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CO-OPERATION BETWEEN CARICOM AND NON-CARICOM COUNTRIES



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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN  
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### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to stimulate some discussion and reflection on the optimal means to achieve co-operation between those countries that are not Members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and those that are, given the fact that a fairly broad range of activities are currently under way within CARICOM, but in relative isolation from the rest of the region. The experience of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC)<sup>1</sup> is offered as a case study since the establishment of greater linkages among Caribbean countries is its major preoccupation.

The paper does not lay emphasis on what is being done to advance co-operation, although this is available for study, but rather emphasis is placed on how it is being done and why. An attempt is also made to evaluate the potential for co-operation and to ascertain the pace at which the exercise can proceed.

As this is intended to supplement a more comprehensive study on CARICOM and the regional integration movement<sup>2</sup>, no time will be spent on the internal workings of CARICOM itself, except to note that the process of closer interaction has not been lineal and has suffered setbacks as Member countries' perceptions of their national interest change over time.

Passing reference will be made to the internal debate within CARICOM, on the issue of widening the geographic scope of its activities as opposed to deepening the degree of interaction of the existing membership and to evaluate the stage at which the process has currently reached.

Some attention will also be given to the various forums and institutions through which CARICOM and non-CARICOM States interact, but the bulk of the discussion will be dedicated to the rationale, genesis and evolution of the CDCC whose primary goal is to establish a greater level of interaction between Caribbean countries, with a secondary objective of forging linkages between

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<sup>1</sup> The Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) is a permanent advisory body to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) which comprises 21 Caribbean countries meeting annually at ministerial level to formulate and evaluate a programme of co-operative activities among its membership.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel, Wendell. "An Evaluation of Regional Cooperation in the Caribbean in the context of South-South Co-operation" UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados.

this group and the rest of the United Nations system through the instrumentality of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The experience of the CDCC is instructive in that various methods of co-operation have been tried in accordance with the demands of Member Governments and as their perceived needs changed over time. Nevertheless, despite a fair degree of flexibility in trying to adapt to these changing demands, it is by no means yet clear which of the modalities is the most appropriate for this task. Focus is placed on the CDCC not merely to highlight the institution, but to illustrate the inherent problems which any institution having to develop a co-operation programme for the wider Caribbean will have to face. These include diversity, weak consensus, initial suspicion of the motives of partners and so on. An attempt will be made to draw some conclusions based on these experiences, in the hope of advancing the discussion towards more satisfying conclusions.

The frame of reference

For the purposes of this discussion, the Caribbean referred to is that defined by Dr. Eric Williams at the sixteenth session of ECLAC in May 1975 in May 1975 in proposing what became the CDCC. At that time he advocated "...The establishment of a Caribbean Council of ECLA to deal specifically with Caribbean issues and circumstances and to embrace all Caribbean entities from Belize to Cayenne, irrespective of political status". While the CDCC has been expanding its coverage from the original participation of twelve in 1975, including the single delegation from the West Indies Associated States, to the current twenty-one eligible to participate at the eleventh session in November 1988, the objective of universal participation is still incomplete, in that a number of eligible countries do not yet participate. But the basic definition made by Dr. Williams is the ultimate goal so that basic background information on the constituency being discussed is set out at Table 1.

**Table I**

SELECTED INDICATORS OF CDCC COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	SIZE km <sup>2</sup>	POPN<1>	GDP/cap<2>
Antigua	440	81	2935
Dominica	750	78	1423
Grenada	345	102	1013
Montserrat	102	12	3555
St. Kitts/Nevis	269	46	1670
St. Lucia	616	140	1388
St. Vincent	388	111	883
<b>OECS TOTAL</b>	<b>2910</b>	<b>569 &lt;3&gt;</b>	
Bahamas	13942	234	9462
Barbados	431	253	5288
Belize	22960	170	1226
Guyana	214970	794	654
Jamaica	11424	2336	1042
Trinidad/Tob.	5128	1199	3959
<b>CARICOM TOTAL</b>	<b>271765</b>	<b>5555</b>	
Aruba (A)	193	64	7500
British Virgin Is. (A)	150	12	7101
Cuba	110860	10199	3000
Dom. Rep.	49000	6570	810
Haiti	28000	5500	330
Neth. Antilles (A)	800	200	6110
Suriname	163265	400	2510
US Virgin Is.(A)	344	111	9280
<b>CDCC TOTAL</b>	<b>624377</b>	<b>28611</b>	
Anguilla (O)	91	7	2300
Cayman Is.	260	21	12930
Guadeloupe	1780	300	3151
Guyane	31000	88	1680
Martinique	1110	300	3717
Puerto Rico	8800	3300	4850
Turks and Caicos (O)	417	10	4490
<b>CARIBBEAN TOTAL</b>	<b>667835</b>	<b>32638</b>	

Source: ECLAC, IBRD, CDB.  
 <1>Relates to 1986  
 <2>In current US\$ in 1986  
 <3>Totals may not add due to rounding  
 (O) (A) Refers to observers; associate members of CDCC

Aside from the evident disparities in size and economic power, with the attendant fears of dominance on the part of the smaller actors, other difficulties such as linguistic barriers tend also to slow down the pace at which interaction is able to proceed. Nevertheless, the

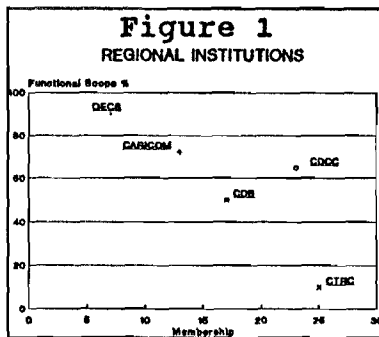
Caribbean is endowed with a range of institutions at the regional and subregional levels through which the process of familiarization and interaction can take place, some of the most salient of which are discussed below.

### The institutional setting

The process of co-operation and co-ordination in the Caribbean needs to be seen as a long-term process. It has been ongoing for several decades mainly among the English-speaking countries, which have a number of specialized institutions acting jointly and operating at different levels of specificity. These institutions operate with varying constellations of countries and at varying levels of concreteness (C), depending on the degree of cohesion which is perceived to exist within each constellation.

Cutting across the geographic spread (G) of each institution one must also factor in the functional scope (F) of each as defined by its mandates. The more clearly circumscribed its mandate, the more likely that it will be empowered to act with concreteness, as in the case of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) or the Caribbean Tourism Research and Development Centre (CTRDC). Yet the more diverse its mandate the more appropriate the institution for policy involvement.

Accordingly, where a high degree of similarity and hence cohesion is perceived to exist within a group, say within the OECS, then the institution acting on behalf of that group will be empowered to act with a high degree of concreteness and specificity. An attempt to put the concept into diagrammatic form appears at Figure 1.



The analysis assumes a given level of political will (W), in the short- to long-term so that  $C+G+F=W$ , trade offs needing to take place between C or G or F. There is accordingly a tradeoff between the degree of concreteness, the geographic spread and the range of functional tasks to be covered by each institution and the leeway open to each institution is determined by the level of political will extant in each group. This is, moreover, assumed to be fixed in the short to medium-terms.

Nevertheless, over time it is possible to increase the level of political will and this has to be one of the major objectives of each organization, since will is the ultimate determinant of action. Will is composed by a number of factors, such as historic patterns of familiarity and culture (H), potential economic benefits to be derived from the activities of the group (E), and direct political action (P). The latter factor, direct political

action, is the only one that is amenable to manipulation to bring quick change to the level of political will. But it needs to be exercised circumspectly, since bold action by one member might be perceived to be detrimental by one or more of the others, if even to their status within the group. Accordingly, the dictum that "each action will bring forth an equal and opposite reaction" is applicable not only to physics, but can also apply to international relations. For the short-term, caution and gradualness seems to be the most appropriate way of increasing political will and the evolution of activities based on a genuine consensus the most viable means of strengthening political will for the long-term.

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) which is regarded as the tightest of the co-operation/integration institutions comprises seven small islands having a joint population of approximately 570,000 people, with an average GDP/capita in 1986 of US\$ 1,400 and land area of less than 3,000 sq. km. scattered over many islands and cays. The OECS treaty which was established in June 1981 covers foreign affairs, defence and security, and economic affairs very broadly defined. It has an administrative and institutional structure which comprises as the supreme body the authority of the heads of government, a foreign affairs committee, an economic affairs committee, and a central secretariat. The major objectives and activities are the promotion of economic integration, the issuance and management of a common currency through the East Caribbean Central Bank, the co-ordination of judicial activities through a joint supreme court, co-ordination of civil aviation activities, and the establishment of joint overseas missions. Discussions are currently underway to create a unified state.

The CDB which was established in 1969 has 17 borrowing Members, comprising all CARICOM countries and including Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands as borrowers, and Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela as non-borrowing regional Members. The bank has had a significant impact on regional financial co-operation not only through the disbursement of its own funds but also as a coordinator of external funding emanating from the Caribbean Group for Co-operation on Economic Development (CGCED) to CDB members. It has also performed a valuable role in the training of regional specialists in subject areas such as project preparation, public finance and economic management.

While its geographic spread is wider than CARICOM, its mandate is nevertheless fairly circumscribed and specific, which at the same time allows its activities to be concrete and an evaluation of its performance and impact to be straightforward.

The Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) comprises 13 countries having a joint population of 5.7 million. There is a greater disparity in size than exists among the OECS between, for example,

Montserrat at 102 sq. km. and Guyana at almost 215,000 sq km; and in income and perceived interest between, for example, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines at US\$883/capita on the one hand and the Bahamas at US\$9462 on the other. In order to contain the antagonisms likely to be engendered by such disparities, yet allow a fairly high degree of specificity in its programmes, special provisions have had to be made for the lesser developed countries (LDCs), the OECS and Belize. Nevertheless, the tensions remain.

The functional scope of CARICOM is fairly high. In addition to its original objective of economic integration through the workings of the Common Market, it has added functional co-operation in a number of sectors (such as transport, education, health, labor, information, youth and sport) and has as a third major objective the co-ordination of its Members' foreign policy.

While the work programmes are fairly comprehensive and measures proposed seem to be fairly concrete, the unanimity rule precludes agreement on many of the fundamentals of the integration process and the co-ordination of foreign policy and even where "agreement" has been achieved, the level of compliance in, for example, the Common Market activities is somewhat less than hoped for. While this is to be expected, it has, nevertheless, engendered a degree of disillusionment with the institution itself and encouraged a perception among some of its failure.

The perception is probably due merely to CARICOM's failure to satisfy unrealistic expectations, particularly as regards the benefits to be derived by its Members from interregional trade and the "common market"<sup>3</sup>. Even so, the benefits to be derived from a market of less than six million with a joint GDP of less than US\$ 13 billion will be fairly limited, particularly when many of the outputs are competitive and there is only limited scope for complementarity.

At the same time some of the non-quantifiable benefits such as the more efficient use of intellectual resources, improvements in information systems, the development of a more effective joint negotiating capacity in international forums have been underplayed. But this impatience with performance is not unique to CARICOM, and springs from a tendency among policy-makers both at the national and regional levels to overestimate the range of viable options open to them. There is also a tendency to ignore those aspects of institution-building and the establishment of common linkages and shared perceptions which are difficult to quantify but are essential for effective co-operation. Accordingly, there is a tendency to overestimate the speed with which changes can be

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<sup>3</sup> As has been implied above, the "common market" exists in name only, since sufficient political will has not been mustered to enable the necessary supporting legislation to be enacted.



effected, thus engendering false expectations. The resulting impatience holds the danger of hasty policy shifts, thus not allowing policies a chance to work and ultimately creating policy inconsistency.

The widening of CARICOM to expand its geographic coverage, is a tendency which coexists somewhat uneasily with attempts to deepen the degree of intensity of CARICOM activities. The impetus for widening came essentially from countries outside of CARICOM, which not having the option of entering common trading arrangements elsewhere and perceiving benefits to be derived from access to the CARICOM market, sought association of one form or another. There was, nevertheless, impetus for widening the market coming also from within CARICOM, essentially from those seeking a bigger market for its output than provided by the existing membership and having sufficient confidence in its capacity to penetrate the expanded market.

The application of Suriname is longstanding, beginning with a request for observer status in CARIFTA in 1973. "Liaison" status was granted at the Thirteenth Meeting of the Council of Ministers in March of that year, which stipulated that "Suriname would be allowed to participate in the technical committees in CARIFTA subject to the discretion of the chairman of the committee". It later participated as observer in a number of meetings of CARICOM institutions such as the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Health, and standing committees for labor. In 1982, it applied for observer status in the Conference of Heads of Government, the Common Market Council and the institutions of the Caribbean Community.

The application by Haiti for membership in the Community and associate membership in the Common Market dates from 1974. The application was amended in October 1982 to that of "permanent observer in the technical bodies of the Caribbean community, particularly in those dealing with agriculture and health". It also requested observer status to the Caribbean Development Bank.

The Dominican Republic sought admission as "observer to the Caribbean Community" in May 1982. This was subsequently clarified to mean "observer status in the institutions that deal with functional co-operation".

Both Haiti and the Dominican Republic are currently seeking admission to the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Group in order to benefit from the various facilities granted by the EEC to those countries within the respective Lomé agreements and where Suriname already sits. But by and large, with the exception of Suriname and recently the Netherlands Antilles which gained observer status on par with Suriname in 1988, the process of widening has not moved rapidly, the unanimity rule and the need to achieve the desired

level of deepening among the existing members being quoted as reasons for the reluctance to admit new members.

But in essence, reluctance springs from an unwillingness to introduce a greater degree of heterogeneity into a group which already has such a wide diversity of perceptions as to the future of the institution, given that either Haiti or the Dominican Republic has a market, in terms of population size greater than that of the existing CARICOM Members, given the greater natural resources that they are perceived to have and given the limited interaction which has taken place with these countries over time because of historical legacies. But the fear of economic dominance perhaps plays the major role in explaining the reluctance of the existing members to permit new entrants into the common market arrangements.

The creation of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee(CDCC)<sup>4</sup> in November 1975 was a significant step in the evolution of Caribbean institutions. For not only did it initiate the process of dialogue and interaction between the countries of the wider Caribbean, but at the same time it provided an opportunity for them jointly to advance their relations with Latin America and, at the operational level, with the United Nations System.

As late entrants into the United Nations, the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean found themselves a part of the regional system dominated by Latin American constitutional and political modes and perceptions with which they felt uncomfortable. Moreover, the developmental preoccupations of continental Latin America were not perceived to be identical to those of the small islands of the Caribbean. As a consequence, interaction with the Regional Economic Commission was limited and cautious.

Proposals by governments to the United Nations Secretary-General aimed at establishing an Economic Commission for the Caribbean were muted following the creation of a Caribbean Office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) located in Trinidad and Tobago to cover Aruba, the then British Leeward and Windward Islands, Curacao, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. The office became fully operational on 1 December 1966. Its main objective was to collect information about these territories in order to better understand

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<sup>4</sup> This section on the CDCC is condensed and updated from an ECLAC internal document entitled "A view of the Caribbean" prepared in October 1984, as an input to the technical review of ECLAC. It was revised and subsequently published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and provides a more comprehensive discussion of the issues.

the "special characteristics and problems of small island states in the Caribbean and so better represent their interests in the activities of the Economic Commission". The work programme of the Caribbean Office remained, however, essentially an extension of that determined for Latin America although with the focus in Latin America being directed towards integration there was a great deal of scope to engage in activities which were currently of relevance to Commonwealth Caribbean countries which were endeavouring at this time to find mechanisms for co-operation following the demise or the West Indies Federation. It therefore gave active assistance in the negotiations leading to the establishment of the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA), as well as to the establishment of the CDB. Other activities included much of the preparatory tasks for the implementation of the Agricultural Marketing Protocol, facilitating the creation within the CARIFTA of the East Caribbean Common Market (ECCM), the establishment of the Caribbean Investment Corporation (CIC), and preparatory work facilitating the further deepening of the trade integration process. Accordingly, the Office worked closely with the Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Secretariat on matters connected with the signing of the Treaty at Chaguaramas and bringing the CARICOM, into being. Once these institutions were established the Caribbean Office began to look towards fulfilling other longer term needs for co-operation in the wider Caribbean region.

In May 1975 the sixteenth session of ECLA was held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Resolution 358(XVI) establishing the CDCC was prepared by Trinidad and Tobago and co-sponsored by Cuba, which also shared some of the concerns of Trinidad and Tobago, that "if the Caribbean did not further consolidate its efforts it would run the risk of losing its identity". The resolution defined the membership of the CDCC as those countries fully "within the sphere of action of the ECLA Office in Port-of-Spain and the Governments of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti and other Caribbean countries as they achieve independence".<sup>5</sup> By the terms of the resolution the Committee would "act as a co-ordinating body for activities relating to development and co-operation". The Executive-Secretary of ECLA was accordingly asked "to co-operate with the governments concerned on matters within his competence on matters which are of concern to these countries," and "to undertake studies and promote initiatives....designed to strengthen the co-operation of the other member countries of ECLA and integration groupings of the Latin American region with the Committee..."

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, the requirement of independence, while necessary for formal membership, has not precluded the participation of non-independent members on a basis of equality, since the only privilege accorded exclusively to members is the right to vote. All matters in the Committee are, however, resolved by consensus.

For a better understanding of the Institution that was being created it is useful to isolate a few of the important threads that were being woven into its backdrop, such as the OPEC oil price increase; the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States; the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations; and the creation of SELA. These events manifested a confidence on the part of the developing countries in the mechanism of South-South co-operation and the use "of the solidarity deriving therefrom for North-South negotiations". At the same time, these events were perceived by the countries of the north with unease and policies of containment were being developed to counteract them.

The scope of the CDCC work programme was fixed at the first meeting. At that stage the perception of the CDCC was one of promoting greater co-operation between the Member countries themselves and of ensuring a better co-ordination of the inputs of technical assistance from all its various sources. The CDCC assisted by the secretariat was therefore being empowered to carry out two basic tasks. It was mandated to co-ordinate the inputs of the various technical assistance agencies within a conceptual framework to be defined by the ministerial sessions. It was also expected to foster co-operation between the Members, Associate Members and Observers of the Committee. The secretariat was expected to provide the necessary substantive inputs whenever necessary. The debate on the work programme therefore centered around making the areas of co-operation and co-ordination as complete and all embracing as possible. At that stage no project-oriented work programme was envisaged.

Subsequently, emphasis tended to shift from the task of co-ordination, the success or failure of which was often difficult to measure and which also ran into difficulty with the specialized institutions having separate and sometimes conflicting mandates with the CDCC, to focus on co-operation as a yardstick by which to judge CDCC performance. The mechanism by which co-ordination of the outputs of the United Nations system was to take place, the interagency meeting, which was scheduled to be held after each CDCC meeting was convened twice, but did not have the intended effect, partly because of the difficulty experienced by individual governments in maintaining consistent policies from one forum to another. This was due to a lack of effective internal co-ordination of foreign economic policy issues as advanced by departments such as finance, planning, trade and foreign affairs, but also in lesser degree between the departments responsible for social matters such as health, education and culture. In sum the co-ordination of external developmental agencies was not effective through the CDCC because a necessary pre-condition - the co-ordination of national government policy internally, which should have taken place between the various ministries operating in the international arena - was not itself satisfied. Inconsistencies created confusion and conflicting mandates, and

agencies tended to revert naturally to instructions emanating from their own intergovernmental forums.

Secondly, the secretariat was not able to provide sufficient assistance to the governments in the task of co-ordinating technical assistance inputs from the United Nations family of agencies neither was it able to foster the necessary dialogue between the governments on the one hand and with the agencies on the other. But this task would not have been possible without determined and consistent government support in all the relevant forums. While some attempt is made through the CGCED, to co-ordinate donor country inputs at the national level the task of co-ordinating the regional inputs from the international agencies remains unfulfilled. The CDCC still provides the only forum for this task because of its nearly universal membership and its multidisciplinary scope. But this potential will not be realized until enough CDCC governments are able to co-ordinate and systematize their own foreign policy.

In the absence of co-ordination, focus was therefore placed on co-operation. But while South-South co-operation was regarded as a necessary part of the process of development by a few people, it was regarded by many more as a tactic to strengthen the negotiating capacity of the south in the North-South dialogue and a shift in emphasis in this direction was to be seen over time.

As the industrial countries deflated their economies after the second oil shock experienced recession and as this filtered into the Caribbean, attention was focussed on their sources of hard currency earnings in the north and they became preoccupied at the same time with domestic adjustment policies. The focus therefore shifted to domestic preoccupations and to the negotiations with the north. Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) and Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries (ECDC) were therefore relegated in order of importance on the international agenda as the short-term took precedence over the medium- and long-term. In this scenario the international agencies were soon to be judged by the speed with which they were able to transfer resources, either material or technical.

The focus by governments on more operational project type activities growing out of the CDCC work programme placed it at variance with the activities defined by the Economic Commission as a whole. As a result the secretariat had to face two sets of mandates, one for which it had to be answerable to ministers on an annual basis. The scope of the work programme, defined in the first place for the task of co-ordination, assumed more daunting proportions once it needed to be operationalized, and implemented by a small staff with severely limited resources.

The quest of the CDCC in recent years has been one of trying to accommodate its policies in the face of the changing needs and

policies of its members. Its secretariat has in turn had to try to secure some autonomy, in order to make its work programme more responsive to these changing demands and perceptions while at the same time struggling to obtain the resources needed to fulfill the greater demands being made upon it.

It would seem, however, that the matter has now come full circle, since at the eleventh session of the CDCC held in November 1988, CARICOM Members articulated some clear positions through its spokesman, the Minister of External Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, which suggested that new emphasis should be put on co-operation and co-ordination particularly between the Caribbean and the other United Nations agencies. What remains to be seen is whether the preconditions necessary for the success of this phase are now being met, by the governments and by the agencies.

After 22 years the two distinct but interrelated objectives of the Subregional Headquarters of ECLAC in Port-of-Spain remain to create a functionally relevant programme for itself, on the one hand, and to ensure a coherent Caribbean input into the United Nations system, on the other. These objectives were reflected in the early quest of Caribbean governments for a United Nations institution with a Caribbean identity and relevance which caused the Caribbean Office of ECLA to be established in 1966, and which subsequently motivated the establishment of the CDCC, nine years later. It is noteworthy that this quest remains as urgent as ever and derives from the twin objectives upon which the office was founded as an agency for preserving the Caribbean consciousness and integrity, and, as an agency for introducing the Caribbean into Latin America, and the United Nations system as a whole.

But in the final analysis it must be recognized that an institution such as the CDCC, which covers a more diverse grouping of countries, of differing historical, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and varying size, and with a broad functional mandate, will be empowered by its membership only to operate at a fairly abstract level, which at the same time might not be perceived by the political directorates of its members to be of immediate and high priority. This in turn will constrain such an organization to operate with relatively weak political support, so that it will need to establish a network of constituencies among fairly specialized and technical interest groups having longer term perspectives, such as the Association of Caribbean Economists (ACE), various university study groups, specialists concerned with the diffusion of regional languages and creoles, cultural fora and other aspects of social development.

Yet the overlapping institutional fabric is necessary and desirable to move the process of familiarization, co-operation and co-ordination forward at the regional level as a whole, while not hampering the pace and intensity at which the various sub-sets can interact. It is also evident that a fairly high degree of

interaction and co-ordination of policies is necessary at the institutional level.

Over time, a fairly substantial stock of operations has nevertheless accumulated within the ambit of the CDCC in all the varying categories outlined above: co-ordination, co-operation and projects, a few of which are described briefly for illustrative purposes.

The Caribbean Environmental Programme provides a good example of region-wide co-operation which had its genesis in an ECLAC/UNEP project located in Port of Spain and commencing in 1977. The programme is a comprehensive intergovernmental co-operation activity, in fact, with a wider constituency than the CDCC itself, covering the insular and coastal States of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, including the Bahamas, Guyana, Suriname and the French Department of Guyana, as well as the waters of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent to these states and territories.

The Regional Action Plan was prepared after receiving the guidance of an advisory panel of eminent Caribbean experts in the field and a large number of surveys, reviews and studies were prepared and reviewed by the project personnel. After being refined by a number of experts, the Plan was adopted by an intergovernmental meeting in 1981, as the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme. Substantively it covers areas such as environmental assessment and management, education, training and the development of human resources, and the necessary support measures. Operationally, it covers programme implementation, institutional arrangements, financial arrangements and programme priorities.

The Caribbean Documentation Center currently comprises six data bases mounted on computer, to which on-line access can be gained by CDCC Members and other users. The data bases cover economic and social data with 17000 records and abstracts, as well as agriculture, patents, labor and information technologies. Outputs are produced in the form of bibliographies, authority files, abstracts, current awareness bulletins as well as on line access, electronic mail service and so on. Extensive training and technical assistance is also provided at the national level to assist countries to establish and upgrade their national data bases.

The Statistical Data Bank collects and compiles an array of economic data on CDCC countries which provides an input into the economic analysis within the office as well as information to Member countries and relevant institutions. A series of selected statistical indicators is published regularly, for the use of researchers, as well as a comprehensive publication of agricultural statistics. Direct technical assistance and advisory services are provided to regional statisticians, census personnel in the

REDATAM<sup>6</sup> project and to economic and social planners, most recently in the establishment of projects data banks.

In the area of Economic and Social Planning a number of working groups of planners has been convened to exchange experiences and to develop techniques and programmes in their respective sectors. They have identified a number of activities currently forming major aspects of the CDCC work programme such as the link between tourism and the environment. Advisory services are also provided in conjunction with the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) to Member countries in preparing national economic plans and programmes, and training courses are held in conjunction with other agencies in areas such as projects banks, investment programming, trade finance, public sector investment programming and so on.

In Demography an ECLAC/CELADE project has completed its fourth year of operation and has the objective of assisting governments in the integration of population in development planning and in formulating and implementing national development policies. Programme activities include the provision of advisory services, policy guidelines, research, data inputs, staff training and equipment for Member governments.

The Caribbean Council for Science and Technology is an autonomous intergovernmental body conceived within the CDCC, comprising its members and serviced by its secretariat, which meets regularly to devise a programme of activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of its members in the field of science and technology.

In the field of Language training a programme for the Removal of Language Barriers has been underway and is currently finalizing the project designed to establish a Caribbean Language Institute which will include national chapters in all participating countries. The programme has already completed activities related to language trainers in the region and the fostering of networking among the various language institutes in the region.

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<sup>6</sup> Retrieval of census data for small areas using micro-computers (REDATAM).



### Conclusions and Recommendations

The thesis of this paper is that given a fixed quantum of political will, which is not variable in the short term, there is a tension, or a tradeoff, if you will, between three sets of variables:

- a) Universality or geographic scope;
- b) Functional spread of activities, as defined by the mandates; and
- c) Degree of concreteness of the specific activities.

While recognizing that political will might be varied over time, and indeed the objective of each institution is to increase the degree of political will available to it since will is the determinant of action, the use of direct political intervention for that purpose must be judiciously used since it is as likely to have the opposite effect. Accordingly, the accretion of political will needs to be slow and painstaking and based on a firm consensus of the respective parties.

The major institutional actors assign different priorities among the variables outlined above, a factor which influences the nature of each of them, as follows:

- a) The OECS gives primacy to concreteness and functional spread, in that order, with no concern for universality;
- b) CARICOM gives primacy to widening its functional scope and seems to accept, although only implicitly, a lower priority for concreteness. Overall it has a fairly weak commitment to widening;
- c) The CDB by its nature values the concreteness of a legal contract, and has widened its geographic scope to a greater extent than CARICOM, but preserves a high degree of specificity in its work programme;
- d) Similar comments refer to the CTRC which has wide geographic coverage, a very narrow subject focus but a relatively unconcrete manner of operation, in that its task is mainly advisory; and
- e) For the CDCC, universality is its *raison d'être*. At the same time, its functional scope is fairly broad primarily because non-CARICOM actors have fewer institutional options. Accordingly, the level of concreteness of its operations needs to be fairly low.

Given these facts, the conundrum which the CDCC needs to solve relates to the appropriate modality, or more realistically the

appropriate mix of means, to be used in advancing the level of co-operation among the diverse grouping that comprises the Caribbean.

Moving from the diffuse to the concrete in a continuum, the following modalities suggest themselves: consultation, co-operation, co-ordination, specific project activities, joint initiatives requiring legislation and policy harmonization.

Realistically, the bulk of CDCC activities will need to cluster around the categories of consultation and co-operation, with co-ordination to take place in areas relating to the United Nations family of institutions, if the necessary consensus can be established within the CDCC and in the United Nations system. This emphasis should not preclude concrete project activities where a sufficient consensus has been reached as to the need for such region-wide activities as is the case in information.

The focus on the more diffuse activities nevertheless creates a dilemma for the CDCC, in so far as those having opportunities for more concrete action in such fields, the OECS and to a lesser extent CARICOM, might regard such initiatives as superficial and useless unless they can be persuaded that region-wide interaction is itself a worthwhile objective. One means of accommodating to this constraint has been to identify a special constituency of the small island countries both within and outside of the OECS, since they are more likely to arrive at effective solutions to common problems acting jointly.

For the larger countries, some of whom are attracted by the perceived economic benefits to be gained from a wider market, there is need to sustain their interest in those other activities which are feasible in the short or medium terms so that with the growth of greater familiarity and understanding more concrete activities on a regional basis can become acceptable. In the process the opportunity should not be lost to create and nurture those region-wide projects or facilities which can best satisfy commonly identified needs.

As the CDCC enters its fourteenth year of existence it retains a unique vision so well expressed by the late Dr. Eric Williams in May 1975, "to deal with Caribbean issues and circumstances and to embrace all Caribbean entities from Belize to Cayenne, irrespective of political status". The membership of CDCC is wider than ever before although it is by no means complete and more time will be needed before all potential actors in the Williams framework will be convinced about the benefits of participation. It nevertheless provides the forum which will permit the largest grouping of small states, with diverse cultural origins yet all presently so similar in composition and in the problems they must solve, to work together to fashion solutions for them. For as time passes it becomes clear that the peoples of the region are complementing their traditionally outward vision with an inward one in an attempt

to resolve those uniquely regional problems determined by size, location and culture to which the outside has no convincing answer. So we see a potential grouping of 25 Caribbean entities perhaps with different constitutional arrangements, all seeking answers to the same fundamental issues and circumstances.

In a world in which the interaction between states and other international actors is becoming increasingly more complex and intense, all Caribbean States are no doubt anxious to know the future of their nation states as currently constituted. For while the boundaries of national jurisdiction are being eroded in even the largest states it is those small and open states of the Caribbean that face the most serious consequences of this erosion. They will be the first to fall as casualties if this erosion cannot be halted. And if it is found to be an immutable process for the states the inhabitants of these islands will need to know what measures must be taken to preserve and develop those cultural and psychological elements necessary to sustain the future integrity of their societies.

The original task of CDCC, to foster co-operation and co-ordination between the diverse countries of the region, remains valid. These modalities remain the most likely to arrive at rational solutions to common problems as well as the most efficient in maximizing those benefits to be derived from increasingly scarce resources. Co-operation and co-ordination and the development of regional approaches remain the most effective means of circumventing the limits to the absorptive capacities of small states. Development plans and policies that contain even minimal elements of co-operation and co-ordination are necessary to maximize the benefits to be derived from the regional market and to benefit from those resource complementarities which exist in the region and might make it feasible to penetrate world markets. As resources become more scarce Caribbean countries can ill afford the duplicative and unco-ordinated, and sometimes conflicting, initiatives of many isolated actors.

In a situation of rapid technological change with the attendant need at the national level for structural transformation, governments with a crisis mentality cannot permit themselves to be seduced into believing that the solution lies in "a quick fix". The danger of focusing solely on the short term is one to which governments of the region are particularly prone, since most of them must face well-informed and highly articulate electorates after relatively short periods of time. Activities which do not hold out the promise of short-term benefit have therefore tended to be relegated to a lower level of priority. But the overriding problems remain.

The CDCC provides a unique vantage point from which to monitor developments in the region as a whole, and therefore to perceive longer-term trends and issues. This derives from its wide

geographic spread the multidisciplinary nature of its work programme and a growing research capability facilitated by the Caribbean Documentation Center and the Statistical Data Bank which are integral parts of its secretariat. While the Member Governments might not therefore be able to make the resources available to fully explore long-term issues it is a service which the secretariat, linked as it is with the wider network of United Nations human resources might be entrusted to perform.

The CDCC must not be judged by its capacity to transfer resources for short-term development. Its function is essentially to provide the vehicle for conveying Caribbean regional policy into the United Nations system, to ensure that the output of that system is rational, efficient and co-ordinated. This is a major aspect of the terms of reference of the Regional Economic Commissions as mandated by General Assembly Resolution 32/197 which intends that they become "the main general economic and social development centers within the United Nations for their respective regions".

But Caribbean regional policy is still at an early stage of articulation. Economic and social policy is not yet fully co-ordinated at the national level and therefore the message contained through foreign policy tends to be ambiguous and sometimes lacking in coherence. Moreover, the perception of the region as defined within the CDCC is not yet clear to all its members. While some recognize the region in its totality as a valid focus for certain types of regional initiative, others only recognize a part of it and even then only for closely circumscribed types of action or for some specific acts.

This incomplete perception is due in part to the fact that foreign policy is a relatively recent responsibility for most CDCC Members and the first focus has tended to be placed on the major economic actors, sources of trade and finance. The problem is therefore in the nature of a cycle, underdevelopment results in a lack of adequately co-ordinated domestic policies which is reflected externally as national actors speak with separate voices. This in turn leads to ambiguous, duplicative and inefficient inputs from abroad into the domestic developmental process, which are, as a consequence, rendered less effective.

It will take some time before the full benefit to be derived from co-operation and co-ordination within the framework of the CDCC is fully understood and accepted and still longer before this perception can be translated into a working reality. In the interim, therefore, it is the responsibility of the CDCC secretariat itself to fully understand and develop these concepts and the implications which flow from them, and with the support of those other committed governmental and institutional operatives, sustain the ideal until such time as a sufficient level of political will can be mustered at the level of the governments to make these goals a reality.

Accordingly, any realistic proposals for co-operation and co-ordination will need to be guided by past efforts and achievements and actors will need to be satisfied with fairly modest results in the short- to medium-terms.

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