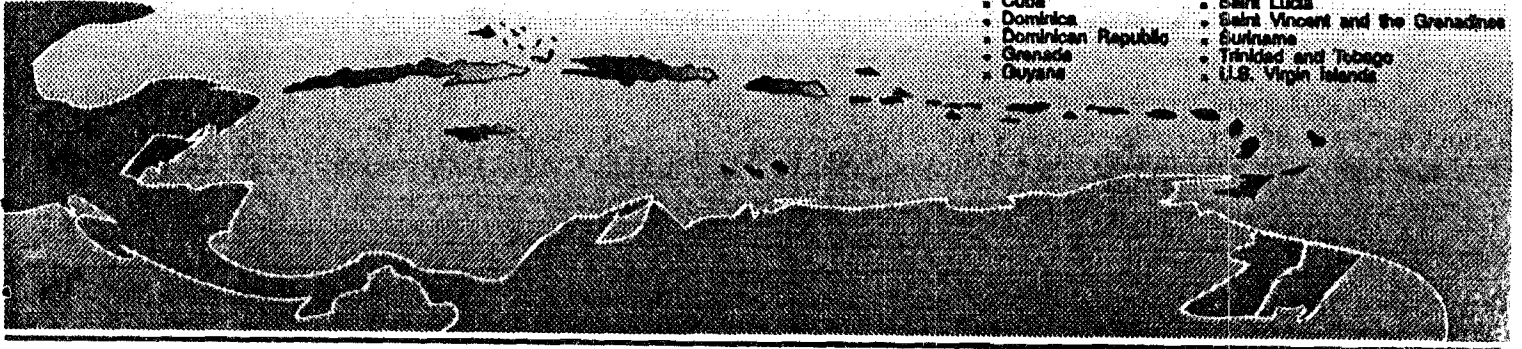




- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Br. Virgin Islands
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenade
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Montserrat
- Netherlands Antilles
- Puerto Rico
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinidad and Tobago
- U.S. Virgin Islands

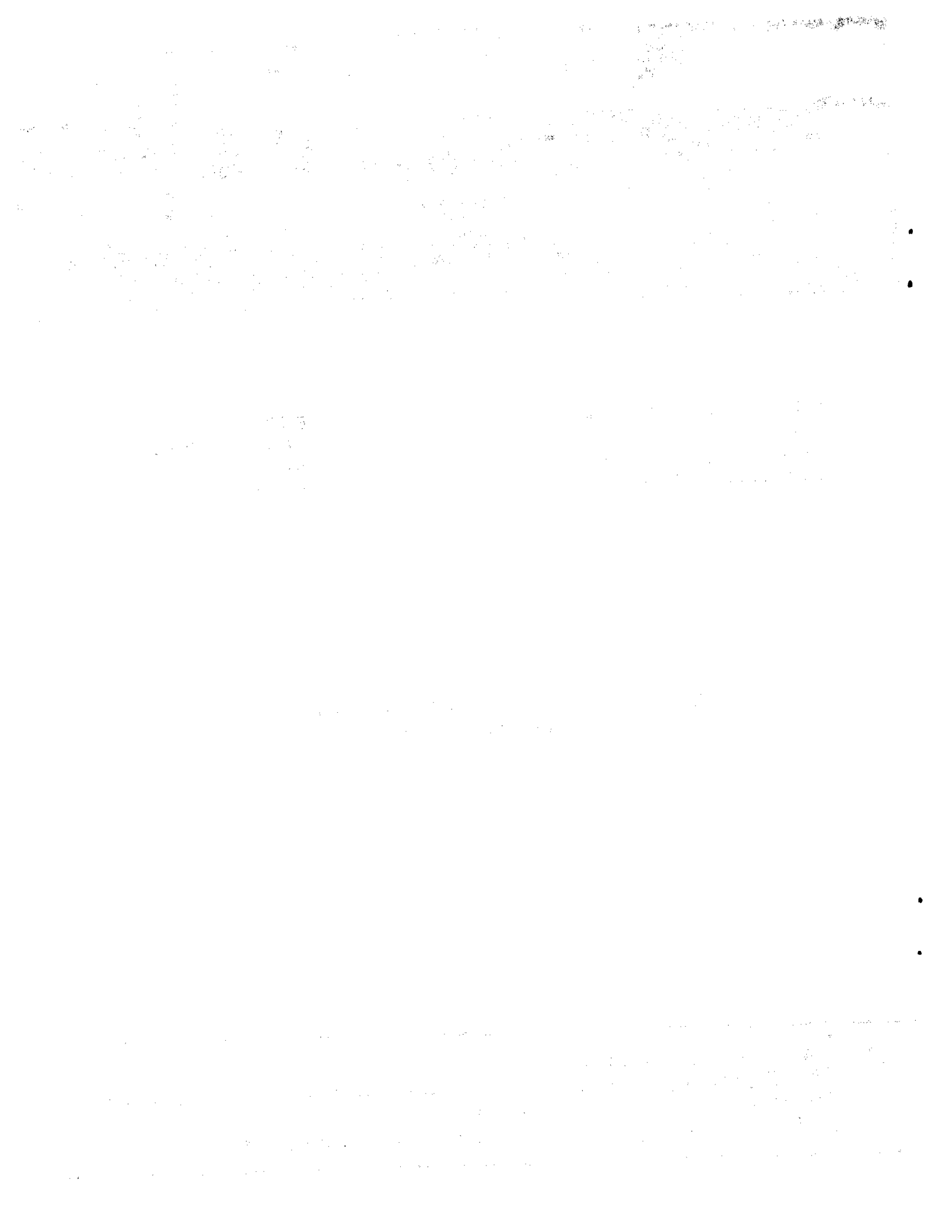


Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on  
 Poverty Eradication  
 28 October - 1 November 1996  
 Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

GENERAL  
 LC/CAR/G.489/Rev.1  
 6 January 1997  
 ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING ON  
 POVERTY ERADICATION**





## **ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

### **Place and date of the meeting**

The Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication was held at the Trinidad Hilton Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago from 31 October to 1 November 1996. Preparatory to the ministerial meeting, officials met at the technical level from 28 - 31 October.

### **Attendance<sup>1</sup>**

The meeting was attended by the following CDCC member countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The following associate members also attended: The British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and the Netherlands Antilles. The Turks and Caicos Islands also attended as observers.

The following United Nations bodies attended: United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The following United Nations specialized agencies also attended: the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Other intergovernmental organizations attending were: Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Organization of American States (OAS), Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), University of the West Indies (UWI), Institute of International Relations (IIR) and the World Bank.

The following non-governmental organizations also attended: Caribbean Association of Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA), Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL), Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA), Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation (CFPA), Caribbean Network of Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD), Caribbean Peoples Development Association (CARIPEDA), Caribbean Policy Development Center (CPDC), Disabled Peoples International, Jamaica, Small Business Development Company Limited of Trinidad and Tobago (SPDC), Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women and the Suriname Trade and Industry Association.

The following ECLAC consultants attended as special invitees: Mr Neville Duncan, Mr Ralph Henry, Mr. Didacus Jules, Ms Dawn Marshall, Mr. Leo Pujadas and Mr Frank Rampersad. Mr Reynold Simons of the Institute of Research and Development of Suriname also attended as a special guest.

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The list of participants is annexed.

### Agenda item 1: Opening ceremony

In his opening remarks, Honourable Ralph Maraj, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, welcomed the delegations to the meeting, commenting that their presence demonstrated the priority attention accorded by their respective governments to eradicating poverty. He noted that the situation of poverty internationally had reached crisis proportions with more than 1.5 billion persons comprising the world's poor, while in the subregion the rates of poverty averaged approximately 38 per cent of the total population.

Minister Maraj commended the organizers of the meeting, particularly ECLAC, for joining together to ensure effective follow-up to the United Nations World Summit for Social Development. The Minister went on to state that this Ministerial Meeting would contribute to efforts at the national, subregional and international levels to encourage social transformation and poverty eradication. He underscored the necessity for the meeting to ensure that its deliberations were action-oriented and facilitated both poverty amelioration in the short term, as well as long-term solutions.

In his opening remarks, Honourable A.N.R. Robinson, Minister Extraordinaire in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, reminded the audience of the enormous threat which poverty posed to the political stability, the social cohesion and the environmental health of the planet. He described poverty as the inability of an individual, household or segment of the population to satisfy their basic needs, both the physical and non-physical needs required for a meaningful life. He noted that poverty brought with it an element of social exclusion leading to a violation of human dignity which he felt was an unacceptable situation. The Minister referred to the report of the World Summit for Social Development which placed emphasis on children in the targeting of vulnerable groups and also drew attention to the phenomenon of "street children" in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Minister stated that an integrated approach involving cooperation and collaboration among different sectors and organizations was essential in advancing social development. He felt that this approach had not been adopted to the fullest extent in Trinidad and Tobago and explained why Trinidad and Tobago's social safety net had not been as effective as it should have been.

Minister Robinson presented a brief overview of the poverty situation in Trinidad and Tobago and outlined his Government's policy to implementing an integrated and multi-sectoral strategy within the overall macroeconomic framework. This strategy was exemplified by the creation of the recently launched National Social Development Council, to address the core issues of poverty eradication, expansion of productive employment and enhancement of social integration. The Minister noted that poverty eradication was perhaps the most daunting challenge for local and national governments and the international community. In this regard, he pointed to the need for a strengthened information base to assist decision makers and the very important role played by non-governmental organizations in interacting with governments to facilitate the campaign against poverty.

The Minister concluded that efforts to eradicate poverty must cover a wide spectrum of activities, ranging from measures to facilitate economic development, improve access to basic

services, provide social services, improve the status of women, stimulate income-generating activities and productive employment, promote anti-discrimination activities, monitor poverty trends, promote social funds and safety nets and encourage activities which addressed the causes of poverty from a long-term perspective. Trinidad and Tobago, he felt, was well placed to achieve the United Nations' international goal of eradicating poverty in 10 years, beginning in 1997.

In his statement Mr. Daniel Blanchard, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, stated that he was pleased to speak on behalf of the nine international organizations, which, together with ECLAC and CARICOM had joined together to support the meeting.

The Director noted that the focus on poverty eradication was not new, either to governments or agencies in the region. Governments, since the post-independence period, had sought to implement development strategies which would reduce poverty, improve the distribution of wealth and provide equal access to social services. The economic downturn during the 1980s, population growth and the requirements of structural adjustment had left the region and the world facing the harsh realities of increasing absolute and relative poverty for large segments of the population.

He noted the World Bank estimate that 38 per cent of the Caribbean population, or close to 7 million people, lived in poverty. This ranged from a high of 65 per cent in Haiti to a low of 5 per cent in the Bahamas. He suggested that the poor in the Caribbean could be divided into three categories, the traditional or endemic poor, the new poor and the unemployed. Poverty in the former group was attributed to economic structures which marginalised significant segments of the society, such as indigenous populations, due to skewed asset ownership deriving from inherited colonial patterns of production and trade.

The new poor were those who had descended into poverty as a result of economic decline or as an unintended consequence of stabilization programmes and included, the elderly, living on fixed and inadequate pensions; children and the disabled. Another group which had emerged was the "working poor", because their income did not permit more than a subsistence level existence. These included small scale farmers, small fishermen, persons in the informal sector, unskilled workers and some people employed in the public sector whose incomes had not kept pace with inflation.

A particularly important group of poor was the unemployed, particularly young persons below the age of 30, who were without the skills relevant to the current labour market; the underemployed; and in some countries, female-headed households.

The Director pointed out that poverty was morally intolerable since it prevented people from achieving their fullest potential. But poverty also affected the non-poor and could destabilize a society through the increase in crime, substance abuse and trade in illicit drugs. The very democratic structures, of which the Caribbean could be so justly proud, could come under strain, as citizens become alienated from the political process.

These problems could not be resolved simply through packages of sectoral policies, welfare-type measures or the mere existence of social security systems. ECLAC rejected the approach which considered economic policy and social policy as separate. It believed that the quest for social development required simultaneous, not sequential, progress towards the goals of growth and social equity. The integrated approach stressed technical progress, productive employment at fair wages. It also stressed the need for investment in human resources, it required consensus-building and policies to maintain appropriate levels of international competitiveness and improve income distribution. It also included redistributive measures in favour of the most disadvantaged groups, since their incorporation into sectors with increasing productivity could, in some cases, take a considerable period of time.

The four core aspects of the ECLAC integrated approach were: generation of productive employment; educational reform; the search for specific instruments to overcome poverty; and the intensification of social integration.

In concluding, the Director listed the conclusions reached by the technical meeting:

- (a) Action must be taken to retool the planning process to apply the integrated approach to development;
- (b) Governments were being called upon to encourage activities related to information technology, sports and entertainment, since they showed strong potential to generate employment;
- (c) Too much emphasis was being placed on relief and mitigation efforts and insufficient attention to sustainable development efforts. Action was needed to reshape those programmes so that they empowered the poor, enabling them to be participants in their own development;
- (d) Research suggested that governments should take action to improve the information systems and database in the social sector;
- (e) All actors in the field of poverty reduction and eradication were encouraged to move away from a charity-based approach to one which was more developmental;
- (f) Action should ensure that poverty eradication programmes involved the beneficiaries of the programmes in its design and implementation.

Election of officers

The presiding table was elected by acclamation, as follows :

<b>Chairman:</b>	<b>His Excellency, the Honourable, Manohar Ramsaran, Minister of Social Development - Trinidad and Tobago</b>
<b>Vice Chairmen:</b>	<b>Mr Jean-Luc Desinor, Ministry of Planning - Haiti His Excellency, the Honourable Rupert Herbert, Minister of Education, Labour and Social Security - Saint Kitts/Nevis</b>
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	<b>Her Excellency Mrs. Cherrie Orr, High Commissioner of Jamaica to Trinidad and Tobago - Jamaica</b>

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

The agenda was approved, as follows:

1. Opening ceremony
2. Feature address: Honourable Billie Miller, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Barbados/UNFPA Special Guest
3. Ministerial statements
4. Review and adoption of the report of the technical meeting and the Plan of Action on Poverty Eradication
5. Closure of meeting

Agenda item 2: Feature address

The feature address was presented by the Honourable Billie Miller, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs of Barbados. The Minister thanked the UNFPA for inviting her to speak on the important issue of Reproductive Rights, Sexual Health and Sustainable Development at such an important meeting dedicated to poverty eradication, since it showed an understanding of the underlying causes of poverty in its widest sense.

The Minister noted that ECLAC statistics showed that female-headed households constituted a major portion of the urban poor in the Caribbean and that these women had many children who dropped out of school to care for younger brothers and sisters or to supplement meager family income. Data also showed that better educated girls postponed their first pregnancy and better spaced subsequent children.

The link between sexual and reproductive patterns and sustainable development had finally been widely accepted. It was, therefore, necessary for the Caribbean to build and spread this knowledge to ensure the fundamentals of sexual and reproductive rights and the provision of concomitant health services for the young people in the region.

Widespread education and counselling of the young was necessary to combat the AIDS/HIV pandemic being experienced in the Caribbean. Quoting WHO statistics which indicated that the incidence of AIDS was highest in the Americas and within the Americas among the highest in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, the Minister noted that AIDS was also a particularly destructive force economically since its highest incidence was between the years of 22 to 44, the most productive years. It was also infecting adolescents.

The Minister emphasized that suitable family planning information and services should, therefore, be made available to adolescents, in accordance with the pledges made at the International Conference on Population held in Mexico in 1984 and the "Vision 2000 Strategic Plan" of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. These and similar texts should be made available to adolescents in every school in the region, while sexual and reproductive health care clinics for teenagers were also desirable, since these services were often provided to them in a judgmental and insensitive manner in adult clinics.

Tracing the numerous developments which had taken place in the international forums, the Minister stressed the need for action and implementation since many agreements had remained on the shelf and had become a source of disillusionment for the people they were intended to serve. She recalled that governments had pledged in Cairo to provide universal access to a full range of family planning services by 2025 and that failure to do so would be evidence of unsustainable development. Noting that governments had pledged that 20 per cent of overseas development assistance (ODA) and 20 per cent of budgetary allocations would be directed to the social services, the Minister noted that the English-speaking Caribbean had surpassed these targets consistently so that our human resource base was without equal in the hemisphere.

The Minister concluded that the region now faced the task of dealing with dwindling resources. Partnerships would need to be built across the society with the media which, as opinion shapers, had to publicize the issues in gender sensitive ways so as to increase the level of communication between men and women. Partnerships would also need to be built with the NGO community and an NGO way of doing business adopted for the twenty-first century, since they had established grass-roots contacts and had developed the capacity to operate more efficiently and at lower cost.

### Agenda Item 3: Ministerial statements

The Jamaican High Commissioner, Her Excellency Ms. Cherrie Orr noted that since 1944 the Government of Jamaica had committed itself to the eradication of poverty as its principal development priority. This commitment was founded on the necessity to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty among the children and youth and to prevent others from falling within its grasp. To this end, the Government had sought to create an appropriate climate for investment, macroeconomic stability, growth and development with equity.



She noted that the national poverty eradication programme in Jamaica had been designed to be community-focused and community-centred. It was built around the principles of partnership and integration but more so, its bedrock was the empowerment of individual families and communities to marshal their energies to lift themselves from poverty, with the government playing the role of enabler and facilitator. The Jamaican delegation was, therefore, pleased that the Plan of Action defined by the meeting gave primacy to the role of the community and civil society in regional poverty eradication efforts. They also endorsed the building of partnerships both at the national and regional levels, the promotion of integration and coordination to optimize resource use; and the sharing of regional experiences.

In the national statement made by Belize, the Government committed itself to the principles and actions enshrined in the Plan of Action arising from the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, specifically: the fostering of social integration; the enhancement of productive employment and the eradication of poverty. Special mention was made of two initiatives by the Government in the eradication of poverty, namely, the National Assessment Team (NAT) and the Social Investment Fund (SIF). The SIF was identified as being central to the country's attack on poverty through the identification of those most in need as well as those organizations best suited to provide assistance.

The delegate noted that all fiscal and economic decisions recently taken by the Government of Belize to address current economic problems had been framed with consideration for the possible effects on the poor. In the same vein, he hoped that poverty eradication would be given its deserved priority in the region and be informed by past experiences.

The representative of Barbados noted a general consensus in Barbados that poverty alleviation was necessary, drawing reference to the unemployment rate of 23 per cent in 1993. He noted that social development and poverty alleviation programmes had suffered as a result of the current period of structural adjustment. This had resulted in retrenchment, reduced spending on social welfare, higher costs for utilities, reduced Government subventions to NGOs working in the field of social services and a reliance on indirect income tax, among others. Accordingly, Government was encouraged to identify the socially disadvantaged and formulate programmes and projects targeted to them.

The assistance of international agencies in the field of poverty eradication was welcomed but poverty studies already conducted should not be duplicated since the funds liberated could be used for providing services and improving policies and techniques. He noted that poverty issues were not the domain of any one ministry, but required a multidisciplinary approach. In closing, the Barbadian representative warned that social assistance should not be made open-ended since it was important not to destroy self-reliance. The need was for social development not simply social welfare.

The Honourable Indra Chandernal, Minister in the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security of Guyana, informed the meeting that Guyana had already begun to implement many of the policies being recommended by the meeting to alleviate poverty which, she stated, needed to be addressed at three levels: the macroeconomic level, the creation of social safety nets and mustering political will. She recommended that social programming should take place simultaneously with the implementation of the wider structural adjustment programme.

The Minister underscored her Government's concern about poverty in Guyana which was directly related to the heavy debt burden faced by the country, noting that it was difficult to achieve development in the current global context. She emphasized the need for participation of the poor themselves in the formulation and implementation of the policies designed to help meet their needs. She recommended that there was still the need for strong guidance by the State: that better salaries needed to be paid to teachers, health and social workers; increased promotion and support for the work of community non-partisan groups, especially among the poor, while multilateral agencies should help to broker the write-off of the huge debt owed by Guyana. In closing, Minister Chandernal pleaded that the work of the technicians at this meeting be examined and debated in other countries as they would be in Guyana.

In his national statement, the representative of Haiti noted that in his country, more than elsewhere, poverty had reached an alarming level since more than the half of the population lived below the poverty threshold. The per capita income was US\$260 while more than 60 per cent of the economically active population was unemployed. The illiteracy rate bordered on 75 per cent while infant mortality was 30 per cent and maternal mortality in urban areas 12 per cent. One doctor was available per 10,000 inhabitants while one hospital bed served 1,300 persons. Lack of housing, potable water, together with galloping inflation added to the precariousness of the poor.

Despite scarcity of resources, the Government of Haiti intended to continue the fight against poverty and had developed a programme of economic reforms based on the drastic reduction in public spending in non-priority sectors and an increased expenditure for national production and the social sectors. Within the framework of negotiations with the main donors in the structural adjustment programme, greatest emphasis was placed on poverty eradication. A national council for the eradication of poverty had recently been created, composing ministries of social affairs, women's affairs, planning, finance and the prime minister's office. It was charged with developing and coordinating activities to relieve poverty in the short term and to eradicate it in the medium and long terms. The delegate remained convinced that the meeting would make an important contribution to the efforts of governments in their fight against poverty and contribute to the restoration of the dignity of Haitians. The presence of a strong Haitian delegation was to be seen as a testimony to the unequivocal wish of Haiti to be fully integrated into the Caribbean.

The Honourable Rupert Herbert, Minister of Education, Labour and Social Security, Saint Kitts and Nevis, expressed his appreciation to the host government, Trinidad and Tobago, and to the sponsors of the conference. He stated that it provided an excellent opportunity for the subregion to share information and develop actions to eradicate poverty in the subregion. He noted the high level of participation of donor agencies from the subregion and the international community and expressed appreciation for their interest in the subregion's quest for poverty eradication.

The representative of the British Virgin Islands commented that there was a general perception that poverty did not exist in his country, and this was supported by a high per capita GDP of US\$16,000 and ample physical evidence of an affluent society, as opposed to one that suffered from severe deprivation. However, he commented that a generation ago (1967) the Government had barely been able to raise a million dollars in recurrent revenue. Currently, by contrast, recurrent revenues were \$100 million; while preliminary data indicated that real GDP growth in the British Virgin Islands rose to 4 per cent, up from

3.5 per cent in 1995. Sustained economic growth had led to steady increases in household and government consumption, public and private capital formation.

Poverty was, nevertheless, a complex phenomenon and was not always the case of "absolute and endemic poverty", but also of "relative poverty". He stated that to dismiss or deny the existence of poverty would be a mistake and to rely on anti-poverty programmes alone would be to underestimate its complexity. He then recommended the development of poverty profiles in each country to identify individuals/groups who were at risk; to analyze the root causes of poverty; and to provide a better understanding of the local characteristics and intensity "amongst" and "within" different locations, living arrangements and other socio-economic features of individuals and households. Additionally, he stated that these initiatives should be practical and not merely theoretical means for alleviating poverty.

The delegate from the Netherlands Antilles focused on three aspects: poverty, employment and social integration. She noted that while macroeconomic policy played a key role, growth was not sufficient to reduce poverty. Social integration also went beyond the simple provision of resources to the poor and was a more laudable goal. The speaker noted that work was the best way to reduce poverty, especially if it was productive, well remunerated and conducted under good working conditions since this would also contribute to the process of social integration. Underlying all approaches she said it was necessary to have an ideology of compassion and solidarity.

The Honourable Maurice Moore, Minister of Social Development, speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas noted that while the country seemed not to face high absolute poverty, data on the subject remained scanty and was necessary to address the problem effectively. He expressed support for the concept of the "instant poor", those caused by natural disasters, since recent hurricane Lili had ravaged some islanders just recovering from Hurricane Andrew. Recovery entailed not only the loss of material possessions but also psychological trauma. He noted that the archipalaeic nature of the country required that services be replicated on all the 24 inhabited islands. Moreover, the country had no tax base so that innovative ways had to be found to meet social needs. The Minister concluded that the key to unlocking the region's potential lay with its people. He noted that while impressive levels of economic growth had been achieved there was also evidence of racial gender and socio-economic polarization. He suggested that development lay with the empowerment of people thus enabling them to use their innate and acquired power to be self-supporting, entrepreneurial and productive.

#### Agenda Item 4. Review and Adoption of the Report of the Technical Meeting and the Plan of Action on Poverty Eradication

The officials met at the technical level, from 28-31 October to prepare the Directional Plan of Action for Poverty Eradication in the Caribbean (LC/CAR/G.490). The rapporteur, Her Excellency Ms. Cherrie Orr, High Commissioner for Jamaica, presented the Report of the Technical meeting and the Directional Plan of Action for Poverty Eradication in the Caribbean. Several delegations expressed support for the Plan of Action, stating that work should commence immediately at the national and regional levels to implement its recommendations. It was also proposed that a regional meeting should be convened within two years, to review progress in implementing the Directional Plan of Action at both national and regional

levels. The Directional Plan of Action for Poverty Eradication in the Caribbean was then adopted. The report of the meeting, at the technical level, was also adopted and is set out below.

## **REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL LEVEL MEETING**

### **Review of issues on poverty eradication**

#### **Social issues identified/prioritized for the Caribbean**

In the subsection on social issues three presentations were made. The first, by ECLAC Consultant, Dawn Marshall, introduced the paper, entitled, "A review of issues of poverty eradication of particular concern to the Caribbean with reference to the World Summit for Social Development". The consultant noted that poverty had increased in the Caribbean over the past two decades, partly because of economic recession but also because of the policies adopted to cope with them. For the future there was a need to adopt mutually reinforcing policies in the social, economic and environmental spheres.

The consultant noted that poverty eradication strategies required a four-fold approach which focused on:

- (a) Macroeconomic policies for sustained economic growth;
- (b) Building human capital among the poor to empower them to access and benefit from national development;
- (c) An anti-poverty sensitivity needed to be developed to inform all government policies; and,
- (d) Social safety nets needed to be developed and strengthened.

Three aspects of the Caribbean reality were outlined:

- (a) The region comprised mainly Small Island Developing States (SIDS), though pleas on behalf of SIDS seemed to be falling on deaf ears. The SIDS seemed to be operating in an environment hostile to them so that reality dictated greater self reliance;
- (b) All faced severe environmental constraints yet despite measures, such as the Port of Spain Accord, actions seemed not to have changed. There was need for a new strategic vision which was holistic and intersectoral and which was not limited only to the national level; and,

(c) All faced severe population/demographic constraints. Here societies seemed to have benefited from past efforts. For most countries, problems at the macro level seemed now to be manageable. At the micro level, however, several problems remained, for example, teenage sexuality seemed to be translating into poverty.

Turning to the health situation, the consultant noted the recognition by the Ministers of Health that the State had a responsibility to promote and to protect the poor and ensure that strategies were targeted to improve their well-being. At the same time, it was noted that downsizing was creating new categories of poor while contraction of the public sector was reducing the capacity of the State to respond to them. While social indicators had been good in the past they were now under threat because of the reduced capacity of the public sector and the family to respond to the new challenges. Systems were also in need of reform because of the inflexible ways of operating them.

In concluding, the consultant indicated that the key was for the system to be effectively managed so that problems could be anticipated and prevented. This would require continuing monitoring and response, not only in domestic systems but also in the external environment. If this capacity was to be developed, however, a high premium would have to be placed on education and training at all levels of society.

The second presentation was made by ECLAC staff member, Sonia Cuales, who described the findings of the ECLAC/CDB consultations designed to trace the shape of poverty in six Caribbean countries. She noted that the focus on GDP had concealed several aspects of the social reality, for since GDP had continued to expand there was a tendency for respondents to be extremely sensitive to and even deny the existence of poverty in their respective countries. This pointed up the need for the meeting to suggest a plan which harmonized social and economic aspects of development. With respect to the issue of employment, there seemed to be a lack of understanding about the dynamics of labour markets. Changing economies required new and more comprehensive skills which put a premium on policies to develop skills and to re-skill those whose skills were obsolescent. Even so, many who went through the school system still remained functionally illiterate. The issue of work attitudes should also be tackled to complement improved skill training.

In closing, the ECLAC staff member indicated several issues requiring special attention springing from the national consultations. They were:

- (a) The decrease in the quality of social services;
- (b) The social problems of migrant workers in tourism-based economies;
- (c) Disenchanted youth, especially the male;
- (d) The working poor;

- (e) Policy needed to ensure that disenchantment and withdrawal did not spread, that promises were realistic and were kept;
- (f) Social policy was generally weak and needed to be integrated into the economic policy package;
- (g) The quality and availability of social data impeded an understanding of social conditions and limited the formulation of effective policies and targeted action.

In the third presentation, Dr. Ralph Henry commenced by noting that the Caribbean was not especially poor in resources but had not managed the resources available to it very well. In reporting on the CDB study on poverty in Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Belize he noted that the surveys showed poverty at 25 per cent in Saint Lucia, 33 per cent in Belize and perhaps as high as 42 per cent in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, although in the latter case a final figure had not been computed. The study recognized that poverty was a multi-faceted problem. The sample survey approach adopted, therefore, only provided a snapshot of the problem at a particular point in time. It was desirable to know what were the factors contributing to poverty and how the poor got that way. The survey did not limit itself to households but sought also to ascertain the community and institutional setting. They also sought the advice of the poor as to possible solutions.

The survey, therefore, examined several government agencies as well as NGOs and private sector activities to ascertain their relationship to the target communities, since in all instances the range of institutions mediated resources to the household level. Resources were also widely defined to include collective goods as well as goods more conservatively defined. The survey showed gaps in the institutional coverage both at the level of public and private providers. It also showed gaps in the provision of services and the uneven provision of services within households.

The survey concluded that the solution had to be integrated. Current problems reflected past factors. In all countries fiscal constraints had weakened the State and ways had to be found for civil society to cope in the face of weakened public delivery. There was also the need for flexibility, since society would continue to change. Nevertheless, it was important to monitor developments on a national basis to identify households at risk and at potential risk. There was also the need for safety nets to be provided to cushion the transition as people moved from declining activities to those with new potentials. The nets themselves should be designed not to trap the poor but to facilitate this transition.

Several issues were revisited via questions and discussions from the floor. On the issue of small size, the characteristic of openness was discussed in relationship to the uneven nature of relations with larger States. Some felt that this warranted foreign assistance and countries should not allow the larger developed countries to escape their responsibility to ensure an adequate transfer of resources. Others felt that the reality was that those resources would not be transferred via aid but that financial flows might be induced under favourable conditions. Some felt that the small island countries had not exhausted the options open to them, for example, in using the skilled nationals

available abroad for capital formation, training and savings mobilization. It was also felt that migration had proved beneficial to labour markets and had provided welcome remittances to nationals. Others felt that the region had failed to develop the social knowledge to permit an effective insertion in the increasingly open economic markets while migration was considered to be a mixed blessing. A further manifestation of smallness was seen in the vulnerability which countries had to natural disasters which often created a new category of instant poor.

One delegate wondered whether the recent concern for the poor sprang from altruism or from fear. He provided several examples of what he considered to be exploitation of the poor noting that grass-roots organizations had less access to resources than the rich. Several institutions were considered to perform a redistributive role, from the poor to the rich. In response, it was felt that many in the region were reluctant to discuss the issue of poverty. In that sense the debate tended not to be Caribbean driven, but this did not mean that the issue was irrelevant to the Caribbean. Nevertheless, there was concern that the paradigm being presented, which expanded the role of NGOs at the expense of government, was not the best.

#### Macroeconomic considerations for poverty eradication in the Caribbean

In the section dealing with a review of macroeconomic issues and macroeconomic issues and measures of importance in the Caribbean, there were three presentations. The first presented by Ms. Judy Baker, the representative of the World Bank, focused on macroeconomic considerations for poverty eradication in the Caribbean based on the recently completed report for the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development (CGCED) entitled "Poverty Reduction and Human Resource Development in the Caribbean". This study drew on several background papers and poverty assessments carried out by the CDB, IDB, UWI, and researchers. The study analyzed the causes and characteristics of poverty in the region and reviewed current efforts to alleviate poverty. Several recommendations were set forth, with the caveat that the region was highly diverse and therefore conclusions should not be generalized as being applicable to all.

The report identified several causes of poverty in the Caribbean and focused on the issues of economic growth and of employment. Contributing factors were low or negative growth, inappropriate macroeconomic policies, deficiencies in the labour market resulting in limited job growth, low productivity and low wages in the informal sector, and a lag in human development. Other factors which had also contributed to a decline in living standards for some, yet which were not structural causes of poverty, included the increase in crime and violence, retrenchment of workers, a decrease in the real value of safety nets and changes in family structures.

In the Caribbean there was tendency to link growth and poverty reduction, though accurate data were not always available to measure this. Countries which had experienced positive growth rates and maintained policies that invested heavily in the social sectors now had relatively low levels of poverty. Accordingly, in countries with low or negative growth there was evidence of overall declines in per capita GDP, in real wages and in social sector expenditures. Low growth resulted from two causes: firstly, external shocks, such as adverse changes in terms of trade, changes in the

global demand for exports (such as bananas), global interest rate changes on debt, and natural disasters; and secondly, inappropriate macroeconomic policy responses such as sharp increases in external borrowing, and expansionary monetary and fiscal policies.

Most countries in the subregion which had suffered from macroeconomic disequilibrium had to undertake major policy reforms including devaluation, fiscal restraint, and a variety of market liberalization and privatization issues. A second key macroeconomic issue was that of employment. Since the most abundant resource of the poor was their labour, a vital labour market was important to reducing poverty and income inequality.

Eight main points were proposed as a general strategy for poverty reduction in the region:

(a) The promotion of growth with equity by adopting policies that oriented public spending toward basic social services since they were most heavily utilized by the poor would have the biggest impact.

(b) Employment could be promoted by policies which made conditions more appealing for employers and investors by removing some of the distortions in the labour market.

(c) For the Caribbean to remain competitive, countries should continue to invest in human resource development. Quality and efficiency improvements were needed in health and education, with assurances that the poor would benefit from these improvements.

(d) It was necessary to ensure good governance and develop new partnerships between all stakeholders so that limited resources could be used more efficiently and programmes and policies could be more effective.

(e) It would be essential to address the problems of crime and violence to encourage investment and improve living standards.

(f) To assist vulnerable groups during the short to medium-term transition, safety nets needed to be reformed to ensure adequate coverage and benefit levels at a minimum cost.

(g) Community participation had a critical role to play, but current efforts needed to be strengthened via training and new mechanisms for fund raising.

(h) Countries needed to strengthen the quality and consistency of economic and social data and establish regular systems of monitoring and evaluating poverty. In this regard, the flow of information was critical to appropriate decision-making. The biggest obstacle to this was a lack of commitment from governments.

In the second presentation, the representative of the ILO, Grace Strachan, introduced a paper entitled "Promoting Productive Employment: Issues, Policies and Programmes in the Caribbean".



Four themes were emphasized:

- (a) The importance of strategies for employment, labour markets, labour institutions, social protection and human resource development for poverty eradication;
- (b) The need for multi-dimensional and integrated approaches which involve policy reform, institutional development and micro-interventions;
- (c) The role of public policy in setting the agenda, creating the supportive environment and framework for productive employment growth and poverty eradication;
- (d) The role of pressure groups and organizations of the poor in influencing priorities, forging strategic alliances and sustaining results.

The point was made that the extensive changes in political, economic and social spheres, including the globalization of trade, finance and technology and growing flexibilization of labour markets not only impacted on the incidence and characterization of poverty, but mandated a fresh consideration of strategies and new thinking about effective policies and mechanisms for its eradication. In response to this, two fundamental objectives were identified, as necessary:

- (a) The forging of strategic alliances among different groups nationally and internationally to promote productive employment and eradicate poverty; and
- (b) Monitoring changes, analyzing new trends and new responses developed.

The following five sets of actions were highlighted as necessary to meet these objectives:

- (a) The strengthening of political resolve in addressing these problems at the national level and at the level of CARICOM Heads of Government;
- (b) Given the multi-sectoral nature of strategies, the building up of an increased capacity for policy and programme coordination. An important element of this was staff development. Increased use should be made of TCDC. Arrangements within the subregional, regional and international organizations could play an important role in facilitating this;
- (c) The considerable strengthening of the information base to facilitate more effective monitoring of labour market and poverty trends;
- (d) The carrying out of more Caribbean-based research to improve the understanding of how local labour markets functioned and the impact of new trends on different labour market actors;
- (e) The documentation and dissemination of more information on successful initiatives related to employment generation and poverty eradication in the Caribbean.

Some of the main labour market issues which have impacted adversely on the poverty situation were highlighted. These were unemployment, underemployment, informalization and casualization of employment and low wage and income levels.

The particular poverty situation of four vulnerable groups was analyzed in the context of recent labour market developments. Additionally, HIV/AIDS was identified as a growing regional problem with broad social, cultural, economic, political, ethical and legal dimensions and having significant implications for poverty.

Eleven goals were identified as important in the formulation and implementation of employment policies in the Caribbean.

- Promoting economic growth;
- Promoting employment growth as a centre-piece of macro-economic policy;
- Examining income policies;
- Promoting the development of small and micro-enterprises and the informal sector;
- Promoting education and training;
- Strengthening employment services;
- Strengthening labour market information systems;
- Ensuring the full and equitable participation of women in the labour market;
- Enhancing employment opportunities for youth;
- Enhancing employment opportunities for the disabled and
- Eliminating child labour.

The important role of employers' and workers' organizations in the employment promotion process was also emphasized, with mention made of the need for many of them to adopt a fresh approach to "doing business", based on more careful analyses supported by relevant research. Mention was also made of the need for these organizations to expand their activities beyond their traditional role as partners in collective bargaining and negotiating on employment conditions and to use their position to influence national policies on issues of broad economic and social concern.

The third presentation, by ECLAC Consultant, Mr. Frank Rampersad, noted that the achievement of political independence had done nothing for development in the region since there was now more poverty than before independence. Both money and real incomes had declined. Increasing inequality in money income distribution and the curtailment of expenditure on social services had created an explosive situation. Adopting the criterion of per capita income, the Caribbean countries could be considered poor. The Human Development Index showed the Caribbean to be somewhat better off than indicated by the income per capita categorization. The problem seemed to be one of distribution of wealth and official policy should address that. One quarter of the region's people lived under the poverty line. The integrated poverty measurement for Trinidad and Tobago was 36 per cent. The main explanation for such poverty was that the governments' macroeconomic policies had not placed people at the centre of development. The Gini coefficient for one country had increased from 0.44 to 0.49 in 10 years. The trickle down effect was ineffective as economic growth was

exclusive of social factors. He observed that the International Financial Community had come to the realization that economic development should also encompass social development.

The presenter listed the following nine principal macroeconomic causes of poverty:

- (a) A high degree of leakage of income to the rest of the world through debt servicing and the repayment of Public Debt;
- (b) A dualistic pattern of development with separate enclave and informal sectors; this was unlike the pattern of development in the Asian countries where he observed an umbilical link between the formal and informal sectors.
- (c) Unequal distribution of income earning assets, manifested most in regimes of landholding and land ownership, especially of agricultural holdings;
- (d) Difficulties faced by small farmers in accessing credit;
- (e) An educational system which produced functional illiterates and which was poor in terms of its understanding of technology and technological development;
- (f) Inappropriate wage structures in which the enclave sectors paid high wages which the informal sector could not match and which exacerbated the observed income inequality ;
- (g) Macroeconomic policies, many of which followed IMF prescriptions and impacted hardest on the poor;
- (h) The weakness or absence of social safety nets in some Caribbean countries;
- (i) The lack of self-confidence of Caribbean people and in the future of the region.

In this regard, policy makers needed to take into account the specificities of the subregion. They also needed to equip the population with the ability to sustain the requirements of the market place. Programmes of rural development and specifically land reform, access to credit, water management and market information were identified. Policy makers also needed to address:

- (a) Diversification into the services sector to create the environment for vibrancy and sustainability over the long term;
- (b) A more active role in promoting entrepreneurship through joint ventures with nationals.
- (c) Increased rate of savings;

(d) Strengthened safety nets to provide more effective social relief to a wider coverage of the vulnerable groups; budgetary reallocations would therefore be required ;

(e) The need to educate entrepreneurs to consider the desirability of paying more taxes as an alternative to the private financing of security occasioned by a worsened income distribution situation.

The presenter concluded by observing that the debt service burden was too high because of the graduation of most Caribbean countries to net donor status and their consequent loss of access to preferential loan facilities. The Caribbean governments should move towards the implementation of a Human Security Fund financed through transfers and grants.

At the end of the day, a sound macroeconomic policy against poverty rested on the premise that governments would put people first.

In the discussions that followed, clarifications were made that of greater importance than the issue of a single Caribbean currency as a desirable regional development strategy was the need for countries to increase output. The Caribbean countries needed to increase their savings ratio significantly, but faced difficulties in achieving that objective. To achieve success, the population had to be equipped with the capability to make a living. More attention had to be paid to the production of more food while at the same time avoiding degradation of the environment. The use of some of the revenues from the national lotteries to create jobs or to finance youth development was suggested.

#### Presentation of national reports

Several countries made presentations regarding their national reports on poverty eradication. Brief summaries of these are provided below:

The delegate of the **Commonwealth of the Bahamas** outlined the structure of his country which made the delivery of social services difficult and expensive. He noted that the land area was 5382 square miles divided over 700 islands and keys, though the bulk of the population resided on 14 of them. Sixty-seven per cent of the population lived in the capital, New Providence. The median population age was 25 years though this was expected to rise to 31 by the year 2009. Tourism accounted for 70 per cent of GDP while financial services accounted for a further estimated 15 per cent. Together these activities supported an average income per capita of over US\$13,000. In recent years, however, the rate of growth had slowed and the country was currently experiencing double-digit rates of unemployment. After outlining the ministerial structure the representative focused on the services of the Ministry of Social Development, which had divisions dealing with community support services, child welfare, family services, senior citizens, the family island division, research, planning and community relations, health services, school welfare and disability affairs. Its primary purpose was to ensure that poor and indigent persons had access to the basic necessities of food housing and shelter.

The government's strategy, however, rested on the empowerment of people to use their innate and acquired power to be self-supporting, entrepreneurial and productive. This was to be supported by community capacity-building, intended to broaden a community's leadership base beyond the traditional networks, involve citizens in a search for solutions which they devise themselves and for which they have strong commitment and sharpen a community's ability to identify and use outside resources to support development. Within this framework they would have five objectives: self-sufficiency and economic self-support; innovation; partnerships; coordinated approaches to problem solving and barrier removal. The development programme had three key objectives, which were: building community; increasing economic activities; and, sustaining community and economic development.

The representative of Barbados outlined the social situation of his country which had been put under severe stress by the structural adjustment process of the 1990-1994 period. One notable result of the process was an unemployment rate that had risen to 23 per cent in 1993. There were signs that the situation had improved since 1993 with the level standing at approximately 16 per cent in 1996. The initiative of establishing a poverty line in Barbados was a new one that had not yet been completed. Notwithstanding the high rating accorded to Barbados in the Human Development Index, poverty remained an important and growing concern. Even in the absence of a comprehensive poverty survey, it was clear that certain groups were more vulnerable to poverty than others on the basis of their inability to obtain basic goods and services. Those groups included: the elderly; persons with disabilities; young persons, particularly the unemployed and underemployed; single parents without financial support from fathers; grandparents looking after children whose parents were drug addicts or in prison.

Past governments had placed significance on developing social welfare services aimed at the eradication of poverty. Their concern and action had therefore pre-dated Copenhagen. The list of government reform initiatives included the following:

- (a) A poverty study with the aid of the IDB to establish a poverty line, determine areas where it existed and to provide a basis for programme planning to reduce poverty;
- (b) A Health Rationalization Study to ensure the optimal use of available resources;
- (c) A study on the rationalization of social services involving the Welfare Department, Child Care Board and National Assistance Board;
- (d) Education Reform which included literary enhancement, expansion of skills training, and the creation of a Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council;
- (e) An expanded Youth Affairs Programme under the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture that featured empirically based research and youth entrepreneurship;

- (f) The establishment of a Rural Development Commission and proposed Urban Development Commission;
- (g) A programme to ensure greater coverage of social security by providing for compliance with the rules of the National Insurance Scheme;
- (h) A Public Sector Reform programme with emphasis on human resource development, programme performance budgeting and improved customer services.
- (i) The development of a policy on the disabled and the proposed establishment of a Bureau of Disabled Affairs;
- (j) Institutional strengthening of the Bureau of Women's Affairs;
- (k) Economic initiatives (small business and micro enterprises);
- (l) Strengthening of the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Labour, Community Development and Sports in the areas of research, planning and policy and programme management.

The national paper on Belize provided an overview of poverty alleviation policies over the last three years. Among the social problems, special mention was made of the migratory patterns faced by the country, in-migration from political refugees in Central America and economic refugees from Asia and out-migration of Belizeans to the United States, both of which created major policy issues for social planning. Poverty also remained a problem, surveys showing 33 per cent of Belizeans being poor and 13 per cent being indigent. These figures had remained constant between the two poverty surveys conducted. Prior to the most recent survey formal safety nets had been put into place to protect single parents, urban youth and ethnic minorities, while informal nets were provided by voluntary social groups and by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) through project support for migrants. An informal safety net was also provided by remittances to nationals from relatives abroad. Nevertheless, there was a need for poverty relief interventions to be revised, since often they were supportive and remedial but did not deal with the underlying causes.

The Cuban national presentation focused on economic developments following the breakdown in economic relations with the Soviet Union. Between 1989-1993 GDP had contracted by 35 per cent while trade fell drastically. Lack of petroleum imports had limited electricity production, while agricultural production had also suffered from a lack of imported inputs. In this climate macroeconomic imbalances had surfaced especially in fiscal and external accounts. These imbalances were aggravated by the blockade which Cuba faced and which had been estimated to cost US\$45 billion. Current policy was designed to reinsert the economy into global markets while defending the social advances made in the past. Recovery began with slight growth in 1994 while the economy was expected to grow by 5 per cent in 1996, despite the effects of hurricane damage. Advances which had been made in health and education in the past had been eroded by lack of imported inputs although more resources were becoming available for those sectors in 1996. The

major challenges for the future were to resuscitate income which had fallen to US\$1200 per capita and to ensure that the economic base could support the social gains secured in the past. It was also necessary to integrate the Cuban economy efficiently into the global economy.

The country report on Guyana stated that despite ample natural resources, the country's per capita income was only US\$680 in 1996, compared to an average of US\$720 between 1970 and 1980. An estimated 43 per cent of the population was found to be living below the poverty line, and approximately 33 per cent in extreme poverty. Among the population, 85 per cent of Guyana's indigenous peoples lived below the poverty line, and 45 per cent in conditions of extreme poverty. The incidence of poverty among the Afro-Guyanese population was 43 per cent, and 33.7 per cent among Indo-Guyanese. In the capital, Georgetown, 29 per cent of households were below the poverty line. In the interior community households 9 per cent were so affected. Remittances from abroad accounted for a significant portion (on average, one third) of household income of female-headed households.

The report also mentioned the emphasis placed on public accountability, popular and community participation in development programmes and the high priority placed on programmes to provide social services to the poor. This followed a change of government in 1992, but they have yet to be implemented because of a shortage of administrative personnel, the high cost of debt servicing and other factors.

The report recommended several proposals aimed at creating a new type of economy which recognized that poor and declining economies could not be treated with those remedies appropriate to countries which were no longer underdeveloped. In this regard, the following recommendations were made: debt write off; improvements to salaries in the social sector; community support by agencies such as the Social Impact Amelioration Project (SIMAP); measuring and monitoring of poverty prior to proposing pro forma plans of action; testing of the development model in use; information dissemination and accountability on project implementation; and assessment of results from clearly defined poverty reduction goals.

The Government of Jamaica was committed to adapting policies, plans and programmes to address poverty, its incidence, its prevalence and severity. To improve the design and, therefore, the level of success among existing and new projects and programmes, the Government had carried out annual surveys of living conditions, a poverty mapping exercise, as inputs into the development of a national policy towards poverty eradication and a National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP), which had as its guiding principles and strategies the following:

- (a) Integration;
- (b) Partnership;
- (c) Community-based participation; and
- (d) Sustainability.

The proportion of persons below the poverty line had declined in 1990, below the level of the previous year and continued to decline until 1994. Those declines had been the result of macroeconomic policies on the rate of increase in inflation, the impact of price liberalization on farm incomes, special plant materials targeted to poor rural farmers and increased real incomes relative to the previous years.

While the Surveys of Living Conditions and the Poverty Mapping exercises had been providing critical data for determining the level of poverty and identifying the focus for policy and investment, the Government had carried out consultations to guide the development of a policy and programme for the eradication of poverty. The outputs of the consultation were the documents entitled, "Jamaica's Policy towards Poverty eradication" and the NPEP. These were predicated on the commitment to promote economic and social development and to eradicate absolute poverty. The policy and programme to eradicate poverty had been developed out of the acknowledgment that it was time for the country to make a concerted move to improve the well-being of the socially and economically vulnerable. The action plan for poverty eradication had been developed through a process of consultation among representatives of government, communities, NGOs and the private sector, the political opposition and members of the donor and lending agencies.

The policy focused on reorienting those resources which related to social, physical and economic indicators of well-being and to eradicating poverty, primarily through integrated community development. Programmes and projects to be included in the NPEP had been identified in line ministries and categorized in four subprogrammes. These were subprogrammes for community-based development, human resources and social development/welfare, education and health. A safety net was provided which included national insurance benefits, food stamps and a national minimum wage, all of which had provided increased benefits towards the cushioning of the impact of structural adjustment on the poor. The school feeding programme had improved its targeting and had the potential to establish strong community links.

The NPEP was geared to shift focus from welfare to development, in the interests of eliminating dependency and promoting self-reliance. Projects had been established to target the youth and families with children in the lower income brackets.

Two other subprogrammes were, the Enabling Environment to include institutional strengthening and employment and Environment and Natural Resources Protection. Technical assistance was being provided as part of the programme to identify the needs generated by the strategy to build the enabling environment and then to provide the training to empower community members to identify the social, physical, institutional and economic deficiencies and their solutions.

The implementing capacities of public sector and non-public agencies involved in the programme would be assessed, rationalized and strengthened to improve their ability to deliver. For economic development a bank of projects was being identified within communities to promote the use of indigenous resources. Local government reform was targeted to begin implementation in the



1997/1998 fiscal year. The National Industrial Policy was structured to be strategically integrated with, maintain and reinforce the goals of poverty eradication.

The implementation process and success of the NPEP would be dependent on the continued cooperation among all the partners. It required a willingness to work together for the national good and depended to a large extent on the ability of leaders of all persuasions to assist in the mobilizing of communities and sustaining them in their efforts to move to a higher state of well-being.

The delegate from Montserrat made a presentation of the current situation in that country. She also drew attention to the Government and NGO initiatives to redress and alleviate poverty. Because of the hazard of an erupting volcano, housing had become a critical issue in that relocation to the designated safe area affected privacy, the family as a unit and the economics of everyday life on the island. The Government had responded by providing virtually free hospital care at its temporary setting in a school building in the north of the island. In addition, coping mechanisms had been established to ameliorate the negative psychological and emotional effects of the ongoing disaster. In this regard, the work of the Red Cross was of great importance to the maintenance of relief services.

The Government's poverty eradication initiatives had included a system of free secondary school education, a school meals programme, bus services for school children, day care centres and nursery schools in all communities. A National Plan of Action for nutrition sought to improve the nutritional status of all Montserratians. The Protection of Wages Act of 1996 addressed the issues of minimum wage rates, redundancy pay and pension rights for survivors of deceased public servants. The Department of Community Services provided for relief to all needy persons. Other programmes catered for children at risk, in addition to the provision of free health care and medication for hypertensive and diabetic patients. The Ministry of Health had developed a scheme to bring help to seriously ill persons at no cost to the individual at institutions outside Montserrat.

The national paper on the Netherlands Antilles provided an insight into the situation as regards vulnerable groups in the country, identifying this group as comprising female-headed households, the elderly, the unemployed and the disabled. It was indicated that certain strengths existed in the country that allowed for the provision of basic social security to the citizens, those were: the presence of professionals; the existence of various institutions with the capability of providing basic assistance to vulnerable groups and with persons knowledgeable of the groups at risk and their social situations; and the creation at the federal level of a body to address welfare, family and humanitarian affairs. The existing weaknesses had also been identified as: a lack of funds, arising from the inadequate and inefficient use of the funds that were available; poor coordination and cooperation among institutions offering social assistance and a legislation that did not properly address welfare issues.

The main issues of poverty and social development as they related to the current political situation in the Netherlands Antilles were also raised. It was pointed out that a distinction should be made between the political situation as it related to the Netherlands Antilles on its own, as opposed

to viewing the Netherlands Antilles as a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It was noted that the issue of social development had, in the previous few years, become an important aspect of the development agenda of both the Dutch and the Netherlands Antilles. As a result, a great degree of bartering had to take place to take into consideration each viewpoint. It was, therefore, suggested that the issues of welfare and social development would benefit greatly from having clear jurisdictions and the sharing of responsibility between the two levels of government.

The representative of the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis sought to highlight the major issues related to poverty along with the activities undertaken at the national level for poverty eradication. The report summarized the behaviour of the main measures of economic and social well-being. A growth in real GDP in 1995 of 3.4 per cent was observed. Per capita GDP in real terms rose by some 7 per cent in 1991 over the level of the previous year. A decline in the population was observed from the results of the 1990 census from the level of 1980. Modest rates of price increase, of the order of 3 per cent, had been observed within recent times. The problem of poverty had not escaped Saint Kitts and Nevis, though exact assessment had not been possible because of the lack of information relating to the phenomenon.

Saint Kitts and Nevis had approached the measurement of poverty from the relative viewpoint. No structured methods were employed to quantify the extent and severity of poverty in the Federation. The implicit poverty reduction programme was primarily focused on education, health and housing. Indicators of activity in those areas point to improvements over time of basic services in those areas. A number of instruments existed to bring a measure of relief. They included the following: lunch and transportation for over 3000 school children; the construction of low and middle income housing; allowances for the disabled; immunization programmes for children and subsidies for school-aged children.

Social safety nets provided social security, free social services, and small cash transfers to the most vulnerable of the aged, women and children. The readily identifiable vulnerable groups were female parent households, children, the disabled, youths and the elderly. Poverty seemed to have been concentrated more in the rural areas.

The 1991 population census report showed that the incidence of female-headed households was of the order of 50.9 per cent. Some 47 per cent of the households were headed by women with children under the age of 15 and only 43 per cent of them had been gainfully employed. Although education and training had been available, poverty-stricken families could not make use of the services. In the area of housing, overcrowding and deterioration of the existing housing stock had been a cause for concern.

The unemployment rate ranged from 4.3 per cent to 11.3 per cent. Several problems confronted the youth. Those included unemployment, and underemployment, lack of appropriate skills to acquire desired jobs and terms and conditions of work (wages, hours of work, rest periods and physical conditions).

Among the ongoing activities that targeted the eradication of poverty were the following: early childhood and primary education; secondary education; adult education, formal and non-formal and financing, management and administration of education. Initiatives aimed at the development of micro enterprises had conducted motivational camps to enlighten and advise owners of small businesses and prospective entrepreneurs. The development of a small business policy addressed the needs of special incentives for women, youth and the disabled. A National Housing Corporation had been established to address the problems in the housing sector. Housing policy would focus on land availability and pricing, provision of infrastructure, housing costs and afford ability and housing credit.

Health services were offered through a network of 17 health centres and included: maternal and child health; family planning services; dental health services; mental health services; health programmes for the control of diabetes and hypertension; home visiting and food and nutrition surveillance.

Government would continue to interact with the private sector and non-governmental organizations in the development process.

The **Trinidad and Tobago** national paper addressed the main issues surrounding the characteristics of poverty in Trinidad and Tobago. They were: increasing poverty and inequality; changes in the nature of poverty; and the link between poverty and household characteristics.

Three focus areas which featured as key commitments in the World Summit for Social Development included: change management for poverty eradication; job creation and sustainable livelihoods; and the enhancement of social integration.

Actions taken to combat poverty included the establishment of a National Social Development Council and the establishment of a multi-partite commission. Action had also been taken to formulate a gender policy and collect and disaggregate data by gender. This was important for project and policy formulation aimed at the achievement of gender equity. Gender training had begun within the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs. In particular, the Ministry of Public Administration would be targeted to facilitate the gender mainstreaming process. The National Plan of Action on Violence Against Women was expected to build interagency linkages and to afford better targeting of resources to alleviate violence against women. The Plan would also be used to address the structural causes of violence in society.

Actions were also taken to determine the level of poverty. These included the preparation of a report to determine and measure poverty in Trinidad and Tobago. Actions taken to understand the cause and the solutions to poverty included the establishment of a Task Force on Crime.

Action taken to improve access to productive resources and infrastructure by the poor, especially women, included the Community Development Fund Programme (CDF) which would

provide resources to the population for small-scale community infrastructure or social projects, to assist the situation of the poor.

Action taken to meet the basic needs of all or action proposed to improve the lives of the poor and vulnerable included:

- (a) Restructuring of the System of managing Social Services in Trinidad and Tobago;
- (b) Community Care Project to be partly funded by CDB and which would provide care for the elderly and disabled, including children.
- (c) A community-based project for persons with disabilities in an identified geographic area was established and would be evaluated;
- (d) A School Feeding Programme which would be expected to provide for a larger school population;
- (e) The Social Help and Rehabilitative Efforts (SHARE) - a programme which was administered through selected NGOs.
- (f) The establishment of soup kitchens to provide relief for persons in extremely poor areas;
- (g) The establishment of a Senior Citizens Bureau - a skills bank that facilitated the continued contribution and participation of senior citizens in national development and a number of other actions that addressed the facilitation of access to basic services by people living in poverty and vulnerable groups.

## **PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY ERADICATION STRATEGIES AND MEASURES - PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

### Panel discussion 1 - Employment and sustainable livelihoods for all

The panel comprised Chairman, Mr. Reynold Simons, Institute of Research and Development, Suriname, and panelists, Dr. Dennis Pantin of the University of the West Indies speaking on behalf of youth, Mr Roy Thomasson of the OAS, Mr Robert Morris of the Caribbean Congress of Labour representing the trade unions, Mr. A. Lo Fo Wong of the Suriname Trade and Industry Association representing employers, Ms. Alicia Mondesire and Ms. Heather Tull of the Small Business Development Company (SBDC) of Trinidad and Tobago, representing small business. The Chairman opened the discussion by stating that the main challenge to providing employment had to be faced at the macroeconomic level. Economic growth should lead to increased employment. He noted that

the Caribbean had traditionally experienced problems in adapting to this change and recommended that at the micro level the relevant actors should adopt a human development approach.

Mr. Pantin addressed the issue of youth in the Caribbean labour force. He expressed concern about the aging Caribbean population and the decrease in the proportion of youth - persons between the ages of 16 and 24 - in the working population.

Youth in the labour force should be viewed from the supply side and the demand side. The problem on the supply side arose as a result of structural unemployment and produced a mismatch between the demand for jobs and the skills of young people available to the job market. There were two strategies used in coping with unemployment on the demand side: community solidarity and "survival of the fittest".

He also observed several characteristics of youth employment training programmes which militated against their effectiveness. Those were:

- (a) Dominance by the public sector, both financially and in the decision-making process;
- (b) Tension between genuine training and political influence in youth training programmes;
- (c) Susceptibility to the vagaries of the political process;
- (d) Bias towards the informal sector in training activities;
- (e) Conventional wisdom which stated that micro enterprise training should be emphasized.

The representative of the OAS stated that the major cause of poverty was the inability to absorb the increasing number of youth into the labour market. Since the capacity of the formal labour market was becoming saturated, the focus should be on the informal market.

He observed that skill training programmes motivated youths to re-enter the schooling system since it was typically very difficult for students to re-enter the academic mainstream of schools. He also intimated that it was not enough to conduct short courses without follow-up. There were several levels of training. They included motivation, confidence building, skills training, follow-up and monitoring.

The representative of the trade union movement informed the meeting of the developments in that area. He stressed his movement's commitment to collective bargaining and the belief in its importance to attacking unemployment and conceded that while there were problems in the collective bargaining process, it would be effective if it were allowed to realize its fullest potential. Through that process, the establishment of fair remuneration should ensure that workers received an adequate

level of income to sustain their livelihoods as well as ensuring that no constraints existed to prevent new entries into the labour force.

He reported on non-traditional activities into which trade unions were entering. Those included small business development as a means to improve employment opportunities, the establishment of credit unions which assisted in providing finance to workers, Medicare schemes; education and training, including technological training and distance learning.

He concluded by stating that trade unions were important partners in alleviating poverty and in encouraging economic growth.

The panelist representing employers stressed the importance of developing an atmosphere of trust and ethics in any approach to combat poverty. He also stated that for long-term solutions to be effective the focus should be on equity.

Ms. Alicia Mondesire addressed the issue of gender and indicated the necessity for gender analysis to be part of the planning process. She noted that women comprised the major proportion of the labour force of the traditional services sector, especially at the lower levels. Women had not been able to access jobs at the higher managerial and technical levels to the same degree as men, as evidenced in the manufacturing sector, even though they possessed the necessary educational qualifications. It was hoped that the trend in the emerging services sector, such as telematics, would turn around and allow women a greater share of the employment pie at higher levels. That would allow the Caribbean to better deal with the issue of unemployment.

Ms. Mondesire identified four considerations in the formulation of an analytical framework. They were:

- (a) Structure of the economy;
- (b) Quality of jobs;
- (c) Conditions of labour; and
- (d) Alternative employment opportunities.

She stated the need for policy to incorporate gender issues in formulating strategies and plans and stressed the importance of advocacy in this area.

The panelist representing small business informed the meeting of the structure and composition of the small business development companies and indicated the importance of providing finance to aid the development of small businesses.

In the ensuing discussion, concern was raised about the role of gender in trade union activities. The trade union representative stated that his organization was including gender issues in the collective bargaining process and that a policy on gender had been established. The trade unions had been trying to involve other social partners, such as the government and private sector. Efforts were being made to ensure that the necessary ILO Conventions were being ratified.

Panel discussion 2: Social integration of vulnerable groups

The panel comprised the moderator, Mrs Jennifer Sampson, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social Development of Trinidad and Tobago, and panelists, Didacus Jules, ECLAC consultant, Ms. Glenda Simms, UNFPA consultant/Director of the Women's Bureau of Jamaica and Ms. Asha Kambon of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat.

Mr Didacus Jules referred to the paper entitled, "Towards poverty eradication in the countries of the OECS: Issues of poverty and social development" which he had prepared for the meeting and which was intended to inform member countries on efforts towards poverty eradication/alleviation in the OECS subsequent to the World Summit for Social Development. He presented an overview of the extent and configuration of poverty in the subregion, identified the main challenges faced by OECS governments in dealing with issues of poverty and outlined proposals, guidelines and recommendations for improved and targeted action relevant to the needs of OECS countries.

In reviewing efforts to combat poverty, the panelist concluded that little had changed since the Copenhagen Summit and that although regional governments were more sensitized to the reality of poverty, there had been no major initiatives to address the issue other than the conduct of assessments, principally under the aegis of the CDB and other agencies. In this regard, the paucity of data on social statistics was identified as an issue and the panelist recommended that the CDB be utilized as the agency to take the lead role in poverty assessment.

The level of poverty in the OECS ranged from a low of 12 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda to 42 per cent in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and was more acute in the Windward Islands than in the Leewards. It was observed that in the OECS member states poverty was largely the consequence of structural constraints and included an undiversified economic base, the openness of the economy, limited natural resources, vulnerability to natural disasters, the relative youthfulness of the population, a high dependency ratio and low levels of functional literacy and education.

The most vulnerable social groups in the OECS were identified as youth, especially teenage mothers and single heads of households, elderly women, small farmers, agricultural workers, rural residents and workers in the light manufacturing industries.

The available information for each OECS member State was explored. Among the causes of poverty that had been identified were:

- (a) Declining competitiveness of the major export sectors;

- (b) Declining wage competitiveness in export-oriented light manufacturing and assembly operations;
- (c) Absence of viable economic alternatives to provide employment and income;
- (d) Deficiencies in capacities necessary to support alternative economic activity;
- (e) Deficiencies and inadequacies in the existing safety net;
- (f) Limitations in physical infrastructure; and
- (g) Weakness of civil society and its institutions.

The panelist recommended that in the face of economic contraction, OECS countries could no longer afford welfare approaches to poverty alleviation and advocated more targeted interventions. In undertaking this restructuring, the perspectives of the poor and the capacity of communities must be taken into account. A paradigm shift from the issue of poverty to that of vulnerability, which stood out as a recurrent concern of poor people, and which had been ignored by professional definitions, was necessary.

Another major challenge for future policy was the minimization of the poverty index as distinct from the maximization of the welfare function. In this regard, the recent thinking of multilateral organizations, such as the European Union (EU) and ECLAC, was presented.

The panelist concluded by calling for the implementation of four measures that related to the new human development paradigm: productivity, equity, sustainability and empowerment. Those measures included the creative mobilization of indigenous and non-traditional sources of capital for investment in niche areas: the re-invention of adult and continuing education programmes to deal with human capacity needs of the new economic thrusts and the revision of existing safety nets.

Ms. Glenda Simms, the UNFPA consultant provided a perspective of the poverty problem in Jamaica. Quoting from the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, she noted the commitment of the Government of Jamaica to the ideals contained therein and alluded to some of the problems experienced by the Jamaican society. The root cause of the currently high levels of poverty in Jamaica lay in the structural adjustment, liberalization and privatization policies. She contended that the greatest impact was felt by the vulnerable groups.

The working poor in Jamaica represented a large section of the vulnerable population. This group included rural small farmers, agricultural labourers, domestic servants and street vendors. However, the most vulnerable groups were represented by children, women, the elderly (in particular those who are childless), the disabled, unemployed youth and males (particularly those in prison) and the rural poor, the mentally retarded and the homeless.



Integration of vulnerable groups required rehabilitation of inner-city communities. She pointed to the need to return to community-based development which included the need to strengthen the viability of those communities. That objective could not be achieved without addressing the problems of infrastructure and housing.

In conclusion, she contended that poverty eradication could not be addressed without dealing with economic and psycho-social barriers. Systems in place should work for people and should include a new definition of development and of success.

Mrs. Asha Kambon presented a review of the discourse on gender and poverty and a gender analysis of data currently available on households in the subregion with a special focus on Haiti. It was hoped that such an analysis would add to the stock of information required for the mainstreaming of gender concerns to the current debate on poverty eradication in the subregion.

The panelist contrasted the 1994 world survey on the role of women in development which had indicated that the highest proportion of female-headed households (31 per cent) would have been found in Sub-Saharan Africa. Recent studies on the Caribbean showed that the average incidence of female headed households was in the vicinity of 34.6 per cent, ranging from 58.5 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda to 20 per cent in Suriname.

The determinants of female headship were identified as stemming from such varied socio-demographic phenomena as migration, divorce, desertion, political turmoil, widowhood, late marriage or unpartnered adolescent motherhood. In some countries the incidence of poverty among female-headed households was high, particularly in urban areas. This was attributed to high unemployment, wage discrimination and time constraints due to child-rearing activities. Poor women were also made more vulnerable by high fertility rates, teenage pregnancy and high maternal mortality rates.

The panelist contended that poverty represented a major failure of development and that the gender dimension of poverty was manifested in the unequal burden borne by women in managing consumption under conditions of scarcity. This unequal burden had been brought to the attention of and recognized by, policy makers. Attempts had been made to bring the unremunerated work of women into the national accounting framework.

Indicators for development and poverty eradication had been constructed and provided a gender analysis of the development process which was critical to understanding the society. In this regard, cause for concern was found in what appeared to be a reduction in the real allocation in government budgets in the region to education and other parts of the social sector. It appeared that girls were affected first, causing an increasing drop-out and absentee rate in the secondary schools system. That problem required further study.

The case study on Haiti concluded that female-headed households in the southern peninsula of Haiti had less access to productive resources and received less than two-thirds of the income of male-headed households, although both carried a fairly equal burden of responsibility.

In conclusion, the panelist recommended an integrated approach to development in which gender concerns would be integrated into all stages of the process from planning and programming through to evaluation. Analysis of national statistics must be conducted disaggregating the data by the gender of the head of household to enable policy makers to make informed decisions about household behaviour. The requirements for sound approaches to the eradication of poverty in female-headed households were known and what was needed was the political will to make the necessary shift in approaches.

Participants were urged to increase the use of data and employ methodologies for targeting and designing programmes for poverty reduction. Reference was made to ongoing work with respect to several Latin American countries.

While research and planning activities were recognized as being essential for increasing efficiency of poverty reduction plans and programmes, several participants emphasized the need to move beyond the research and planning, to implementation.

One participant highlighted trends which were evident in several parts of the Caribbean, and which seemed to have contributed to increased poverty levels. Those included trade liberalization, which threatened the banana industry, and the influx of refugees which strained national resources. Those situations facilitated the entrenchment of the drug trade and other undesirable cultural changes.

Several participants suggested that an increase in the numbers of female-headed households could be related to an increase in economic opportunity, where women became less financially dependent and so became less tolerant.

In closing, the ECLAC panelist proposed that efforts to deal with poverty reduction issues, such as support services for female headed households, were often clouded by judgements from a moral viewpoint, rather than from the viewpoint of the social scientist. She encouraged separation of moral judgement from the application of scientific principles in the formulation and implementation of plans and programmes.

### Panel Discussion 3: Structural and institutional mechanisms for poverty eradication

This panel comprised Ms. Carole McDowell, of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), as moderator and panelists, Mr. Leo Pujadas, ECLAC consultant, Mr. Fabio Sabatini of UNICEF and Ms. Gillian Lindsay-Nanton of the UNDP.

Mr. Pujadas presented the paper entitled, "Surveys of Administrative Structures for Social Development in the Caribbean, With Particular Emphasis on Poverty Eradication". The aims of the study were to:

(a) Assess administrative and organizational capacity of social development ministries/departments;

- (b) Make a comparative assessment of the degree of collaboration among social sector agencies;
- (c) Make relevant recommendations.

There was a dominance of social assistance over preventive and developmental services which had three identifiable consequences:

- (a) Services to children, families, persons with disabilities were treated as residual;
- (b) Rehabilitation received a low priority;
- (c) Programme evaluations were almost non-existent.

He identified structural gaps which currently existed and indicated that there was a lack of structures for research, planning and integration; evaluation; coordination; children's services; disabilities; family services and rehabilitation. He stated that rehabilitation was only now becoming an issue and commented that family and children services tended to be subsumed under the Ministries of Health and Probation Services instead of being considered in their own right.

He lamented the fact that although it seemed to be common knowledge that community-based development could be a vital force in fighting poverty, there was not enough action in that area. The management implications for community-based development were enumerated as follows:

- (a) Introduction of participatory management at village level;
- (b) Development of management models and systems from village to national level;
- (c) Potential conflict among interest groups over leadership, policies and resource allocation;
- (d) Issues of accountability and transparency;
- (e) The challenge of integrating multiple groups, government agencies and programmes under the aegis of the community;
- (f) The capacity of existing community organizations, and
- (g) Facilitating government and non-government organizations to assume new and increased responsibilities.

He commented that countries using the United Nations Matrix for Sustainable Development had experienced some measure of success.

Mr. Sabatini, UNICEF representative, noted that it was unfortunate that contrary to the belief that GDP increase would eliminate poverty and other social ills, the region had experienced the paradoxical co-existence of expanding economies and worsening income distribution, with ever-widening gaps between the rich and the poor. The per capita income appeared to be relatively high, but it was characterized by an extremely skewed distribution. He stated that it was not surprising that in countries for which data were available, it was believed that high unemployment and eroding incomes had worsened income distribution. The phenomenon of child labour was now pronounced as children were forced into labour to supplement family income.

He stated that while governments had traditionally shown a strong commitment to the provision of social services, the percentage of expenditure on social services, education and health had either stagnated or fallen over the past few years, while wages and incomes had lost purchasing power. Therefore, there was an urgent need for Caribbean countries to pursue policies that would stimulate and sustain economic growth. That pointed to the need for targeting and efficiency in the management of resources, so that a higher level of return on those outlays could be realized and greater benefits derived by those most in need. Social gaps could be narrowed by the pursuance of a policy of targeting segments or groups of society which warranted greater attention. Governments needed to introduce an accurate and targeted system of social planning, based on relevant information and analysis to be able to prioritize social expenditure and avoid cutting services for the vulnerable sections of the population.

Ms. Gillian Lindsay-Nanton focused primarily on the economic and institutional mechanisms for effective poverty eradication and to a lesser degree touched on the political, social and cultural components. She set out a framework for understanding and addressing poverty in the Caribbean and discussed the process of economic globalization and liberalization and its impact on the region. She noted that globalization was widening the gap between rich and poor nations and stated that capital, labour and technology were now the dominant factors of production. Countries should, therefore, recognize that over time their comparative advantage could change, thereby enhancing their capacity to compete in the global market economy and that it would be wise to invest in human capital.

Because the issue of poverty is so multi-faceted and dynamic, no single government, regional institution, donor or United Nations agency could by itself meet the entire challenge in eliminating poverty. That called for a network of strategies, collaboration, participation and coordination between and within institutions - the private sector, the government, and the international donor community. Realistic deadlines should be set with a view to enhancing productive sector activity and social development. Therefore countries should develop reappraisal mechanisms that involved governments, opposition parties, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, local governments and business firms. She concluded that in order to eradicate poverty there should be a fundamental remapping of institutional structures and their operations; and the relationships between those institutions and the people that they served.

In the ensuing discussion, there were two main issues of contention - resource allocation and resource utilization. Participants were informed that although resources allocated to the Caribbean

subregion had decreased, efficient utilization of those resources should offset to some degree the decrease. Optimization of resources could be achieved to a greater extent if a regional approach was taken.

**Panel discussion 4: Formulating integrated strategies for poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods**

The panel comprised Dr. Neville Duncan of the ISER, UWI, Jamaica as moderator and panelists, Dr. Jeffrey Dellimore, CDB; Ms. Monique Essed-Fernandes, UNFPA Consultant; and Ms. Luna Ramkhalawansingh, Coordinator, CPDC, representing regional NGOs.

Dr. Jeffrey Dellimore presented an overview of the CDB's discussion paper on its possible strategies and policies for poverty eradication. Noting the role of the Bank as an instrument of collective policy and strategy for Caribbean governments, he indicated that the support of the governments and their participation in deciding the proposed activities of the Bank was very important to the CDB.

He indicated that any CDB policy and strategy needed to optimize the CDB contribution to social development at the national level. Six main areas in which policies and strategies need to be defined were :

- (a) Poverty reduction;
- (b) Gender equity;
- (c) Development of human resources;
- (d) Access to basic health services;
- (e) Community development; and
- (f) Incorporation of social dimensions into development programmes and strategies.

In the approach to poverty reduction, vulnerable groups that might be targeted by these strategies included the elderly, large families, small farmers, indigenous peoples, disaffected youth, children and the disabled.

The five principal activities which were being considered as part of CDB's poverty reduction programmes included :

- (a) Identification of policies and strategies for expanding employment opportunities;
- (b) Support for productive activities that generate employment and income;
- (c) Improvement of access to basic social services, and improved management of these services;

(d) Collaboration with NGOs in design and delivery of community level poverty interventions;

(e) Concessional lending to Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs) for implementing poverty reduction strategies.

In dealing with the critical issue of gender equity, the CDB's proposed strategies included the following :

(a) Assistance for policies and interventions which provide opportunity for maximizing contributions to the development process;

(b) Support to HRD;

(c) Support to activities for improving the production, earnings and assets of women;

(d) Support for education and cultural programmes integrating young people with mainstream values and lifestyles;

(e) Support for skills training for young males and females;

(f) Employment of gender analyses in development interventions, where appropriate.

With regard to human resource development, the CDB had advocated and facilitated activities which :

(a) Maintained high levels of investment in people;

(b) Identified and addressed knowledge and skill deficiencies;

(c) Improved and expanded HRD infrastructure;

(d) Upgraded skills and productivity of the poor, especially the young.

In order to give greater attention to the human aspect of projects and programmes it finances in the region, CDB is proposing to utilize social impact analysis, ensure consultation and participation of beneficiaries in project design, promote interdisciplinary teamwork and increased investment in social impact mitigation.

Interventions in the area of health services centred around solid and liquid waste management, provision of access to potable water and investments at the community level in health clinics. No major policy change in these areas was envisaged.

The CDB was also active in community-based development, through its Basic Needs Trust Fund and the improvement of basic community-led infrastructure and services.

The future role of the CDB in poverty reduction programmes had been facilitated through the creation of a social development division, and an organization-wide mandate to recognize social issues in all activities. He summarized the future role of the CDB as centering around the following:

- (a) Assistance with the definition of social development goals, policies and strategies;
- (b) Identification of vulnerable groups and strategies and programmes for reducing deprivation, increasing visibility and integration in national development;
- (c) Assistance with planning and financing direct poverty reduction and social development projects;
- (d) Impact assessment of CDB-financed capital projects relative to their contribution to achievement of social development objectives;
- (e) Identification and monitoring of key social development indicators, and their use in evaluation of relevant interventions;

Several areas for intervention were identified as priorities, and reflected the strategies and activities proposed.

Monique Essed-Fernandes proposed two main concepts which she felt should inform discussions and action on poverty reduction. These were greater attention to poverty in the Caribbean and the integrated approach to development. An examination of the Caribbean position should include an assessment of the vulnerability of all sectors.

The integrated approach required an examination and adoption of new paradigms which revolved around:

- (a) A new prominence for human development which required a clear definition of the human being, and his/her purpose and place in development;
- (b) Gender equity - there was need to address existing gaps, especially with regard to the effects of poverty on women, women's health, empowerment, rights and accountability;
- (c) Revised constitutional and legal frameworks, which recognized human rights;
- (d) Collaboration with civil society;

The NGO sector representative from the CPDC presented a summary of the NGO input to the panel, which would include her presentation, a presentation by an executive member of the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples, and a presentation of the NGO action plan formulated at a forum of NGOs previously held.

She recognized the role of ECLAC as a catalyst and facilitator of collaboration and discussion on poverty issues and gave a brief description of the CPDC. She proposed that integrated strategies for poverty reduction should include :

- (a) Focus on people;

- (b) Collaborative and coordinated approaches;
- (c) Information and research for Caribbean solutions;
- (d) Use of technology to facilitate activities;
- (e) Protection of key resources - the people, the natural environment, and the economic resources;
- (f) Concepts of equity.

Those strategies could only be realized through political will at all levels, and in a context in which all parties were respected, and positive relationships fostered.

The representative of the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples spoke on behalf of indigenous peoples in the Caribbean. He noted two definitions of poverty based on means and availability of resources. Drawing on his own life experience, he questioned definitions and perceptions of poverty which were based on material possessions, and looked at how these perceptions had changed from generation to generation. He referred to international strategies to address social issues. Expressing doubts about the possibility of achieving the goal of poverty eradication, he urged the meeting to adopt more precise and realistic statements of intent which would lead to more effective action.

The retention and recovery of traditions and identities by indigenous peoples were identified as being critical to the creation of self-pride, thus enabling action to rise out of poverty. This required education in three areas :

- (a) The identity of indigenous peoples;
- (b) The present situation of indigenous people;
- (c) The future of indigenous peoples.

Ms. Sheilah Solomon presented the results of a consultation on sustainable livelihoods entitled, "Building Community: A Caribbean Action Plan for Sustainable Living", held on 25 and 26 October 1996, in preparation for the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication. The recommendations of the consultation were based on the experiences, failures, successes and vision of community, national and regional non-governmental organizations.

The conceptual basis for the recommendations lay in the premise that the possibilities for solving the inequities of Caribbean society needed to be addressed in the context of communities. This approach recognized the reality of diversity and valued the desirability of diversity and was based on a "push up" rather than a "trickle down" model of development. "Push up" facilitation enabled all communities, even the poorest, to value and build upon assets which they possessed and was therefore likely to avoid costly mistakes and ineffective, but expensive, "solutions". It was felt that a Caribbean Action Plan for Sustainable Living should be central to the development process and as a conscious response to Caribbean realities.



Seven guiding principles for the Caribbean Action Plan for Sustainable Living were identified. These were: food security; the State as facilitator of community well-being; involvement, integration and incrementation; investment in sustainable living by communities/individuals; access to assets; sustainable environments; and socially, physically and psychologically healthy communities.

Two processes were identified: partnership with NGOs and other civil society institutions and partnership with communities.

The consultation also identified mechanisms to motivate, mobilize, facilitate and finance the Caribbean Action Plan for Sustainable Living. These were: production of a video documentary of "best practices" of a variety of sustainable livelihood strategies and accompanying a Manual of Community Mobilization Processes; comprehensive community centres for guidance and counselling in matters ranging from parenting to agriculture and home economics; development of community-targeted micro-financing strategies; activities to facilitate community dialogue; and grow local, buy local, tour local cultural campaigns.

The need and opportunity for the State to build a new legitimacy in partnership with civil society to support the shift to community-targeted development were observed. This would involve changes in central government, local government and NGO processes and relationships. In particular, legislation, new mechanisms and extensive training were needed to realize the real potential of local government and to underpin and facilitate the concept, principles and practice of social-led, community-targeted holistic development.

In the general discussion, reference was made to the need to formulate programmes for youth which would facilitate integration of disabled youth. Concepts of poverty eradication versus alleviation were also discussed. One participant contended that relative poverty would always exist, but that the goal of efforts at poverty eradication should be to ensure that all persons had the basic necessities. The Chair noted that where concepts of empowerment were advocated, they should be viewed as relating to collective power which created abundance for the benefit of the entire society.

The representative of the Caribbean Congress of Labour noted that despite traditional divisions existing between NGOs and trade unions, his organization would welcome any opportunity to work with NGOs in efforts to eradicate poverty.

One participant noted the difficulties in accessing resources from the donor community, as a result of increased allocation of resources to NGOs. As a result, governments were finding it difficult to implement their own projects and programmes. Other issues raised included the need to identify resources; the need for a clear understanding of human needs in spiritual terms; and the lessons to be learnt from the lifestyles of indigenous peoples. Community development was raised as a means of increasing the possibilities for confronting the problem of unemployment among the youth.

The use of housing as a trigger to income generation could be examined as part of an initiative that sought to alleviate poverty. Even if there were no possibilities of eradicating poverty, there was need to address the threat caused by poverty. Some countries informed the meeting of their strategies to eradicate or alleviate poverty and recognized the need to achieve a more equitable distribution of income.

**POVERTY ERADICATION IN THE CARIBBEAN - ARRIVING AT A CONSENSUS  
ON PRIORITY ISSUES AND ACTIONS**

Six working groups were convened to consider issues relating to: vulnerable groups; macroeconomic issues and employment; integrated social and economic strategies; institutional mechanisms; and measurement. They were mandated to evaluate the current situation including the constraints and opportunities, to establish goals and targets and define strategies for achieving the targets. They were also asked to provide time-frames and suggest the organization, whether national, regional or international which should be assigned responsibility for implementation.

The proposals of the working groups were integrated into a directional plan of action which was prepared for the consideration and adoption by the ministerial meeting.

Annex**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****A. Member countries  
Países Miembros  
Pays membres****ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

Head of delegation:

His Excellency Ambassador Dr Patrick Lewis, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations, New York  
 Ms Ann-Marie Layne, Protocol/Research Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Ms Joan Gomes, Chief Welfare Officer, Citizen's Welfare Division, Ministry of Labour & Home Affairs

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Head of delegation:

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 Mr Maxwell Poitier, Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry of Social Development  
 Ms Blanche Deveux, Director of Social Services, Min of Social Development

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His Excellency, the Honourable Rudolph Greenidge, Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports  
 Mr Elsworth Young, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour  
 Mr Errol Best, Director, National Assistance Board  
 Mr Charles Corbin, Chief Welfare Officer, Welfare Department

**BELIZE**

Head of delegation:

Ms Velda Aguet, Council of Voluntary Social Services  
 Mr Evans Dakers, Social Planner, Ministry of Human Resources  
 Ms Nancy Namis, Social Planner, Ministry of Economic Development

**CUBA**

Head of delegation:

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 Ambassador Guillermo Batista, Ambassador of Cuba to Trinidad and Tobago  
 Ms Georgina Fajardo, Programme Official, MINVEC

**DOMINICA**

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Mr John Baptiste John, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs  
 Ms Heather James, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Port and Employment  
 Mr Samuel Carrette, Local Government Commissioner (Ag., Local Government Department)  
 Ms Esther M. James, Economist, Ministry of Finance, Industry and Planning  
 Ms Avril Oscar, Statistician, Ministry of Finance, Industry and Planning

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 Mr Mervyn Haynes, Planning Officer, Ministry of Finance and Planning

**GUYANA**

Head of delegation:

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 Ms Denise De Souza, Head of Division, State Planning Secretariat, Ministry of Finance  
 Ms Marion Herbert, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Head of delegation:

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 Mr Jean-Luc Desinor, Ministry of Planning  
 Mr Ronell Gilles, Ministry of Social Affairs  
 Mr Jacques Nixon Myrthil, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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 Ms Anne-Marie Bonner, Senior Director, Office of the Prime Minister  
 Ms Carole McDowell, Consultant/Manager, Planning Institute of Jamaica

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Head of delegation:

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 Ms Rosalyn E. Hazelle, Director, Women's Affairs  
 Ms Hilary Webbe, Economist, Planning Unit, Ministry of Finance, Development and Planning

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Head of delegation:

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 Mr Ezra Jn. Baptiste, Chief Social Planning Officer, Ministry of Planning  
 Mr Mark Louis, Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Planning  
 Ms Ives Heraldine Rock, President, National Council of Women

**ST VINCENT AND  
THE GRENADINES**

Head of delegation:

His Excellency, the Honourable Louis Jones, Minister of Housing and Community Development, Youth and Sports  
 Mr Junior Bacchus, Executive Director, National Youth Council  
 Mr Cecil Ryan Managing Director, Projects Promotion

**SURINAME**

Head of delegation:

Ms Nalinie Sewpersadsingh, Official, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Head of delegation:

His Excellency, the Honourable A.N.R. Robinson, Minister Extraordinaire and Minister of Tobago Affairs  
 His Excellency, the Honourable Ralph Maraj, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
 His Excellency, the Honourable, Manohar Ramsaran, Minister of Social Development  
 His Excellency, the Honourable Trevor Sudama, Minister of Planning

Ms Cheryl Blackman, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Minister Extraordinaire and of Tobago Affairs  
 Mr Selwyn Arthur, Ministry of Labour and Cooperatives  
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 Ms Vernetta Calvin-Smith, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
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 Ms Margaret King-Rousseau, Deputy Director, Political Affairs Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Ms Neela Maharaj, Planning Officer I, Ministry of Planning and Development

Ms Shirley C. Maharaj, Senior Statistician, Central Statistical Officer, Office of the Prime Minister  
 Ms Kimlan Minott, Senior Project Administrator, Ministry of Planning and Development  
 Ms Denise Noel-DeBique, Division of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs  
 Mr Stanley Plowder, Ministry of Community Development Culture and Women's Affairs  
 Ms Jennifer Sampson, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Development  
 Ms Nicole Smith-Cooper, Social Planner, Ministry of Planning and Development  
 Ms Zorina Seereeram, Administrative Officer V, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs  
 Ms June Williams, Senior Planning Officer, Ministry of Planning and Development  
 Ms Nicole Fernandes, Senior Economist, Office of the Leader of the Opposition

**B. Associate members**  
**Miembros Asociados**  
**Membres associés**

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 Mrs Loralie Connor-Noel, Social Development

**MONTSERRAT**

Head of delegation:  
 Community

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Head of delegation:

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 Mr Keith Carlo, Director, Department of Welfare, Family and Humanitarian Affairs  
 Ms Brenda van Putten, Head, Department of Welfare, St. Eustatius  
 Ms Aimee Kleinmoedig, Second Secretary for Netherlands Antillean Affairs, Embassy of the Royal Netherlands, Port of Spain  
 Ms Idelma Panneflek, NGO representative on social housing  
 Ms Ann Philipps, Coordinator of Women's Affairs, Federal Department for Welfare, Family and Humanitarian Affairs

**C. Observers**  
**Observadores**  
**Observateurs**

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Head of delegation:

Ms Mary Harvey, Office of the Chief Minister, Grand Turk,

**D. United Nations Secretariat  
Secretaría de la Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
Secrétariat de l'Organisation  
des Nations Unies**

United Nations Information Centre

Mr Hadi Toron, Director, UNIC, Port of Spain

**E. United Nations Bodies  
Organismos de las Naciones Unidas  
Organismes des Nations Unies**

Food and Agriculture Organization of  
the United Nations (FAO)

Mr Don Robinson, FAO Representative, Port of Spain

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

*UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, New York:* Ms Gillian Lindsay-Nanton, Chief, Caribbean Division; Ms Savitri Bisnath, Consultant

*UNDP/Port of Spain:* Mr Jan Van Eyndhoven, Resident Representative and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System's Activities in Port of Spain, Aruba, Netherlands Antilles and Suriname; Ms Claudette Walker, Deputy Resident Representative; Ms Carol James, Senior Sustainable Development Adviser; Ms Sheilah Solomon, Consultant

*UNDP/Barbados:* Ms Marjorie Thorpe, Resident Representative and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System's Activities in Barbados and the OECS countries; Mr Lee Farnum-Badley, Programme Officer; Ms Paula Mohammed, Programme Adviser

*UNDP/Haiti:* Mr Richard Mathelier, Programme Officer

*UNDP/Namibia:* Mr Clement Jackson

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Mr Oyebade Ajayi, UNFPA Representative in Jamaica and Director for the Caribbean

Her Excellency the Honourable Billie Miller, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Barbados and UNFPA Specially Invited Guest

Ms Beryl Chevannes, Consultant and Executive Director Jamaica National Family Planning Board

Ms Monique Essed-Fernandes, Consultant and Head, Projekta, Suriname

Mr Gerardo Gonzalez, Regional Adviser on Population and Development, UNFPA Country Support Team, Santiago, Chile

Mr Desmond Hunte, CARICOM Regional Census Office, Port of Spain, Trinidad

Ms Glenda Simms, Executive Director, Bureau of Women's Affairs, National Family Planning Association, Jamaica

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Mr Fabio Sabatini, Social Policy Advisor

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Ms Lalla-Fatouma Maiga, Programme Officer, UNIFEM, Barbados

**F. United Nations specialized agencies  
Organismos especializados  
Institutions spécialisées**

International Labour Organization

Mr James Williams, Director a.i. Caribbean Officer and Multi-Disciplinary Team

Ms Grace Strachan, Senior Specialist, Employment and Labour Market Policies

Ms Constance Thomas, Senior Specialist, International Labour Standards

Ms Wedda Conny

Ms Marleen Verbruggen

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Mr Winthrop Wiltshire, UNESCO Representative/Subregional Science and Technology Adviser

**G. Other intergovernmental organizations  
Otros organismos intergubernamentales  
Autres organismes intergouvernementaux**

Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

Mr Miguel Ceara-Hatton, Director  
Mr Mario Estrada, Director

British Development Division For the Caribbean, Barbados (BDDC)

Mr Eric Hanley, Social Development Adviser

Caribbean Centre for Administrative Development (CARICAD)

Dr P. I. Gomes, Executive Director

Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM)

Ms Evelyn Wayne, Deputy Programme Manager

Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)

Dr Jeffrey Dellimore, Deputy Director, Social Development  
Mr McDonald Thomas, Project Officer, Poverty Reduction  
Mr Clairvair Squires, Chief Project Officer  
Mr John Harrison, Social Policy Analyst Planner

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Mr David Rogers, Social Sectors Specialist  
Mr Floyd Duprey, IDB Youth Group

Organization of American States (OAS)

Mr Roy Thomasson, Principal Specialist, Unit for Social Development and Education, OAS General Secretariat, Washington

Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO)

Mr Edward Greene, PAHO, Washington

University of the West Indies (UWI)

*Cave Hill Campus, Barbados:* Ms Christine Barrow, Head, Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work; Dr Farley Brathwaite, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences

*St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad:* Ms Linda Hewitt, Senior Planning Officer; Mr Roy McCree, Institute of Social and Economic Research; Dr Keith Nurse, Lecturer, Institute of International Relations; Ms Michelle Rowley, Centre for Gender and Development Studies

Institute of International Relations (IIR)

Mr Keith Nurse, Lecturer

World Bank

Ms Judy Baker, Poverty/Social Sector Specialist, Country Operations, World Bank Headquarters, Washington

**H. Non-governmental organizations  
Organizaciones no-gubernamentales  
Organizations non-gouvernementaux**

Caribbean Association of Feminist Research and Action (CAFERA)

Ms Karen Bart-Alexander, Member

Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL)

Mr Kertist Augustus, General Secretary

Mr Robert Morris, Deputy General Secretary and First Vice-President

Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA)

Ms Karilyn Shepherd, Director/Secretary

Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC)

Ms Patricia Bynoe

Caribbean Family Planning Association (CFPA)

Dr Tirbani P. Jagdeo, Chief Executive Officer

Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD)

Mr Nerle Robertson, Interim Director

Caribbean Peoples Development Association (CARIPEDA)

Mr Byron L. Campbell, Secretary-General

Caribbean Policy Development Center (CPDC)

Ms Luna Ramkhalawansingh, Coordinator

Mr Wilfred Fredericks, Public Relations Officer, Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples

Disabled Peoples International, Jamaica

Mr Derek Palmer

GRAMONDE

Ms Alicia Mondesire, Managing Partner

Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women

Ms Hazel Brown, Assistant Coordinator

Rapid Environmental Assessments Ltd. (REAL)

Ms Michelle Mycoo, Private Consultant

Small Business Association of Jamaica

Mr Francis Shaw, 3rd Vice President

Small Business Development Company Limited of Trinidad and Tobago (SPDC)

Mr Frances Guide-Atherly, Corporate Services Officer

Suriname Trade and Industry Association

Mr Arthur Edwin Lo Fo Wong