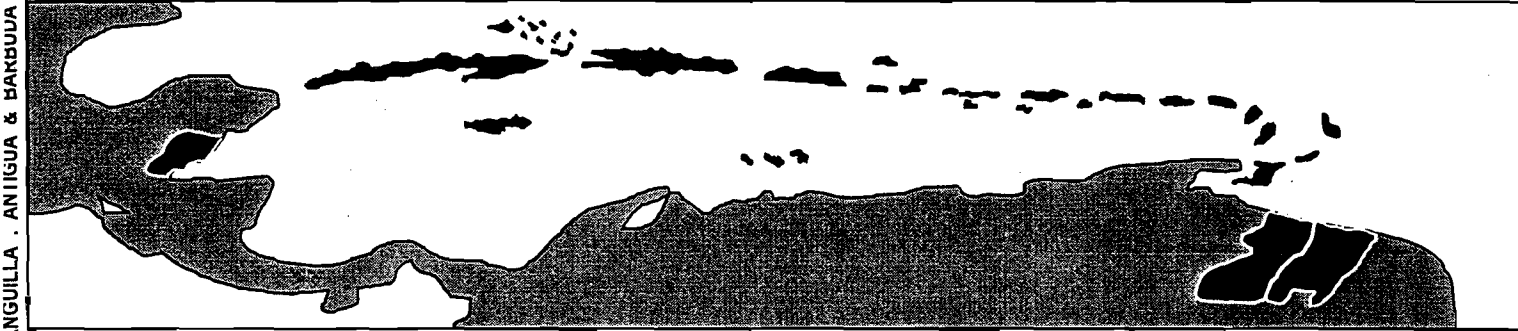




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PUERTO RICO . SAINT KITTS & NEVIS . SAINT LUCIA . SAINT VINCENT & THE GRENADINES . SURINAME . TRINIDAD & TOBAGO . U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS .

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on Intraregional Migration  
9-10 November 2000  
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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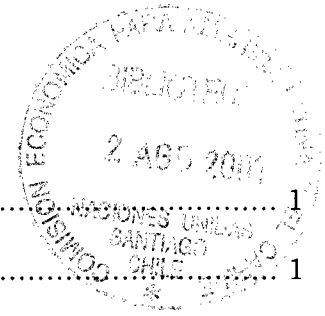
**REPORT OF THE AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON  
INTRAREGIONAL MIGRATION**





## Table of contents

Introduction.....	1
Agenda item 1: Opening.....	1
Agenda item 2: Migration trends and patterns in the Caribbean .....	4
Agenda item 3: Migration and its impact on development .....	6
Agenda item 4: Intraregional migration and its impact on social development.....	12
Health care.....	13
Education .....	14
Crime .....	14
Agenda item 5: Country case studies .....	16
Anguilla.....	16
Grenada .....	18
Netherlands Antilles .....	19
St. Kitts/Nevis .....	21
Belize.....	24
Dominica.....	25
Montserrat.....	26
Trinidad and Tobago.....	27
Agenda item 6: Recommendations for future research and policy initiatives .....	27
Annex .....	31





## **REPORT OF THE AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON INTRAREGIONAL MIGRATION**

### Introduction

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC) convened a meeting of experts in the field of intraregional migration over a two-day period, 9-10 November 2000, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The theme of the meeting was "Understanding the complex relationship between migration and development: intraregional migration and SIDS".

The objectives of the meeting were:

(a) To provide a forum for sharing and discussing the findings of recent studies on migration that had been commissioned by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat; and

(b) To arrive at recommendations for public sector policy that were pertinent to the issues of intraregional migration and relevant to countries of the subregion.

Fourteen experts from 10 CDCC member and associate member countries were present, namely: Anguilla, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, St Kitts/Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. Also present at the meeting were representatives from regional organizations, academic institutions, a visiting scholar and special invited guests. The list of participants for the meeting is annexed to this report.

### Agenda item 1

#### Opening

Dr. Len Ishmael, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, welcomed the participants to the meeting. In her opening remarks, she stated that the meeting was the fifth in a series of expert group meetings to be hosted by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat. That, she explained, was in an effort to refine the research agenda and give definition to new policy initiatives aimed at assisting member States to deal with the challenges presented by the ever-changing socio-economic environment. Dr. Ishmael noted that regional governments recognised the relationship between migration and development and its importance to their goal, which was to achieve growth with equity.

Quoting from the World Migration Report 2000, she informed participants that the 15 independent Caribbean nations, plus several

dependencies had some of the highest migration rates in the world. She also indicated that the four largest sources of migrants to the United States of America which accounted for 75 per cent of the 36 million Caribbean residents were from Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica. She further indicated that there was also a high level of intraregional movement of labour, heightened in the 1990s, which had resulted in the transformation of many of the countries of the subregion into receiving societies. So intense were some of these transformations that in Antigua and Barbuda, for example, Sunday Mass was said in Spanish, radio stations read the news in Spanish and Spanish troupes paraded during the island's annual carnival celebrations. It was noted, however, that attached to the contribution of migrants was a cost that was reflected in the increase in demand for social services and infrastructure, as well as in social tensions. In the British Virgin Islands for example, for the first time in years the need arose to build new infant and primary schools to educate the growing numbers of children born to Caribbean migrants.

Dr Ishmael further explained that governments were aware of the need to formulate policy as it pertained to migrants and migration and to understand the effects of migration on society. In this context, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat had conducted country assessments and assisted governments in the formulation of strategic policies in this area. She noted that Caribbean governments had reiterated their support for the exploration of migration and development issues and had mandated, where relevant, regional and subregional mechanisms to pursue this course. This was effected through the United Nations General Assembly resolution 54/212 on International Migration and Development adopted at the eighty-seventh plenary session, 22 December 1999. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat was, therefore, pleased to provide the present forum to continue on a path that would arrive at policy recommendations and the identification of areas for future research.

In her capacity of Chair, the representative of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat drew to the attention of participants the agenda and the programme of work for the two-day meeting. The agenda was adopted as follows:

1. Opening
2. Migration trends and patterns in the Caribbean
3. Migration and its impact on development – addressing the issues of return migration, remittances and the Caribbean common market
4. Intraregional migration and its impact on social development policy and equity – education, health, safety nets, crime and equity
5. Country case studies

6. Recommendations for future research and policy initiatives.

She outlined to participants, important aspects of the working paper, “Expert Group Meeting on Intraregional Migration”, in order to provide a context for the meeting’s discussion. In so doing, she pointed to some of the factors that influenced the process of migration, namely:

- (a) The processes of trade liberalisation and globalisation;
- (b) Movements for regional integration;
- (c) The environmental/ecological vulnerability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS); and
- (d) Efforts to meet sustainable human development goals and eradicate poverty.

The ECLAC/CDCC representative also noted that the meeting was a post-International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) activity and also followed on the Beijing process. It was recalled that Chapter 10 of the ICPD Programme for Action urged governments to look at the root causes of migration. She expressed the desire that over the two days of discussions, participants would:

- (a) Share their expertise and experiences in addressing the varied issues of intraregional migration;
- (b) Deliberate on the findings of recent studies on migration that had been commissioned by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat;
- (c) Arrive at recommendations for public sector policy that were pertinent to the issues of intraregional migration and relevant to countries of the subregion; and
- (d) Make recommendations on key issues for future research, which would advance the goals of sustainable human development in the Caribbean taking into account the factor of intraregional migration.

Agenda item 2  
Migration trends and patterns in the Caribbean

Professor Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona Campus, Jamaica, addressed participants on the topic "Migration trends and patterns in the Caribbean". She stated that migration was a very sensitive barometer of change in the society and also a highly valued aspect of freedom to Caribbean people. It was important at the personal level because of the opportunities it presented. Any restrictions to that freedom, she explained, represented an affront to potential migrants.

She noted that there were always tradeoffs at the personal, household and national levels attendant with migration. Immigration in receiving countries, for example, represented the need for labour, but a concomitant potential loss of social infrastructure. At the personal and household levels there were also opportunities and obligations associated with the migration process and, in this context, there was a need to conduct negotiations in a very careful manner. She explained, however, that migration had its own checks and balances and in a less than ideal world, these balances tended to be based on policies. In that regard, she recommended that policies should take the form of incentives rather than restrictions as, for example, when Jamaica liberalised the banking sector, it influenced the inflow of remittances.

She expressed the view that there was no single root cause of migration but that there were a range of migrants that tended to be selected from among the fittest. She explained that the poorest persons from society were rarely ever 'selected' as migrants and that people had greater opportunities to migrate when they had greater education and skills. She acknowledged that poverty often played a critical and dynamic role in the decision to migrate but also saw migration as an intense aspect of the transnational process, which could result in the further development of migrants and their children. When the move was actually made, migrants were noted to return. Overseas communities were also noted to be part of a transnational society and, therefore, important to the export of our culture and goods, while its importance at home was due to the fact that it provided an external market for local artistes and goods.

Professor Thomas-Hope's presentation was visually aided using graphs, the first of which, Regional vs. External Migrants in selected Caribbean Countries, illustrated that countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, the British Virgin Islands, and Antigua and Barbuda had a high Caribbean migrant stock. Other data, Migrant Rates: In Migration vs. Out Migration for the period 1991-1992 demonstrated that Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, the United States Virgin Islands and Barbados had more in-migration while Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Guyana, Grenada and Dominica had the reverse situation. Particularly noticeable was the fact that the Bahamas had no out-migration and the British Virgin Islands and the United States



Virgin Islands had the highest in-migration. The data also illustrated that for the period 1987-1997 the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago, in that order, had the highest levels of migrants to the United States of America. For the period 1980-1996 more nationals entered Canada as students, from the sending countries of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Haiti, than into the labour force.

Following her presentation, the floor was opened for discussion. Participants noted that some of the statistics that pointed to a high number of return residents to Trinidad and Tobago might have resulted from:

(a) The fact that dual citizenship offered in 1988 led to a backlog of requests that was retroactive to 1962; and

(b) Changes in legislation in the United States that allowed for deportation of more than 3000 'criminals' that were formerly resident in that country.

It was further noted that some countries had a steady stream of returnees, which included the skilled and professional classes. It was observed that this could be attributed to the fact that among these returnees there were a number of children of migrants who wanted to go to their parents' homeland to make their contribution. It was noted that persons such as these, would need assistance so that their efforts could be sustained economically and socially.

The issue of data was raised during the discussion, in the context of providing researchers and policy makers with up-to-date statistics. The point was made that collectors of information now have new technology that should allow them to collect information that was more updated. Professor Thomas-Hope responded that while this comment was valid, it was still not always possible to collect updated data for a number of reasons. She gave as an example the fact that data collected from entry and departure cards were not very helpful in capturing returning residents, since the questions were so worded that 'returning resident' could mean a person who had left the country for two days or 20 years. Some countries did not use these immigration cards at all.

The meeting agreed that important data were, in fact, not being captured by immigration and provided examples where the data did not capture tourists who frequented countries and varied their stay in accordance with immigration laws by living at least six months in one country and the remainder of the year in another. The importance of time-series data was also noted and the case of Trinidad and Tobago nationals, who claimed political refugee status and migrated to Canada in 1996-1997, was cited. Those who over-stayed their time in Canada were returned to Trinidad and Tobago because Canadian officials

realised that a false declaration had been made to the authorities regarding the refugee status of the migrant. This information was, however, not recorded and therefore data on illegal migrants were not captured. It was also suggested that data on students ought to be kept separate, since students travelling on student visas must return to their country of origin and are therefore, strictly speaking, not return migrants or ought to be looked at as a special kind of return migrant.

Participants asked whether any studies were done on deportees from the United States of America in Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries since, it was agreed, that this was an important area for studying issues related to crime, poverty and other factors responsible for out-migration. The meeting was reminded that in Trinidad, for instance, 'criminals' were being deported at a rate of approximately 200 per month, and that the total now stood at 5000.

### Agenda item 3

#### Migration and its impact on development – addressing the issues of return migration and remittances

The representative of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat moderated session two - Migration and its impact on development. She introduced Dr. Dennis Brown, UWI, St Augustine, who presented on the topic "Return Migration". Dr. Brown concurred with Professor Thomas-Hope's observation that migration was a sensitive indicator of what was going on in society. He also said that there seemed to be an absence of theory on return migration and that the literature did not seem to locate migration within the global socio-economic context. This observation, therefore, formed the basis of this hypothesis that globalisation, which stood on the free market principles, telecommunications and technological developments, had altered society and concomitantly the migration processes in Caribbean societies.

He indicated that globalisation had led to an interconnection of societies across the world, and this had affected the structure of each Caribbean society. He explained, for example, that advances in technology had a positive impact on sectors such as tourism, telecommunications, export processing zones, and finance, on one hand, while the provision of social services had suffered, leading to the fragmentation within societies.

In order to gain an understanding of the changes in migration in the region, Dr. Brown posed three main questions. These were:

(a) Had the proportion of the population involved in travel into and out of Caribbean countries changed over the period of the 1980s and the 1990s?

(b) Exactly what pattern of travel obtained among international migrants? and

(c) Had this pattern changed over time?

He also questioned whether the conventional understanding of return migration had become passé and should instead be replaced by a conception that highlights circularity in the pattern of travel undertaken by our people in the region.

In attempting to answer this question, he compared the 1990 census data for the subregion, which spoke of movements in the decade prior to the 1990s, with data from the survey of living conditions for St. Kitts and Nevis and Grenada, which spoke to activities occurring at the close of the 1990s, for these two countries. According to Dr. Brown, the 1990 census data showed that between 7 and 10 per cent of the population from Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were involved in return travel to these territories. This was in keeping with the findings of the survey of living conditions in both Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis at the close of the 1990s, whereas Grenada's data showed 9 per cent and St. Kitts and Nevis showed 7 per cent of their population involved in return travel.

In both countries, at least 25 per cent of the returnees indicated that they intended to travel again and there was a general expression of intention to live abroad again. The data also indicated the existence of two main categories of return migrants, the first of whom were those who once lived abroad and had no intention of doing so again. The second were those who engaged in the circulatory process. He explained that while it was possible to give information on what pattern of travel obtained in the closing years of the twentieth century in the two territories, it was not possible to say whether this pattern of travel represented change. This was because no baseline data on 'number of times' travelled existed. As a result, the data could not answer whether circularity had in fact increased with globalisation and in his opinion it was too early to make any conclusions.

Dr Brown however noted that the social conditions arising out of the processes of globalisation had led to a situation in which some countries in the subregion were better off than others, depending on their areas of economic activity. In the 1980s, Guyana and Jamaica experienced economic decline while the Turks and Caicos, The Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands and the United States Virgin Islands experienced economic prosperity. These are examples of the kinds of structures that formed the basis of intraregional migration. In Grenada he noted that less than 25 per cent of travellers went to the metropolis while the remainder travelled within the Caribbean.

Following his presentation, the floor was opened for discussion. The need for greater definition of concepts was the concern of one participant who

noted that this could affect the use of statistics to estimate return migrants. This was especially important when questionnaires were being developed to ascertain the exact nature of a person's travel abroad.

The point was also made, in response to Dr. Brown's view on the absence of theory on migration, that there was need to engage in cross-disciplinary studies since some work was being done in this area under the umbrella of cultural studies.

Professor Thomas-Hope commented on Dr. Brown's use of the terms 'migration' and 'travel' and said that there was need to accompany concepts with specific time lines in order to clarify the terminology that was being used. For example, she explained there was a need to define whether the word 'travelled' meant one who had been away for two days or two years. Circulatory, she suggested, could include those who sold and bought goods or those who worked for six months abroad, etc. The fluidity of the process of migration was seen to create some difficulty to demography and other cross-disciplinary studies.

The next presentation was made by the representative of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat on behalf of the representative of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) who was unable to attend the meeting. On behalf of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, she also expressed her appreciation for the various studies which had been conducted, namely:

(a) A Study of Return Migration to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) territories and the British Virgin Islands in the closing years of the twentieth century: Implications for Social Policy prepared by Dr. Dennis Brown;

(b) The Impact of Immigration on Caribbean Microstates: Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Saint Maarten, United States Virgin Islands prepared by Dr. Frank Mills; and

(c) The Contribution of Remittances to Social and Economic Development in the Caribbean prepared by Dr. Wendell Samuel.

She briefed participants on the study, 'The Contribution of Remittances to Social and Economic Development in the Caribbean'. The study noted the various uses of remittances and warned that when it was used for conspicuous consumption it led to a decrease of foreign exchange and had the negative impact of replicating ostentatious consumption patterns that led to a further decrease in foreign exchange. On the other hand, remittances also had the effect of empowering its receivers, which could lead to more productive workers. Poor households were also seen to receive higher remittances, which impacted on the income equilibrium of society, which could be seen as a

positive development goal. They were also used for the creation and expansion of new businesses and were also very visible when natural disasters occurred. Remittances were also noted to impact on the balance of payments.

The study also spoke to the portfolio choices of migrants and how interest rates affected the saving of remittances. The study was cognisant of the wider interpretation of migrant resources in the development process such as the opportunities to export carnival, entertainers and culture, which could also assist in the development process with respect to the flow of income.

The study recommended that the establishment of branches of regional financial institutions abroad was one way of tapping into migrant resources. Additionally, it noted that the provision of other investment vehicles, in United States dollars available at home would make returnees feel comfortable to invest, as there would be no need to worry over the value of their foreign exchange.

In conclusion, the ECLAC/CDCC representative endorsed Professor Thomas-Hope's statement on the need to use creative policies to encourage remittances rather than placing restrictions, which would impact on how and where savings were lodged.

The representative of the CARICOM Secretariat presented on Migration in the Caribbean Community and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and informed participants that the goals of the CSME were a subset of the objectives of CARICOM, namely:

- (a) Full employment of all factors of production;
- (b) Improved standards of living and work;
- (c) Accelerated, coordinated and sustained economic development;
- (d) Increased economic leverage and effectiveness vis-à-vis other States, groups of States and entities;
- (e) Expansion of trade and economic relations with other Caribbean countries, Central and Latin American countries;
- (f) The achievement of increasing levels of competitiveness; and
- (g) Organization for increased production.

He noted that CARICOM no longer included a common market since this was replaced by the CSME which he said was essentially about the creation of

new opportunities for employment and investment geared towards the improvement of the standard of living. The key assumption behind the strategy of the CSME was that fully integrated goods, services, capital and labour markets would result in a more dynamic economy. He noted that the main difference between the common market and the CSME was that the CSME catered for the free movement of goods, services and capital and labour while the common market catered only for the free movement of goods.

Regarding the free movement of skills, the meeting noted that up to the time of reporting, 10 member States had completed the legal process to give effect to the free movement of university graduates. In addition, three member States had completed the legal process to give effect to the free movement of the other approved categories.

The meeting was informed that the Secretariat was looking into Protocol II, Establishment, Services, Capital, which in effect provided for the free movement of persons as service providers or to establish businesses, including the free movement of managerial, supervisory and technical staff associated with the service of the business and their spouses and immediate dependant family members. It was noted that most member States, with the exception of Barbados, used model legislation prepared by CARICOM to assist with the mandates to enact legislation at the national level.

In briefing on the various Acts, the CARICOM representative indicated that most of them provided for both the indefinite entry and a provisional entry for six months based on the origin of the Certificate of CARICOM Skills Qualification. Furthermore, most Acts provided for freedom of movement, including the right to leave and re-enter, freedom to acquire property to use as a residence or for business purposes and the right to engage in gainful employment. All Acts indicate that the permission and rights are irrevocable, except cause and procedure, which would render at least some category of nationals liable to deportation, extradition or other forms of expulsion. Note was also made of the CARICOM agreement on social security which 13 member States had signed, 12 had ratified and 10 had legislated.

He informed that national bodies were to be linked to form accreditation bodies in member States and that technical support had been promised by the Commonwealth Secretariat to assist member States to put these bodies in place.

It was explained that no concrete activities had been undertaken in the Establishment of a Skills Register. However, it was envisaged that after the completion of the United States Department of Labour, Labour Market Information System (LMIS) and Labour Exchange Project, to which member States have signed, it would become easier to establish the project. The project

will result in the establishment of a LMIS and Labour Exchange System (LES) in all member States by November 2001.

It was shown that historically teachers, nurses, police agents and other non-degree professionals moved and continued to move intraregionally for work purposes. In 2001, the Secretariat would start discussions on the other categories that must become eligible for free movement. Such movement was consistent with the policy directive to inform the adoption of a broad policy that would permit the general extension of the right of freedom of movement to CARICOM nationals as their circumstances permit and as agreed by the Heads of Governments.

This having been said, it was emphasised that no major migration effects or issues had been noted as a result of the free movement of skills and labour with respect to the outflow of skills to other member States. This was because the traditional destinations for skills, namely the United States of America, Canada and Europe, continue to attract migrants thus maintaining the Caribbean diaspora.

He pointed to research needs as determined by the Secretariat in the following areas:

(a) The effects of the free movement of skills on the social infrastructure of both the country of origin and the receiving country and possible responses;

(b) What other rights, besides those he noted in the respective Acts would be conferred to people, who moved as 'skilled' persons; and

(c) The experiences of people who migrated as skilled persons.

The meeting agreed that the establishment of basic rights for migrants should be consistent with the establishment of migrant policy. The point was reiterated that legislation was indeed important lest there be a recurrence of the situation with respect to the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) which allowed for the free movement of goods where no consideration was given to how the goods should be sold and by whom, when the agreement was enforced.

In response to concerns that there was need for information on the labour force in the Caribbean, its quality and quantity of skills and the impact of the movement of these skills, the CARICOM representative responded that those issues had been discussed, and proposals made for such a study to be undertaken. That was necessary, as there was a need to study the effects in a country if it were drained of a certain type of skill because the incentives were better in another country.

Some participants expressed the view that it might be problematic for small States to enact and implement the mandates, as it might not be viable for their economies. It was posited, however, that people would move where the jobs existed and, therefore, policies would make this possible to the benefit of all.

#### Agenda item 4

#### Intraregional migration and its impact on social development

The representative of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) moderated this session and remarked that intraregional migration and its effects were sensitive and controversial issues within the Caribbean subregion. However, this only highlighted the need for frank and open discussion. He also indicated that those issues should be seen in the context of the globalisation process and within a context of ever increasing movement between Caribbean islands. He explained that international migration to metropolitan nations from the Caribbean was also unlikely to cease and that because of low fertility rates, which had resulted in an aging population and shrinking labour force in the developed countries, there was an increasing possibility that those nations would accept migrants.

Dr. Frank Mills, University of the United States Virgin Islands then delivered a presentation on "Health, Education, Crime and Social Integration". He began by indicating that in the past, migration from the Caribbean was associated primarily with the "brain drain" phenomena. However other consequences had been coming to the fore, both in the countries that were losing persons and in those that were the recipients of the migrants. Countries in such as the British Virgin Islands and St. Maarten were becoming alarmed at a situation whereby an increasing proportion of their resident population had not been born in those countries.

Dr. Mills spoke of a "new" migration that was taking place within the Caribbean subregion, where neighbouring countries of the Caribbean were now "receiving/destination" countries. He explained that in the same way that developed countries had had to struggle with migration and its impacts, the same was true of these small nations. He then proceeded to highlight some of the major migration movements in of the Caribbean over the last century. He spoke of an intraregional migration to Guyana and Trinidad after slavery. This was followed in 1885-1920 by migration to Panama, Venezuela and Honduras. Between 1925 and 1940, there was an exodus to Venezuela (because of the oil industry) and Curacao. From the 1950s onwards, there was the movement of persons to the United States of America and the United Kingdom, a process that is still ongoing. Dr. Mills spoke of the responses of countries, much bigger than those in the Caribbean, to the inflow of migrants into their countries and the way in which they sought to limit the proportions of migrants entering their



country. The United States of America and Canada, for example, had migrants that were less than 10 per cent of their entire population, while Switzerland was attempting to limit the migrant population to about 18 per cent. In some Caribbean countries he noted, the migrant population had reached 30 to 40 per cent of the total population.

He emphasised the impact of such inflows of migrants into very small States, such as those that existed in the Caribbean and pointed out that in this context, planning could become very burdensome.

Dr. Mills posited the following scenarios:

### **Health care**

In the health care sector, migrants might not be able or willing to access public health care, especially if they were illegally present in the country. They might also resort to seeing unlicensed doctors, at great risk to their health. In other instances because of language barriers, migrants might find it difficult to access the necessary health services, thus possibly contributing to the spread of infectious diseases throughout the society.

Giving examples from the Caribbean, he pointed out that in the Bahamas the number of live births by Haitians rose from 7.8 per cent of the registered births to 13.4 per cent. This had led to an increase in the health allocation as assigned by the budgetary process. In government clinics, the percentage of Haitians requiring attention might be anywhere from 30 to 70 per cent of the treated. Because of their diet, Haitians were also at greater risk of intestinal infections and it had been ascertained that Haitian women, for a variety of factors were 2.5 times more likely than women in the population, to be HIV positive.

In the United States Virgin Islands, there was a large immigration movement in the 1960s. At that time nationals paid only 50 per cent of their health care costs, but foreigners were obliged to pay in full. This kept non-nationals out of the system, but led to infectious diseases spreading within the population. The law was subsequently revoked, but only at a cost to the government.

Health care workers also bore an inordinate burden because of the increase in numbers of persons seeking health care. Dr. Mills suggested that the key was to implement the kinds of policies that ensured that nationals did not bear the burden of servicing the health of non-nationals while ensuring that the cost of such services was not so prohibitive as to prevent access to non-nationals thereby, causing an eventual problem to the entire society.

## **Education**

The countries whose education systems were impacted significantly by the presence of migrants included Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands and the United States Virgin Islands. It had been predicted that there would be problems in St. Kitts/Nevis and the Cayman Islands. There were few schools in those countries, so that construction of new buildings would become necessary, with all the attendant costs involved. In some countries, the children of illegal immigrants were not allowed in public schools, but that had social repercussions later on. In many cases the rules had been changed, either by legal action or as a part of government policy. In some countries such as the Cayman Islands, whenever low skilled labour was brought in, the adults were not allowed to bring their children with them or they were charged a fee for doing so. This process had also been dismantled. Yet, in other cases, language proved to be a challenge to the education system in cases where the immigrants spoke a different language. In order to deal with that problem, St. Maarten, for example, had to build eight makeshift schools to accommodate the children of migrants who did not speak the language of the host country.

## **Crime**

In terms of migrants involved in criminal activity, it was found that the police generally did not have available or accurate data on crimes committed by non-nationals. However, available statistics did not indicate any greater involvement of non-nationals in criminal activity than the rest of the population. Crimes in which non-nationals were involved, tended to be highlighted more by the media, which resulted in an emotional response from the population.

Dr Mills thought that migration policy needed to consider the issues of regulation and entry into the country and what should be done once migrants had arrived. He advances the view that the present policies were seldom thought out along those lines and, as a result, could affect relations between States. He explained that those issues tended to affect Caribbean unity, since if nationals of one country had the perception that their country men and women were being treated unfairly in another country, they might demonstrate their sympathy by meting out similar treatment to migrants in their own country. In the pursuit of designing proper policies for treatment of migrants, other factors came into the picture, for example, the possibility that if migrants had the right to vote, they could affect the politics of a country to which they were not native. In any case, the issue of accommodation of migrants remained an issue that should be dealt with, since failure to do so, would result in social problems for decades to come. Concomitant with this was the determination of the status of the children of migrants.

In attempting to incorporate migrants, there were basically four strategies that had been employed. These were:

(a) Assimilation - this occurred when migrants were expected to adapt to the language, behaviour and culture of the host country. This was described as the “melting pot” theory and had been practised in the United States of America and older recruiting nations;

(b) Integration - in this scenario, there was mutual accommodation between the host citizens and migrants, so that each had the same access and public privileges as the other;

(c) Exclusion - here, migrants were incorporated into certain sectors, especially in the low productivity sectors of the labour market and disparaging remarks were often made about the migrant group; and

(d) Multiculturalism - in this instance, a transformation occurred where the migrant communities became exclusive communities, but were gradually and increasingly accorded similar rights as nationals in the host society.

Dr. Mills concluded his presentation by emphasising that policy makers needed to include their populations in the development of their migration policy so that nationals had a clear understanding of the way in which it was intended that migrants be incorporated into the society.

In the discussion that followed, participants supported many of the points made in the presentation, with observations that were based on their own experiences. The antagonism that existed between “belongers” and the migrant Haitians was raised, and issues relating to the position of the Haitians in the labour market, as well as their access to legal recourse in the event of injustices, were discussed. It was also suggested that there was a need to sensitise policy makers to regional migration issues, as well as to the importance of concepts, such as what constitutes a genuine refugee. In that regard, it was suggested that the notion of economic refugee might be increasingly important.

In the context of illegal migration, it was noted that in the Dominican Republic and other islands that contain many smaller islands or inlets within their jurisdiction, or countries that shared borders with other countries, efforts to prevent the entry of illegal migrants often consumed a fair amount of resources. A particularly disturbing aspect of illegal migration was the trade of young men and women for various illegal activities e.g. the sex trade. There were no data to suggest whether these sex workers were brought in illegally or whether they were first legalised and then brought into the trade? No definitive answer was given, but it was suggested that persons in the political and

enforcement spheres often knew of these activities, but did nothing to arrest them. Attention was also called to the fact that in most of the countries in the Caribbean, there was a noticeable absence, in the laws governing migrants, of considerations that deal with housing, education and family reunification. The meeting observed the need for public discussion on these issues to avoid unilateral action on the part of governments and the risk of civil reactions from nationals.

Another issue of concern had to do with the effects of migration on the tourism sector. In this situation, land bought by non-nationals was lost to local use and investment. The social consequence of this was noted and the need for policies to effectively manage this activity, identified. It was recommended that legislation relating to landholding by aliens and investments by non-locals needed to be re-examined in this context. It was also noted that in the migration process, there were times that anticipated benefits might not materialise. The example of Belize was noted in this regard, whereby some of the Asian migrants who received citizenship did not settle in Belize, but merely used the passports to obtain an easier passage to resident status in the United States of America or Canada.

The meeting also addressed the question of the profiling of migrants and the use of terms that resulted in discrimination. One example of this was the use of the terms "belonger" and "non believer", which were used in the British Nationality Act and, though not originally meant to demean or engender discrimination, resulted in such.

#### Agenda item 5 Country case studies

Ms. Linda Hewitt, Director, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Development (CIRD) moderated the presentation and discussion of country case studies.

### **Anguilla**

The process of migration in Anguilla was discussed as occurring in two phases - a pre-1980 and a post-1980 phase. The pre-1980 phase of migration was characterised as one of out migration and some estimates are that the number of Anguillians abroad is equal to those resident in the country. The post-1980 phase of migration in Anguilla was characterised as one of immigration. The need of the country for professional and technical expertise was identified as the major reason for the acceptance of immigrants into the country. Approximately 70 per cent of persons entering Anguilla were from the Caribbean, primarily from the Dominican Republic, Guyana and Jamaica. Migrants, although sending remittances to their home countries, also contributed greatly to the GDP of Anguilla. Another reason for Anguilla's ready

acceptance of migrants was the fact that the issuing of work permits was a significant source of revenue for that country, since direct taxation in that country did not exist.

Notwithstanding the positive effects of migration in Anguilla, it was reported that the social impact of this phenomenon on the host country had been great. Some of the impacts and/or outcomes of this increase in migration included:

(a) An increased burden on existing social services as well as on the ability of the State to adequately deliver social services to the population;

(b) Fluctuating legislation regarding immigrants and family members that accompany them. For example, at one time it was ruled that no children were allowed to accompany migrants into Anguilla. This was later amended so that only children of migrants who worked with the government were allowed and, yet later, this was amended so that all migrant workers were allowed to have their children accompany them to Anguilla, but not more than four were able to do so;

(c) Cultural changes in the population due to the inflow of migrants with distinct cultural practices. This sometimes created tension in the society; and

(d) Poor housing conditions, leading to the creation of shanty-towns in Anguilla.

It was also reported that Anguilla had become a transit point in the trafficking of migrants, including the trafficking of women as sex workers. The issue of citizenship was also a source of tension and concern in this country, since with this came the right to vote. Some nationals feared that migrants might soon have greater influence concerning matters of policy and how the country is run if the right to vote is too freely given. Related to issues of citizenship and belonging were also the following matters:

(a) There were children in a condition of 'statelessness' since not all children born in Anguilla could acquire Anguillan nationality;

(b) Migrants were unable to buy their own homes in Anguilla because of laws that prevented them from doing so;

(c) Young adult children of migrant workers did not have the automatic right to work upon leaving school; and

(d) Since the cost of living in Anguilla is high, migrants had now begun to claim public assistance. Government was still considering how this should be allowed as this might cause migrants to be a burden to taxpayers.

It was reported that Anguilla would now have to face issues of human resource development and planning, if it wanted to reduce its dependency on migrants for the labour force. The reform of labour legislation would also have to be considered especially as it affected domestic workers. In light of the fact that there was a small movement of retired return migrants to Anguilla, consideration was being given to initiating policies to encourage more Anguillians to return home to work.

### **Grenada**

Grenada's case study pointed to the high rate of migration in that country. Net migration, which stood at 21 per cent per thousand in 1970, increased in 1981 and then decreased dramatically in 1991. In the 1950s and 1960s migration was male dominated, but this pattern was reversed in the 1970s, where more females than males migrated. This reversal, it was reported, helped to redress the former sex imbalance in the country.

Migration in Grenada impacted on the development of the country in two main ways. In the first instance, the process had been characterized by the loss of skilled persons of working age for better working and living conditions abroad and secondly by the issue of returning residents. With regard to the exodus of skilled workers from the island, this had been accompanied by steadily increasing remittances, popularly known as "workers remittances", which contributed significantly to the country's balance of payments. Emigrants also sent consumer items in the form of food and clothing to Grenada. These were considered by nationals to be of a higher quality than similar items available locally. This tended to stifle the creativity of residents in Grenada. Many of the returning residents were doing so with cash and skills acquired from years spent abroad. In many cases return migrants used their newly acquired skills by volunteering their services in areas where there were gaps in communities and schools. Many were also constructing houses. Unfortunately, most of the lands being used for home construction were prime agricultural lands. Notwithstanding this, returning residents also contributed significantly to the banking sector. Commercial banks had indicated that with the return of residents, their loan portfolios had grown and their profitability had increased.

It was concluded that on the basis of the experiences and issues arising from the migration process, there was a need to formulate migration policies in Grenada that are beneficial to both returning emigrants and the country as a whole.

## **Netherlands Antilles**

The case study on the Netherlands Antilles noted that the territory consisted of two groups of islands; the Windward Islands, lying in the Eastern Caribbean, and the Leeward Islands, near the coast of Venezuela and highlighted that this geographical distance had contributed to different conditions of migration in the two groups of islands. The Leeward Islands, Bonaire and Curaçao were characterised by emigration while the Windward Islands of St. Marten, Saba and St. Eustatius were characterised by immigration.

It was reported that in 1994, the Permanent Committee on Population Issues of the Netherlands Antilles was created and had since been working towards a comprehensive population policy. Migration was one of the concerns arising out of a survey conducted by the Committee to capture people's views on population issues and policy. In this survey, conducted in 1998/1999, the following data was obtained on the issue of emigration:

(a) In the Leeward Islands, 6 per cent of the population between the ages of 18-45 were thinking of emigrating in the current year of the survey. Of this population, 67 per cent were planning to travel to the Netherlands (Holland); and

(b) In the Windward Islands, just over 10 per cent of the population was planning to leave the islands within the year. Only 21 per cent was thinking of travelling to the Netherlands, while 33 per cent was planning to emigrate to other parts of the Caribbean and 32 per cent to North or Central America. Twenty-five percent of these potential emigrants had tertiary levels of education, even though the average educational level of the population in the Windward Islands is lower than in the Leeward Islands.

Actual data from the 1992 Census showed the actual migration figures to be close to figures reported in the survey.

Migration in the Netherlands Antilles was seen to be the result of poor socio-economic conditions in these islands, the booming economy in the Netherlands, and the fact that for Antilleans, entrance into the Netherlands was not restricted. It was reported, however, that in the last few years, the Netherlands had been trying to impose some restrictions on the movement of Antilleans into the country. These included:

(a) The 'regulation for guardianship' for minors up to 18 years old to prevent young people leaving by themselves and not receiving any guidance upon arrival in the new country. Since this regulation is to protect the young, everyone accepted it; and

(b) The ruling that people with low levels of education must take courses in the Dutch language and learn about the Dutch culture, before leaving the islands to enter the Netherlands. If they had no proof of having taken the courses, they would not be permitted to leave for the Netherlands. It was reported that there had not been acceptance of this ruling.

The report observed that the Leeward Islands had high levels of emigration, over 80 per cent of the population of the Windward Islands were born outside the Netherlands Antilles. This compared to the approximately 20 per cent of immigrants that made up the population of the Leeward Islands. It was also reported that immigrants to the Netherlands Antilles came from countries with socio-economic conditions that were more difficult than in the receiving countries. Among the conditions for remaining in the Netherlands Antilles were:

- (a) A record of good behaviour;
- (b) Proof of being able to make a living; and
- (c) Ability to pay a deposit.

Even though these conditions were very strict, there were many undocumented persons in the Netherlands Antilles. Estimations range between 10,000 to 40,000.

Since 1997, a registration system was developed between the Netherlands Antilles and the Netherlands, to verify if a person had double registration and to have this situation corrected. Because of this, the figures from 1997 onwards were much more reliable than in previous years. Nonetheless, migration data for the period 1992-1998 showed the following:

(a) Curaçao and Bonaire had the highest migration movements between the Netherlands Antilles and the Netherlands;

(b) In the period between 1992 and 1996 Bonaire had a positive net arrival;

(c) During the years 1993 through to 1995 Curaçao had a positive net arrival;

(d) Starting in 1996 the departure figures for Curaçao increased significantly;

(e) The total population of St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba that was not affected by the departures (which were not significant);



(f) Approximately 52 per cent of all persons leaving the Netherlands Antilles yearly to go to the Netherlands, were women; and

(g) Approximately 60 per cent of the people leaving the Netherlands Antilles for the Netherlands yearly were younger than 30 years.

The meeting was also informed of some of the consequences of migration that were being felt by this country. These included:

(a) Emigration of highly qualified human resources. This was especially so since the Netherlands had been actively recruiting teachers, nurses and other health specialists and workers in the field of construction. Since the salaries and other conditions this country could offer were better than those in the Antilles, people accepted these jobs very quickly and left with their families. The Netherlands Antilles had tried to balance the situation by lifting all immigration restrictions that would prevent persons from the Netherlands from entering the Netherlands Antilles. There had been no significant change so far. In the meantime, low-skilled and poorly educated and qualified persons were coming from other countries to stay in the Netherlands Antilles;

(b) Imbalances in the flow of remittances to and from the Netherlands Antilles. In the case of the emigrants, there were no significant flow of remittances to the country, since people who decided to leave for the Netherlands, took their families with them. In fact, even if there were people remaining behind, in many cases they continued to sustain the ones living in the Netherlands. On the other hand, the immigrants who made up 20 per cent of the population of the Leeward Islands and 80 per cent of that of the Windward Islands, sent money to their countries of origin, which caused an outflow of foreign exchange affecting the country's balance of payment; and

(c) Demographic shifts in the population due to the migration of young people between the ages 18 and 45. It was noted that this was affecting the rate of the aging of the population and impacting on the social security system.

It was suggested that the socio-economic conditions of the Netherlands Antilles were expected to improve in the future, but since it would take some time before it became visible, the emigration flow was likely to continue for yet a few more years

### **St. Kitts/Nevis**

The case study of St. Kitts/Nevis alluded to some previous migration movements during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, where men went to the Dominican Republic to work on the sugar cane estates. It was reported that

the situation had now reversed and there was a large number of Guyanese who went to St. Kitts/Nevis during the cane harvesting season and then returned to Guyana with their acquired earnings.

With respect to migrants, especially returning migrants, it was reported that the Government had set up a secretariat for returning nationals, which had been operational for almost one year. The Prime Minister of St. Kitts/Nevis highlighted the importance of these migrants, in his budget speech, when he said that returning nationals could become an important source of capital and expertise for the nation. The secretariat established a "one-stop shop" to remove any frustration on the part of nationals trying to return and the removal of import duties on a number of household items. To further facilitate returning nationals, technology was being utilised, for example, to advertise real estate on the internet. The secretariat also intended to get regular stock exchange data from the ECCB and invited investment in the Eastern Caribbean's stock exchange.

In anticipation of the increase in service needs brought on by returning residents, the health care facilities were being improved and a new hospital and dental clinic were being built for the country as a whole. Plans included facilities where doctors would be able to "conference talk" on surgical procedures or seek advice. It was also pointed out, that apart from retired returning migrants, there were many young persons, having studied abroad or of Kittian and Nevisan parentage, who wanted to return to St. Kitts/Nevis. There was however, no policy in place to accommodate these persons. It was reported that the secretariat was planning to develop a database that would contain information on skill areas and the availability of jobs, to assist these young people. It was expressed that the present Prime Minister of St. Kitts/Nevis had indicated the need for more staff within the secretariat and wanted to convert the office into a full government division, eventually.

Participants were told that there was negative feedback, in some instances, from sections of the population regarding returning nationals. At the base of such feedback, was the sentiment that return migrants would take jobs away from locals. It was also believed by some, that the sending of remittances was the best contribution that an overseas national could make to the country and the fact was that large sums of money were remitted to St. Kitts/Nevis, annually. The secretariat planned to implement an education programme using the media of radio and video recordings to reduce any negative reactions to returning nationals.

Following the presentations of the foregoing country case studies, a round-table discussion ensued.

In reply to queries of how the St. Kitts/Nevis return migrant secretariat dealt with the issue of ensuring that return migrants from Nevis obtained land

for construction, the presenter indicated that land was easier to obtain in Nevis than in St. Kitts. He explained that from the period of slavery, the fertile land of St. Kitts was used for sugar cultivation and afterwards, the land was bought and sold because of its agricultural potential.

The existence of stateless children in Anguilla was one of concern to participants. It was noted that the reason this issue had not been resolved might have been due to the peculiar status of Anguilla as an annex of Great Britain. It was also pointed out that the situation required examination to ensure that Anguillan law was not in contravention of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was also noted that if this law were rigorously applied throughout the Caribbean, then islands, such as Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten, would encounter major difficulties, since as much as 84 per cent of the population of these islands might be non-native.

In response to a query on the nature of the relationship between the Netherlands Antilles and the Netherlands and the extent to which that relationship might be responsible for the underdevelopment of the Netherlands Antilles, the response was that a dependency syndrome had developed in this relationship. It was explained that although the Netherlands Antilles was internally autonomous, it was still financially dependent on the Netherlands. The relative ease of access to this metropole, coupled with the embarrassment of having to return home to the Antilles if socio-economic conditions had not improved, resulted in a loss of nationals, especially young persons. The pull to migrate to Holland had been so great that it was reported that some persons had resorted to criminal activity to facilitate their passage.

Suriname was identified as another former Dutch colony with similar migration problems to that of the Netherlands Antilles. It was noted that much of Suriname's population viewed the step to independence as one that deprived them of many of the opportunities afforded them in the Netherlands. They therefore saw CARICOM as an association of poor countries, which were unlikely to be of much help to them. The observation was made that much of this attitude might, in fact, stem from isolation of the former Dutch colonies from CARICOM, during the pre-independence era and that maybe the more unfortunate experiences of other migrants might help in bringing a sense of the realities and the challenges involved in migration.

Dr. Godfrey St. Bernard, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social & Economic Studies (SALISES), University of the West Indies of Trinidad and Tobago moderated the presentation of case studies by Belize, Dominica, Montserrat and Trinidad and Tobago.

## **Belize**

The Belize presentation posited a situation where increasing numbers of skilled, educated Belizeans had left the country since the 1960s to migrate to the United States of America. Data presented indicated that many of these emigrants were women and approximately 56 per cent were young people between the ages of 15-24 who were leaving to join their parents in the United States of America. Many elderly persons were thus left behind and remittances had decreased from 7.3 per cent of GNP in 1986 to 2.5 per cent in 1995.

While this was happening, Belize saw a growth of immigrants, from larger countries of Central America, Asia and Canada. The immigrants came mainly from Honduras and Guatemala, and this resulted in the existence of a large Hispanic community in Belize, with a number of consequences such as an increased burden on existing social services, as well as an inability to deliver adequate social services to migrants. Social tensions were also created as a result of the ability of migrants to participate in the political activities of the country. It was noted that the incidence of HIV/AIDS had increased and this was partly due to migrants from Honduras, where it had been established that the number of cases was very high.

In explaining the reasons for the growth of migrants in Belize, it was explained that the immigration laws and practices of Belize were very open and inclusive. A number of these practices responsible for the large migrant population were identified. These include:

(a) The definition of a Belizean citizen contained in the Constitution. All persons born in Belize on or before the day of independence, as well as naturalised citizens of the United Kingdom and its colonies, living in Belize during this period, were eligible to become citizens. This included the children and grandchildren of persons living in the United Kingdom and its colonies naturalised in Belize;

(b) The Constitution also stated that after Independence Day, persons born in Belize, or who were naturalised by descent or registration, or who were continuous residents for five years before application were also eligible for citizenship. Also the spouses of all citizens of Belize, male or female could also become citizens;

(c) The Refugee Act of Belize also allowed persons who had sought refugee status to enter the country to become citizens. Many Central Americans took up this opportunity;

(d) Economic citizenship was also available to interested migrants. A fee of US\$25,000 per head of household and \$15,000 for children over 18 years of age was charged to those seeking this opportunity. The money was used to

pay the national debt or to support non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Persons who entered the country via this route were eligible for citizenship one year after having lived in the country.

(e) Anyone over the age of 18 years, who had worked and lived in Belize for more than one year, and who was a Commonwealth citizen, was entitled to vote; and

(f) The children of migrants also have full rights of a Belizean citizen.

The election law of the country stated that any citizen of Belize could vote and run for election. Apart from the large Hispanic group that had entered Belize, Chinese and Taiwanese were also among the migrants who were entering. The Mennonites were also a part of the migrant groups that had entered Belize. It was reported that they had been readily accepted as an integral part of Belizean society, primarily because they contributed to the society, without being at all interested in participating in the political and other aspects of life in the society.

The presentation was concluded by emphasising to the participants that Belize continued to maintain an open-door policy and therefore had a continuous inflow of migrants.

## **Dominica**

Historically, migration from Dominica took place in the 1950s and 1960s to England; this changed to the United States of America and Canada during the 1980s and because of its position between the French dependencies of Martinique and Guadeloupe, there was continual migration to the French territories from Dominica. Many travellers found it hard to cope on their return to Dominica, and in many instances, they returned to their previous place of residence.

The main migrants to Dominica came from the Dominican Republic and Haiti. These migrants came as lowly paid labourers. The Haitian labourers intended to move on from Dominica to the French islands and those migrants from the Dominican Republic, especially the women, tended to use Dominica as a link to other islands. There were some immigrants from Asia that had been granted "landed citizenship". There had been some hostility between these landed citizens and the nationals, especially since the migrants tended to set up businesses – a situation that nationals viewed unfavourable to their chances of obtaining similar opportunities.

A social consequence of the migration to the northern countries was seen among juvenile delinquents. This situation occurred when young people were left with older relatives while their parents sought to improve their living

standards abroad. In some instances, the remittances from these persons abroad was the only source of income for the caregivers and when funds were not forthcoming from emigrant parents who might not be doing so well overseas, the guardians of the young people become impoverished.

The migration process in Dominica had also been linked to drug trafficking. Boats used, on the pretext of transporting persons to other islands, had been used to transport drugs. In this regard, when lifeguards accosted boats, illegal immigrants had been known to jump from the craft, resulting in loss of life.

It was concluded that migration policies in the region ought to include recommendations that extradition agreements be developed to ensure that criminals do not get away with crimes committed in one country, by merely travelling to another.

### **Montserrat**

Following the volcanic eruption in Montserrat, multiple dislocations occurred. Among these were dislocation of families and loss of skills from the labour market. The population of Montserrat fell from approximately 10,000 persons to about 4,000 persons. Much of the country's population had received packages that allowed them to relocate to England.

The mass emigration of Montserradians in the post-disaster period was also accompanied by the immigration of nationals from the Caribbean to assist with the rebuilding of Montserrat, based on an open invitation to CARICOM nationals. Because of the relocation of the population from the north of the island to the south, a number of housing schemes were being built in phases and required skilled labour for the construction of these houses.

At present there were no restrictions relating to children accompanying migrants in Montserrat. This had presented some problems in education where, for instance, migrants might not have had a tradition of pre-school training in their own country, but were now required to enrol their children in pre-schools in Montserrat.

In the area of health, members of the population, including migrants, received free medication for the treatment of selected diseases. However, the cost of hospital care was reported as being twice as much for migrants as it was for nationals.

Children of migrants who had completed five years of secondary education were entitled to a work permit.

## **Trinidad and Tobago**

The case study presented with regard to Trinidad and Tobago focused on deported criminals and the impact on the society.

It was reported that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago had been in contact with the United States of America authorities on the deportation issue which, if left unchecked, could cause a serious social problem. The meeting was informed that there were cases of criminals who were resident in the United States of America for some 20 years and were subsequently deported to Trinidad and Tobago. It was estimated that some 1,000 persons with serious criminal records had been deported over the last 10 years. This was complicated by the fact that within Trinidad and Tobago there is no social rehabilitation programme in place to handle these returning criminals.

With regard to immigration laws, an individual might be refused entry into Trinidad and Tobago if he or she had a criminal record. Persons were also not permitted to migrate to this country unless they had obtained permission prior to their arrival into the country. Migrants were permitted to work in the country for 30 days without a work permit. However, the meeting was informed that in the normal course of the performance of their duty, immigration officials do not go seeking and arresting those in breach of the regulations.

### Agenda item 6

#### Recommendations for future research and policy initiatives

One of the recommendations coming out of the meeting was the establishment of a website that would give returning residents the kind of information needed to assist them in settling into their respective countries, upon their return. Also, it was suggested that the issue of deportees needed to be examined and analysed, and policies and programmes needed to be put in place to deal with this situation. According to one participant, studies showed that most return migrants had travelled in the period of the 1980s and not during the 1960s, which was one of the major periods of migration. This meant that most of the return migrants were not necessarily retirees but, in fact, young people who were returning with their parents, and students who had studied abroad. This indicated that many young persons would have completed their education, obtained some amount of work experience and were desirous of returning to their native land. In this regard, it was expected that approximately 2,000 persons per year might be returning to their countries of birth over the next decade. The meeting agreed that such a situation called for comprehensive migration policies to be put in place that would create the most benefit for all involved.

The changing demography of Belize was raised and it was noted that there was a need to conduct studies on the large groups that were making Belize their home. It was explained, for example, that Taiwanese immigrants who purchased corner shops from Belizeans were now being resented and targeted for theft and acts of aggression, especially by young Belizean deportees. Antagonism was also noted toward Hong Kong nationals who were also grocery owners and lived in the urban areas.

Studies on the contribution of migrant groups and their modes of incorporation into the host society were also recommended since it was noted that in spite of the antagonism to some migrants, others were not similarly targeted. The acceptance of the Mennonites in Belize was used as a case in point and it was felt that an examination of the reason for their acceptance would offer guidance for the development of appropriate migration policies.

In the final session of the meeting, participants suggested that mechanisms be put in place, arising out of the meeting's discussion, to arrive at policy recommendations.

In this context, it was thought that perhaps the soon to be launched Caribbean Movement for Parliamentarians on Population and Development (CMPPD) could be another possible forum to bring these issues to the fore.

The Director of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat noted that there was already a wealth of research done on migration and that research was costly, therefore, the research topics suggested should be able to inform policy. She suggested that different groups, in need of research, should be identified and areas for research prioritised consistent with issues that required change. The way that the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat could assist should also be identified, as there were other organizations that had mandates in the subregion. She also reiterated the need for the subregion to dictate its own development where migration was concerned.

In that regard, it suggested that there was a need for the reinvigoration of the working group on population and development which had been established in September 1995, but became somewhat inactive. It was envisaged that this group could keep in touch via the internet and meet occasionally, as funds became available. It was further suggested that the focus of the group should be narrowed with specific attention to migration issues, as there were other working groups which focused on other areas of population and development.

One participant recommended that model policy recommendations should be made for the regional level from which each State could identify the general principles for application at the national level.



The need was identified for a regional body to assist with the streamlining and harmonisation of the immigration laws in the subregion. The question was then asked about any organization that would be able to assist countries with the standardisation of these laws as had been done in other countries. It was mentioned that both CARICOM and the International Organization on Migration (IOM) were looking into this issue. It was therefore suggested that research that examined country policies – labour, economics etc., which dramatically affected migration patterns in the subregion, should be conducted.

Other possible topics identified for research included:

- (a) Identification and collection of existing migration policies of countries in the subregion;
  - (b) Eligibility for citizenship, nationality and resident status;
  - (c) Research on the impact of migration on the host country and country of origin;
  - (d) Rehabilitation of deportees;
  - (e) Examination of international best practices concerning the treatment of migrants;
  - (f) The effects on the environment due to migrant settlement on hillsides and the engagement of slash and burn agriculture;
  - (g) The net contribution of migrants to development;
  - (h) The role of migrant associations in society;
  - (i) The role of migrant women and children;
  - (j) The mode of incorporation of economic residents into policy;
  - (k) Data collection protocols at both the national and regional levels;
- and
- (l) Inventory of studies that have been done.

Participants felt that policy had to be informed by objective data and therefore, the census data needed to be made available to serious researchers doing work in this field. It was therefore noted that processing of the census

data had to be sped up for availability as well as the need for the standardisation of instruments for the capturing of data.

Participants were reminded of the need not only to look at quantitative data but also at qualitative data. This point was endorsed as it was observed that often decision makers were tired of numbers but responded better to human-interest issues. The point was also made that there was a need to classify countries when designing research and studies as some had similar migration patterns.

Another suggested area of study was the use of borders for criminal activities, since it was shown that in the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago had the highest incidence of passport and visa fraud involving Guyanese nationals and facilitated by Trinidadians. This had resulted in the bad reputation that Guyana nationals received and the suspicion with which many of them were viewed when travelling.

The question was posited as to how best to put the issues discussed on the subregional agenda. It was recommended that the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat could convene a high level conference of ministers at which policy recommendations could be discussed.

The ECLAC/CDCC representative ended the two-day meeting by thanking participants for their contributions and promised to provide feedback on the various recommendations, as soon as possible.

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