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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 1982-1983



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA Office for the Caribbean



THIRD PLENARY SESSION OF THE
CARIBBEAN COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (CCST)
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During the relatively brief period following its establishment in July 1981, Council has filled the gap which member countries had identified as providing a regional umbrella for co-ordinating S and T activities and for ensuring harmony as well as consistency with national aspirations and development programmes. The need for CCST to play this role and the opinion in the region that the vacuum exists is further supported by:

1. The number of countries which have deposited their instruments of ratification or acceptance and which, at the time of writing, totals eleven;
2. The official communiqué issued by the CARICOM Heads of Government after their meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 16-18 November 1982, contained several recommendations which coincided with the programme already adumbrated by CCST; and
3. The Caribbean Ministers of Science and Technology at their meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, 6-7 April 1983, identified Agro-industry and Information as priority areas for S and T activity, areas in which the Council had already established Working Groups/Technical Committees and had already identified specific programmes of action.

The other roles identified in descending order for Council were those of Advisory and Implementation, which, I am sure Members will agree, will be predicated by Council's performance and effectiveness in its co-ordinating role.

These results are not based on chance but on the careful preparation and enunciation of our Statutes, and the successes, which are yet to be reported, have not been accomplished without their fair share of problems; not least being the lack of operating funds, since some Member Countries have not paid their annually assessed contributions of US\$8,000 for MDC's and US\$2,000 for LDC's.

I wish to take this opportunity to clarify a point of confusion that might yet exist within some member countries with regards to the contributions. Countries were asked to pay half (US\$4,000 and US\$1,000 for MDC's and LDC's respectively) of their contributions for 1981 since the Council became formally operative only in July of that year. So that there has not been an increase in the level of subscriptions for 1982, but subscriptions were based on a full year.

Despite the deficiency in collecting all the funds due, coupled with the fact that the period between the Second and Third Plenary Sessions was only nine months, many activities were completed.

The Executive Committee and the Secretariat are therefore to be commended for their unfailing efforts to make this year the success it has been. It is, however, most important that Member Countries, who have not yet done so, make the necessary arrangements to pay at least a part of their contributions in hard currency and, at the same time, identify their nominees to the various Specialist Committees/ Working Groups so that the work of Council can proceed at a studied and co-ordinated pace.

The role of CCST having been clearly established, there remains one important issue which must be addressed if Council is to continue to exist and to carry out its mandate effectively. This relates to the need for Council to have its own Secretariat. I therefore propose the initiation, in a very modest way, of a Secretariat which, in the real sense, will provide for the co-ordination of regional S and T activities. I strongly feel that our activities have been hampered or have been unnecessarily delayed by the lack of a Secretariat and urge that both the Executive Committee and the Plenary Session give the matter some very serious consideration and demonstrate their commitment by voting into the Budget some provision for the nucleus of a Secretariat.

The proposed Budget (see Document No. CDCC/CCST/83/11) is considered as minimal and realistic in relation to the US\$237,000 (Recurrent) and the US\$50,000 (Capital) which was optimistically presented to the First Plenary Session in 1981. It also puts into perspective the real support being requested from various funding

agencies and ECLA by way of providing seed money as well as the services of resource personnel.

The timely payment of their annual contributions by Member Countries will greatly enhance and expand the role of Council since this tangible manifestation of support by members will create the necessary environment for funding agencies to consider favourably requests for catalytic funds to undertake projects.

It is appropriate at this juncture, to pay a special tribute to the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) for having provided Council with interim Secretariat services in the embryonic stages of its development. This generous gesture, besides helping Council through a difficult period, has also provided the opportunity for CCST to undertake several activities and thereby establish its credibility. I hope that the Commission takes this intimation on our part in the manner intended and will continue to support our activities especially in supplying the services of those resource personnel who, at this time, cannot be included in our modest budget.

In my humble opinion, there are not many international organizations facing the problems that we experienced during the first two years of our existence, who can boast such comparable accomplishments. During the First Plenary Session six projects (I-VI) were identified and two more (VII and VIII) were added during the Second Plenary Session.

These are as follows:

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| <u>Project I</u> | Assessment of National Science and Technology Capabilities |
| <u>Project II</u> | Establishment of a Regional Science and Technology Journal |
| <u>Project III</u> | Preparation and Exchange of Audio-Visual Material for Education in Science and Technology |
| <u>Project IV</u> | A Study of the Consequence of the Development of Energy Crops on Food Supplies in the Region |

<u>Project V</u>	Conservation and Exchange of Germplasm of Crop Plants
<u>Project VI</u>	Development of Agro-Industries and Employment Opportunities particularly at Rural Level
<u>Project VII</u>	The Potential and Limitations of Newly Emerging Technologies for Developing Countries
<u>Project VIII</u>	A Science and Technology Policy for the Caribbean Region.

I am pleased to report that the initial phases of two of these are now completed and that work on all the others is progressing reasonably well.

Our track record is gradually being established and is more fully elaborated in the Second Annual Report (Doc. No. CDCC/CCST/83/13); however, I would like to highlight the progress made in some of our activities during the last nine months:

(i) The initial Phases have been completed for two of our projects viz:

- Assessment of National S and T Capabilities (Project I), and
- Preparation and Exchange of Audio-visual Material for Education in Science and Technology (Project III).

(ii) During January, at a Meeting of the Caribbean Science and Technology Co-operation Committee (CSTCC) sponsored by the OAS, I was instrumental in having included in the OAS Work Programme for 1984-1985 a commitment that the individual countries, which receive funding from the OAS for the development of their National Science and Technology Policies, would devote a portion of those national funds to a regional activity for formulating a Regional Policy for Science and Technology (Project VIII). A Regional Workshop on Science and Technology Policy is being programmed for early 1984 to enable the pooled

information and experiences to be placed at the disposal of respective national institutions when they are formulating or reviewing their individual policies in Science and Technology.

- (iii) Constraints of time and finance did not allow for a formal Meeting of the Editorial Board which was established to advise on the style, format, etc. of the Caribbean Journal for Science and Technology, (Project II). However, an informal meeting was held in late May in Jamaica and it was decided to publish, for restricted circulation, a draft edition which will be presented at this Plenary in order to obtain the reaction of Members and to guide the decisions of the Editorial Board. I am fully confident that the document can be completed and circulated before the end of 1983.

Concomitant with the establishment of our track record is the increasing realization that Council can act as a valuable interface in several regional activities. As examples, Council is now a Member of the following Committees/Groups:

- (i) The Interim Co-ordinating Committee established by the Caribbean Ministers with responsibility for Science and Technology;
- (ii) The Steering Committee for the Caribbean Alternative Energy Programme of the Commonwealth Science Council;
- (iii) The Technical Group of Officials which service the Meetings of CARICOM Ministers of Energy.

In addition, Council is co-sponsoring Workshops on:

- (a) Agricultural Research Policy and Management (Trinidad and Tobago, 26-30 September 1983), and

- (b) New Technologies and their implications for the Caribbean scheduled for the first quarter of 1984.

You will note that Agenda Item 10 is concerned with a programme which will allow many of our constituent States to exploit their marine resources. Council is indeed happy to assist in mobilising the necessary regional and international support so that all our Member States can benefit from the increased marine resources now available to them due to the expansion of areas under their national jurisdiction.

I must also mention that the arrangements for the Second Conference of Ministers Responsible for the Application of Science and Technology to Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (CASTALAC II) are now underway and pledge the full support of CCST during the stages of preparation for such an important meeting.

I am sure that my brief report has demonstrated that CCST, within its two-year Establishment Phase (and despite many constraints), has performed its co-ordinating function creditably enough to persuade Members, and eventually their decision-makers, that Council has earned the right to request that their commitment to it be expressed in practical and tangible form by prompt payment of their annually assessed contributions. I sincerely hope that my proposal for the very modest nucleus of the Secretariat will find favour with this Session so that the achievements of the Council will gain momentum and provide the medium of direct interaction for all funding agencies.

The previous Chairman in his report for 1981-1982, raised some issues for consideration by Council one of which was the role which would devolve on CCST as a result of the new initiatives in Science and Technology being taken by other regional institutions. As I have had the honour to represent CCST at several Meetings over the last year, I have continually enunciated that the Co-ordinating/Advisory Role identified during the Second Plenary Session, is one which the CCST, by its structure and composition, is ideally suited to fulfil.

As my tenure of office draws to a close I can only express my gratitude to Council for giving me the opportunity and distinction

of guiding its destiny during the past year. The experience has been a marvellous one made even more so by the professional links and friendships which I have been able to establish across the Region.

I close by placing on record my sincere appreciation firstly to the dedicated Members of the Executive Committee who have given me every encouragement and support, and secondly to Dr. Pat Munroe who acted as Secretary and who performed his duties with great competence and patience.

