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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL PLANNING

Ninth Technical Subcommittee Meeting of ILPES

Lima, Peru

1-2 December 1986



JOINT ECLAC/ILPES PLANNING UNIT
FOR THE CARIBBEAN

BRIEF SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING 1986
AND PERSPECTIVES FOR 1987

Port of Spain
Trinidad and Tobago

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Joint ECLAC/ILPES Planning Unit
for the Caribbean

I. CREATION

Following the recommendations of CDCC member countries and in order to assist Governments in a more direct and sustained way, the Secretariat decided to establish a Joint ECLAC/ILPES Planning Unit for the Caribbean. This decision was implemented in August 1985.

II. BASIC IDEAS

1. In a number of recent forums, attention has repeatedly been drawn to the need to provide the Caribbean countries, and in particular, those which are least developed among them, with increased technical co-operation in the field of economic and social development planning. The social, economic, historical, cultural and institutional characteristics of these countries differ from those in other parts of Latin America. Their special nature often militates against any automatic transfer of experience. In addition, they are all small countries, both geographically and economically, and this imposes special considerations to be taken into account in devising approaches and procedures.
2. Moreover, the characteristics of the Caribbean economic structure - the dependence on external sector, the degree of commercial openness and the great challenges to be met in the social field - create the need for planning and co-operation, within a flexible programme of economic management, in order to overcome the structural problems prevailing in the economy of the subregion.
3. The fact that the Caribbean countries are for the most part islands generally with an interdependent economic structure and services oriented, gives rise to the need for an approach to national economic development planning with a regional perspective.

4. In the case of the Caribbean countries, one of the major imperatives is to organize effective approaches to the development of national capabilities for economic planning and management. This implies a type of guided market economy involving selective intervention by means of well organized approaches to macro-economic and sectoral planning.

5. In this conceptual framework, planning is not viewed as a formula which is antagonistic to the market; instead, the need to execute an adequate balance between the two mechanisms is stressed. While it is recognized that the market is an effective mechanism for mobilizing productive resources and stimulating productivity and technological innovation, it is argued that there are important reasons for assigning an active role to the state and hence to planning; in some cases this role would be one of corrective intervention, and in others one of promotion and leadership of the development process.

III. WORK PROGRAMME

A. Advisory services

6. In accordance with existing mandates and priorities established by Governments, the ECLAC/ILPES (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and The Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning) Planning Unit will assist the countries through its advisory programme.

This activity will include collaboration in the preparation of plans, programmes and projects; evaluation of economic and social policies; incorporation of fundamental topics such as science and technology, the environment and demography into national development plans and programmes; design of plans to achieve self-sufficiency in food and implementation of plans to meet the basic needs of producers and consumers.

7. The management of national economies and the establishment of a sound macro-economic policy framework will be considered as one of the most important areas of external assistance.

B. Research activities

8. This activity will be oriented towards meeting the most pressing needs of the countries as regards the planning and national co-ordination of their economic and social policies. In this respect there is an identified need for greater articulation of the applicable economic and social policy tools and there is unanimous recognition of the need to strike an appropriate balance between state orientation and the market.

9. In short, the research activities will be oriented towards the design of public policies aimed to serve as compensatory measures to reduce disparities of income and employment and reassignment of the available resources in a manner compatible with economic reactivation and social development.

C. Training activities

10. In accordance with the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) guidelines, and in close collaboration with other institutions, the list of possible topics for training activities could be as follows:

(i) Planning the state sector: Public enterprises and services to meet the basic needs of the mass of the population;

(ii) Project planning and economic management: Design, formulation, evaluation, execution and follow-up;

(iii) Measures to meet the statistical needs of development planning; the statistical base for planning, development of information systems for planning, introduction of systems of social indicators for planning improvement;

(iv) Training with a practical approach to increase the countries' capabilities in statistics and statistical appreciation, macro-economic and sectoral planning and economic policy formulation;

(v) National economic management issues and articulation of economic and social policies.

11. Following recommendations made by individuals and institutions, greater provision should be made for on-the-job training. The suggested approach must be continuous, innovative and flexible enough to adapt to the circumstances of particular countries. For effective action, all the above require a minimum of institutional co-ordination to avoid duplication of effort and waste of resources.

D. Horizontal co-operation

12. In 1980 the CDCC mandated the creation of six ad hoc working groups for planners in the fields of agriculture, energy, manpower planning, physical and regional planning, training and transport. In 1983 the Secretariat was asked to focus its attention on tourism and its environmental implications as well as the role of public enterprises in development. Since the formation of the working groups, a number of activities have been carried out and these have been reported to subsequent meetings of the CDCC and of Planners. As experience with the working groups has shown, the Secretariat has gained new insights into their operation and utility. Departing from this a great effort will be assigned to the promotion of experiences between Latin America and the Caribbean. There are a lot of opportunities in which the Unit can play an efficient role as facilitator or intermediary for contacting the mutual interests of the countries.

IV. BRIEF SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES
CARRIED OUT DURING 1986

A. Technical assistance

13. Mission to Belize to assist the Office of Economic Development in the establishment of a National Project Bank in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (26-31 January 1986).

14. Mission to Barbados to discuss with the UNDP Office the possibility of collaborating in the co-ordination of the technical assistance provided by all the different institutions to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) region (16-17 February 1986).

15. Mission to Barbados to analyse with the Ministry of Finance and Planning the possibility of establishing a practical macro-economic model for evaluating and monitoring the performance of the economy (22-23 April 1986).

16. Mission to Washington, Mexico and Cuba to discuss with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization of American States joint activities; participate in the twenty-first session of ECLAC; participate in the UNDP/ECLAC Special Advisory Meeting to determine the priorities of the regional programme for the next cycle (1987-1989); discuss with the Cuban authorities (CECE, JUCEPLAN) the administrative, logistic and technical arrangements for the sixth conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean (15-30 April 1986).

17. Mission to Caracas to discuss with UNESCO and OAS representatives the carrying out of the First Seminar/Workshop on "Planning in Science and Technology in the Caribbean", programmed for May 1987; (13-14 April 1986).

18. Second mission to Belize to finalize details on the financing and setting up of the project bank simultaneously with some on-the-job training courses (26-31 May 1986).

19. Organize and carry out a mission to nine countries of the Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Christopher/Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago) to identify priorities of work in the Unit, at the subregional as well as the national level along with local authorities, international agencies and subregional bodies (29 June to 31 July 1986).

20. Mission to Santiago, Chile, to advise on the results of the mission in the Caribbean, the plan of action, its follow-up and carry out the balance of activities of the Joint ECLAC/ILPES Planning Unit for the Caribbean (1-8 August 1986).

21. Mission to Havana, Cuba, to revise and define aspects related to the agenda of the sixth conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean (10-12 September 1986).

22. Mission to New York and Washington to collaborate with the Director General of the Institute on consultation with UNDP related to ILPES project document and in particular, a project proposal for the Caribbean in deliberations with CARICOM. Discussions with the OAS on possible joint future training activities (5-11 October 1986).

23. Mission to Guyana to define the programme of technical assistance in accordance with the priorities identified by the Government (3-7 November 1986).

24. Mission to Santiago, Chile, to discuss the ECLAC/ILPES technical and financial support for implementing the future work programme of the Unit (4-6 December 1986).

B. Horizontal co-operation

25. Participation in the Eighth Meeting of the ILPES technical Sub-Committee to present the preliminary work programme and plan of action for the Caribbean (Bogotá, 20-21 January 1986).

26. Participate as commentator in the seminar/workshop on "Systems of Agricultural Planning in the Countries of the Caribbean", organized by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Unit and the FAO Subregional Office (Port-of-Spain, 6-7 February 1986).

27. Prepare ECLAC/ESCAP/ILPES/UNDP/UNCTAD interregional project to convene a seminar on "National experiences in Economic Management in the Caribbean and Pacific Islands", tentatively programmed for the second half of 1987.

28. Prepare project to carry out a seminar on "Development and Co-operation between the Caribbean and Latin America" sponsored by ILPES and the Institute of International Relations of the University of the West Indies.

29. Prepare project for extrabudgetary resources to support the training and advisory services of the Unit. This project assigns high priority to the OECS region in collaboration with some subregional organizations.

30. Participate as observer in the meeting on "Caribbean Development Issues and Policies", Port-of-Spain, 14 November; sponsored by ECLAC prior to the extraordinary Mexico meeting on Economic Development Policy.

C. Research and publications

31. Draft the document on "Towards a New Planning Approach in the Caribbean", January, 1987.
32. Draft the document on "Practical Problems of International Investment in the Islands of the Caribbean" to be presented at the interregional seminar on "Island Economies" (Martinique, 27-28 October 1986). This seminar was organized by UNCTAD and the Institute of International Studies of the University of Toulouse.
33. Prepare the material for the publication of the first issue of the "Planning Bulletin" for the Caribbean.
34. Distribute to all Caribbean planning units the document "An Alternative Model for Reactivation Policies", drafted by the Research Programme of the Institute.
35. Distribute to all Caribbean planning units the document "List of Heads of Planning Units in the Caribbean" including the respective names of focal points in each country.
36. Distribute to all CDCC member countries the relevant information concerning the ILPES training activities, seminars and workshops. Finally, to maintain periodical correspondence with Governments and Institutions in connection with the Unit's work programme and CDCC's plan of action.

V. IMMEDIATE ACTIVITIES DURING 1987

37. Administrative and technical arrangements for the preparation of the sixth conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in La Habana, Cuba (March 1987).
38. Implementation of a project bank for the Government of Belize at the Office of Economic Development and execution of on-the-job training activities within the overall project cycle.
39. To provide technical assistance to the Government of Guyana in project management, sectoral policy analysis, data management and budget preparation. These activities will be carried out simultaneously with some concrete on-the-job training courses.

40. To collaborate with the UNDP Office for Barbados in the co-ordination of the technical assistance provided to the OECS region.
41. Consultations and preparation of a joint proposal ESCAP/UNCTAD/ILPES/ECLAC for convening an interregional seminar between the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean Islands on "Planning and Economic Management" followed by some exchange of experiences.
42. To set up the "First Seminar-Workshop on Science and Technology Planning for the Caribbean" in collaboration with UNESCO/Montevideo and the Organization of American States (OAS).
43. To organize for the English-speaking countries the "First Seminar on Incorporation of Women into Development Planning" convened for the second semester 1987 in collaboration with INSTRAW and ECLAC.
44. To co-sponsor the "Fourth Economic Policy Analysis Course" in collaboration with the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank, scheduled for the second semester 1987 in Barbados.
45. Preparation of the fourth meeting of Caribbean Heads of Planning scheduled for the first semester 1987.
46. Arrangements for the execution of some ad hoc working group meetings within the priorities of the GDCC work programme.
47. Preparation and dissemination of the first issue of the Planning Review as the main mass media communication among the Caribbean planners.
48. To implement some concrete exchange of experiences between the Caribbean countries and Latin America following the horizontal co-operation modalities.



