints within which it functions.

10. With respect to the project "Assessment of National Science and Technology Capabilities", the representative for Barbados offered to make available to the secretariat the results of a similar project which had been conducted in Barbados during 1985.

11. The SELA representative made some general remarks with respect to existing co-operation between SELA and the interim secretariat of CCST and suggested areas for future collaboration.

Matters arising

12. Most of the discussion was centred around the question of National Science Councils in response to the Guidelines paper that was prepared at the Fifth Plenary Meeting in Dominica.

Barbados

13. The Barbados representative described the organization of the Barbados Council for Science and Technology as follows:

(a) Membership - the Council comprises 14 members, a chairperson and vice-chairperson, representatives of major government ministries, representatives of non-government science institutions (including University of the West Indies (UWI), Sugar Technology Unit), and representatives of private sector industrial organizations.

(b) A small secretariat is funded through the Ministry of Finance and Planning, consisting of an executive secretary, a research assistant and a secretary.

(c) Meetings are held once a month.

(d) Terms of reference of the Council include: to serve in an advisory capacity to government through the Ministry of Finance and Planning; to collect and review scientific information relevant to national development and to co-ordinate science research programmes.

(e) The following activities for 1986 serve to illustrate application of the terms of reference: (i) several requests for advice ranging from preparation of speeches of a scientific nature for presentation at international fora to advice relating to the use of derelict vehicles as artificial reefs; (ii) preparation of a list of registered scientists; (iii) survey of persons involved in scientific research and their programmes.

Netherlands Antilles

14. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had commented on the Guidelines, indicating that the Netherlands Antilles plans to set up a national council. It was suggested that the role of the UNESCO representative in Curacao could be extended to include provision of secretariat services to the Council. Suggestions have also been made to include the private sector and the Chamber of Commerce in the membership of the national council.

Two levels of council membership are envisaged. These comprise a small nucleus of persons including representatives of the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs and the National Co-ordinator of Science and Technology and, at the island level, the Island Co-ordinator of Science and Technology.

15. Several organizations now serve in an advisory capacity on science and technology matters. The work of co-ordinating these is underway. It was suggested also that the following were areas for possible involvement of the CCST: Science and Technology in Education; Science and Technology in Tourism and "Dry Land" Agriculture.

Suriname

16. A consultation on Suriname's Constitution is presently in progress. The chairmen of special commissions from vital sectors of the countries as well as the Chairman of the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST) have been asked to sit in on the deliberations on science and technology. The main concern is that of convincing the decision makers of the need to establish a national council with the necessary powers to co-ordinate the affairs of science and technology. The Chairman of NCST is to sit in on Cabinet meetings.

Saint Lucia

17. A broader concept of science and technology is recognized and plans are afoot to bring together persons and organizations with science and technology interests in a national seminar on science and technology.

Grenada

18. Grenada has a National Science and Technology Council with a large membership which, however, does not have sufficient influence with the highest level of decision makers. There is a need to include higher ranking persons within the membership.

Jamaica

19. The delegate emphasized the need for particular help from CCST for countries in their own efforts at promoting the development of science and technology.

20. The Scientific Research Council (SRC) was established by law, but a wider perception of its role is necessary if the Council is to be effective in science and technology development. An interim advisory committee has been set up to produce a national science and technology policy. This committee has produced an organizational structure within which the national science and technology policy is to be implemented. The proposal is to establish: (a) a national advisory committee in science and technology. This would be broad-based and consist of about 40 to 50 members; (b) an inter-ministerial committee consisting of representatives of the various ministries involved; (c) a secretariat which would be the co-ordinating body.

21. A science policy document is to be presented in Parliament in early 1987 for adoption as part of the national plan.

Special Topic

22. At the Fifth Plenary Session held in Dominica, it was agreed that the Council would select a topic for in-depth discussion. The topic selected was: "Utilisation of Natural Resources for Development in the Region with Special Reference to: (1) Natural Products (including Agricultural Products); and (2) Minerals".

23. Country presentations were made by Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Netherlands Antilles, Saint Lucia and the United States Virgin Islands.

Work programme and budget 1986-1987

24. The Secretary presented the proposed Work Programme and Budget for 1986/87 (CCST/86/6).
25. The work programme was approved in principle with some recommendations and additions (see document CCST/86/6/Rev.1).
26. Regarding the Primary Health Care Meeting and the Workshop on Food and Nutrition, the secretariat was mandated to consult with the relevant regional organizations in those fields in order to clearly define the objectives of the meetings.
27. It was felt that the country reports presented by participants on the Assessment of National Science and Technology Capabilities could serve as the starting point for information gathering. Therefore, a list of science and technology institutions and their addresses should be added to the respective reports and forwarded to the secretariat. The secretariat would then compile a booklet on the state of science and technology in the region. The secretariat was requested to try to obtain similar information from countries and agencies not present at the meeting. This exercise is scheduled to be completed by the end of April 1987.
28. Regarding the proposed meeting of agencies involved in science and technology, it was felt that invitations should be extended to all the region's universities and colleges.
29. Other activities proposed by the meeting were:
 - a regional science and technology conference to bring together the region's scientists. The secretariat was requested to formulate a detailed proposal for this conference;
 - a workshop on food and agro-industry which would bring together persons who can influence government policy on the development of small scale agro-industry to discuss the problems that exist and to develop solutions to them. A proposal is to be formulated, based on discussions with CCST members and agencies working in this area of agro-industries.

Any other business

CCST Secretariat

30. The meeting discussed the question of a permanent secretariat for CCST. It requested the Secretary to prepare a draft letter with proposals for a permanent secretariat to be located at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, located in Trinidad and Tobago for the Executive Committee, which would submit same to the Executive Secretary of ECLAC for consideration.

Logo competition

31. The meeting considered that the three examples of logos presented to it for CCST were unsatisfactory for the Council's needs. It requested the secretariat to hire graphic artists to combine some of the ideas contained in the entries from Jamaica and Suriname.

Proposed amendment to Article 4 of the Statutes of CCST

32. In response to the proposal from the Legal Office of the United Nations, and after much discussion, the meeting changed the proposed amendment to read:

- "1. The Members of the Council shall comprise the States that are members of CDCC.
2. In addition, the Council may admit as a Member of CCST any country or territory within the Caribbean region. In the case of a country or territory that is not an independent state, an application for admission as a member of CCST shall be presented to the Council by the competent governmental authorities of the State which is responsible for the international relations of the country or territory in question".

33. This amendment should be circulated to member countries for their comments.

34. The meeting felt that action on this matter should proceed as expeditiously as possible, and the possibility was raised of convening an Extraordinary Plenary Session of CCST to consider this matter, so that at the next Regular Plenary Session, countries such as the Netherlands Antilles, the United States Virgin Islands and other interested countries could participate as full members.

Guidelines for setting up national science councils

35. Member states were urged to send their comments on the Guidelines prepared last year, and to inform the secretariat of any action taken.

36. It was felt that increased contact between member countries and the secretariat was needed and a suggestion was made that countries should provide periodic reports on activities to be sent to the secretariat for circulation to other member countries, and for the secretariat to inform member states of its activities on a more continuous basis and at shorter intervals.

Election of officers

37. Based on the decisions taken in Dominica at the Fifth Plenary Session in 1985, it was decided that the Executive Committee of the Council would remain unchanged for the coming year, thus giving one Executive Committee a two-year term on an experimental basis. After some clarification, particularly for the benefit of new representatives, the Executive Committee was re-elected for another term of office.

38. The members of the Executive Committee for 1986-1987 are therefore:

Chairman:	Suriname	Ernie Brunings
Vice-Chairman:	Antigua and Barbuda	Leonard Grant
Treasurer:	Grenada	James deVere Pitt
Member:	Jamaica	Gladstone Taylor

Date and Venue of Next Plenary Session

39. The representative of Suriname offered his country as the venue. It was decided also that an alternative venue should be selected and the Jamaican delegate offered his country as an alternative.

40. The date is to be decided following discussion between member states but if possible should be held before the start of the winter tourist season in December 1987.

Annex I

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Sixth Plenary Session of our Council is taking place at a time when the adverse economic condition of our member states forces us to reassess our development strategies and the pathway followed so far in our hope for economic and social development, to which our efforts have been directed.

I say economic and social development because that is the end result or objective of our efforts. But the vehicle for this economic and social development continues to be fueled by our progress and advances in science and technology and their application to the various sectors of the economy.

Yet the very catalyst for advancement in science and technology - finance - is in very short supply everywhere.

How then are we to proceed in order to get out of this whirlpool is probably the most valid question which we collectively will have to address.

May I, therefore, make some attempts at an answer.

Firstly, it goes without saying that there need be increased co-operation among ourselves. Co-operation that would result in a reduction of duplicated efforts and savings of resources.

Secondly, we need to be clear in our minds what it is we want our Council to address. Is it policy matters for an individual government's consideration; is it the identification of regional issues deserving attention, or is it both regional national issues deserving our attention and action? Because that last word action is what will in fact determine our success or failure.

Our work programme for last year was modest and I am happy to announce that we were able to implement much of what we set out to do. But these were not without difficulties. The dispersed membership makes travel

and communication almost prohibitive even for ordinary contact and much more so for programme implementation. Yet, these have to be faced and overcome.

Our financial situation continues to be precarious, but I am encouraged by growing signs of renewed interest in the Council and efforts to meet our obligations. This is a welcome sign I trust will improve.

Our science popularization programme got a boost by the holding of two workshops in audio-visual production for science and technology for the smaller states, and it is hoped that the proposed film festival will get underway next year.

We were able to convene the many times postponed Meeting on the Pharmaceutical Sector in the Caribbean and convened the First Meeting of the Working Group on Health, Nutrition and Pharmaceuticals. Follow-up work and the recommendations from these meetings will be addressed next year.

Our participation and collaboration with other agencies involved in science and technology continued, and I refer especially to the Meeting on New Technologies, held in Port-of-Spain, 7-10 May 1986, together with CARICOM and NIHERST. That meeting also gave our Council some activities to be implemented. The challenges, therefore, to our Council continue to grow. Our collaboration with UNESCO continues.

I mentioned before the question of a dispersed membership and the inherent problems of communication. But our secretariat can only be effective if at the national level the responses to its initiatives and communications are forthcoming and timely. The response to the logo competition was poor; the response to the Guidelines document was also poor. May I appeal, therefore, to ourselves to make every effort to give our Council affairs the attention it deserves in our bureaucracy. I know that the intention is there, but please make a special effort.

My last point concerns our secretariat. We are still operating with an interim secretariat provided by ECLAC. While this has served us well in the past, we may need to look at the arrangement again in light of the

increased demand of work which may necessitate a full time secretariat. This is not a call for increased contribution from our members, but simply to assess our situation in terms of providing those who are to implement our programme with the necessary support and authority to carry out their functions.

It is, therefore, in the light of our renewed and rejuvenated Council that I take pleasure in inviting the Honourable Minister of Education with responsibility for Science and Technology of the Government of Grenada to address our Council.

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. CCST Member Countries

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Secretary of CDCC

Christine David
Research Assistant

Maureen Afoon
Secretary

Annex III

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Chairman's report
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Minutes of the Fifth Plenary Session
4. Minutes of the Eighth Executive Committee Meeting
5. Annual report and balance sheet for 1985-1986
6. Matters arising:
 - Country reports on science and technology activities/problems
7. Issue for in-depth discussion:
 - Utilization of Natural Resources for Development in the Region with special reference to: (1) Natural Products (including agricultural products); and (2) Minerals.
8. Work programme and budget 1986-1987
9. Any other business
10. Election of officers
11. Date and venue of Seventh Plenary Session

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