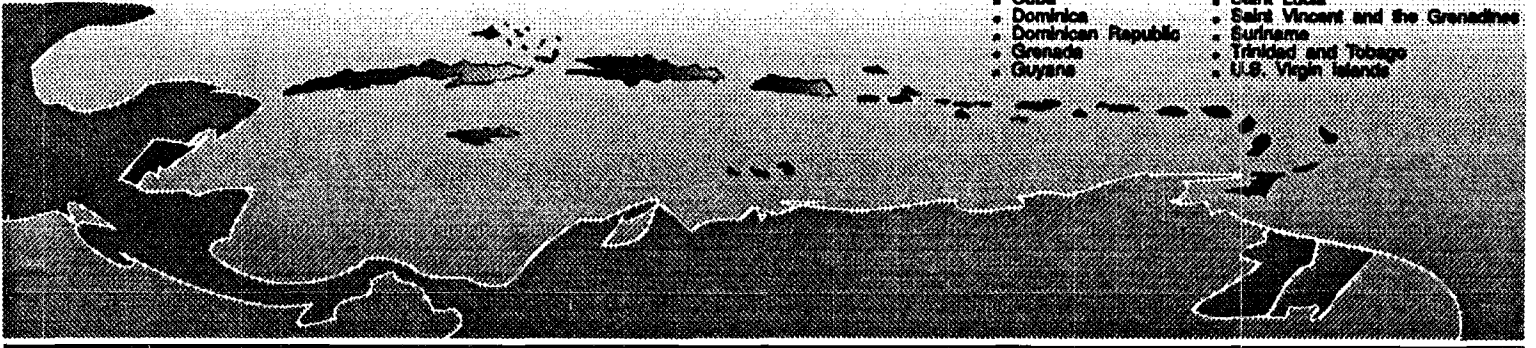




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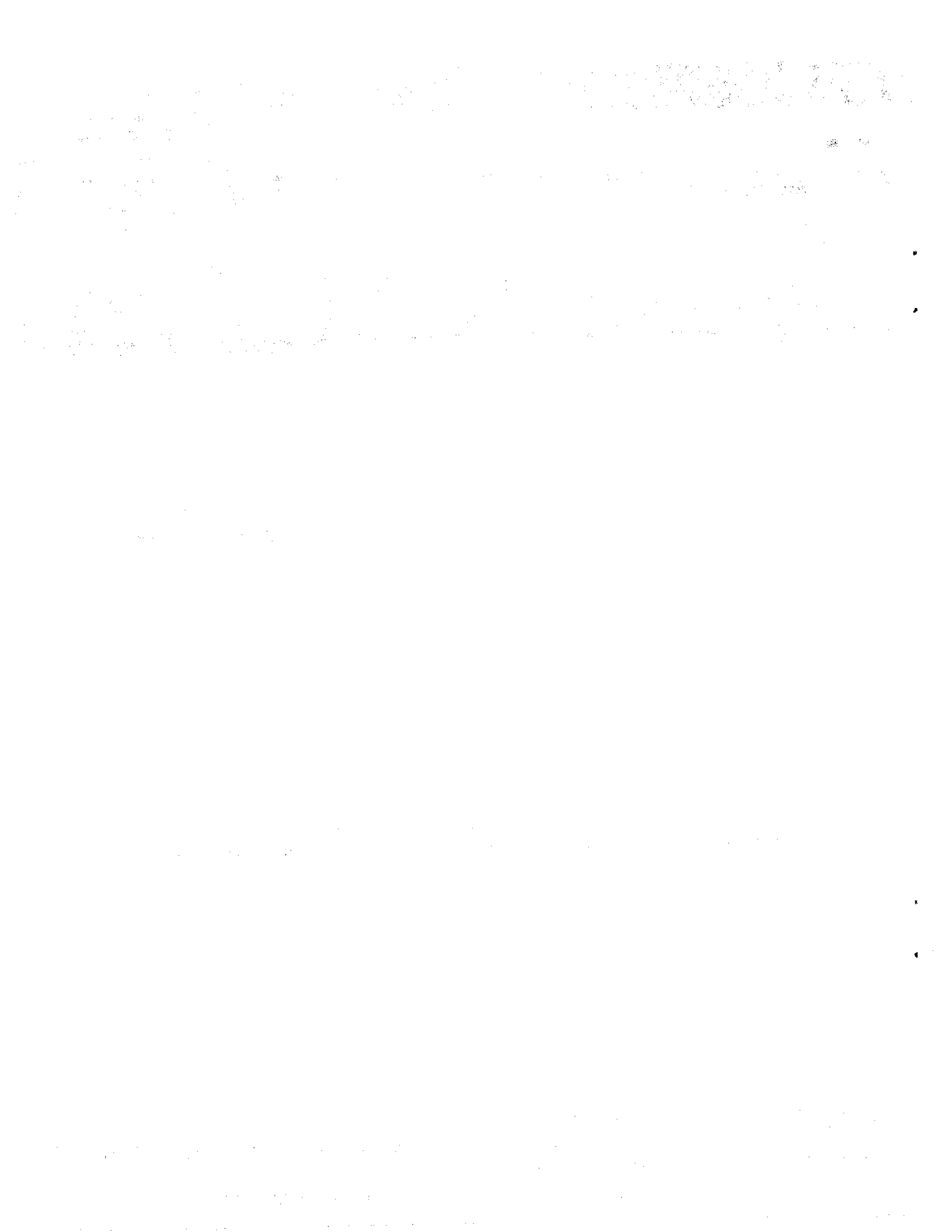


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**REPORT OF THE AD HOC EXPERT MEETING  
THE CARIBBEAN QUEST: DIRECTIONS FOR THE REFORM PROCESS**



**UNITED NATIONS**  
**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**  
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean  
**CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE**



## **Introduction**

The ad hoc expert meeting, entitled, "The Caribbean Quest: Directions for the Reform Process" was held at the Ambassador Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 25-26 June 1997. The purpose of the conference was to shape new development perspectives within the context of "second generation" strategic issues. It was intended that these perspectives would provide a strategic framework to achieve sustainable structural and institutional change for the Caribbean in the global economy. The meeting was convened in keeping with the objectives and purposes of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), to provide a forum for substantive discussion and for the formulation of policy-oriented recommendations on important issues of economic and social policy. In this context, government representatives, the private sector, researchers, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended. The list of participants is attached.

The agenda adopted was as follows:

1. Opening session
2. The state of structural reform in the Caribbean
3. Social process for Caribbean development
4. Information and governance
5. Policy change and strategic thinking
6. New directions in the political economy of the Caribbean
7. Closing session

### **Opening session**

In his opening remarks, Mr. Jan Jacques Van Eyndhoven, Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Trinidad and Tobago stated that he was pleased to be a co-sponsor of the conference since he felt that it could have important benefits for the subregion. He thanked the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Basdeo Panday, for accepting the invitation to formally open the meeting noting that this was a clear indication of the importance given by the Prime Minister to developmental planning and the formulation of strategies for that purpose. He added that reform could not take place without human development which, in turn, should always be guided by the provision of benefits necessary for improving human existence. As a consequence, he concluded, any sustainable reform process should be people centred in its approach.

Mr. Lancelot Busby, Officer-in-charge, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC), welcomed participants to the conference and thanked the Prime Minister for agreeing to deliver the opening address. He also acknowledged the invaluable support of the joint sponsors of the Seminar: the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the UNDP. He pointed to the need to assess past policies and move quickly towards the formulation of relevant and effective reform strategies. Mr. Busby thanked the presenters for their readiness to share their ideas with participants. He noted that initiatives for planning and development must come from national entities although organizations, such as the United Nations, would become involved at the request of governments.

Mr. Frank Maresca, Representative, IDB, thanked the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat for organizing the conference, indicating that it was a valuable exercise as it would enable key stakeholders to promote new ways of thinking and new approaches to development. This, he felt, could be used to influence the programmes of various executing agencies. To this end, he considered the document emanating from the conference to be extremely important.

Mr. Miguel Ceara Hatton, Director, ACS, remarked that his organization was delighted to be associated with the conference and expressed the hope that its conclusions would have a far-reaching impact, not merely with academics but would influence the strategies and policy formulation of different agencies.

He observed that institutional weaknesses in the region had created an urgent need for collaboration and the involvement of governments as important agents in any attempt to transform contemporary society. This, he claimed, should involve political, administrative and electoral reform and should have as a fundamental objective the satisfaction of the needs of the poor and marginalized.

In opening the meeting, the Honourable Basdeo Panday, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, expressed the view that CARICOM States should unite if they were to survive in an increasingly global and competitive world. This integration should involve not only a consolidation of trade arrangements, but an exchange of information, the sharing of research and development ideas and joint venture projects throughout the CARICOM subregion. The Prime Minister then referred to the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), which, he claimed, was the only way forward. He also mentioned the efforts made by ECLAC to bring to the fore the inherent dangers faced by small States attempting to survive in a world of free trade.

Finally, Prime Minister Panday challenged the region's technocrats to develop socio-political strategies which would propel the region forward. He then declared the conference open.

Dr. Peter Evans, Professor of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley, recounted how past visions on development had evolved over the last 50 years to reach what was now referred to as the "second wave of reforms". He then examined what he called the "state society synergy"

perspective, which he claimed to be an effective method of confronting contemporary development challenges and which had as an important feature the concept of "social capital". This, he claimed, involved the cooperation of State agencies and community organizations, which, to be effective, required that those who made up the different communities and organizations work together and actively towards common goals and with each agency performing tasks which made full use of their comparative advantage.

For this concept to be successful, Dr. Evans believed that State agencies should be willing to treat community members as partners in the delivery process, rather than mere clients. He pointed out that this arrangement also served to increase levels of accountability and responsiveness.

## SESSION 1

### The state of structural reform in the Caribbean

This session sought to address the following questions. After a decade of reforms in the Caribbean, what comes next? Are we now in a phase of macroeconomic volatility? What are the coping and accumulation strategies to overcome the emerging policy crisis?

The presenters for this session were: Mr. Trevor Harker, Regional Economic Adviser, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Mr. Bertus Meins, Regional Economic Adviser, IDB, Dr. Ramesh Ramsaran, Reader, the Institute of International Relations (IIR), Dr. Shelton Nicholls, Lecturer, the University of the West Indies (UWI) and Mr. Hermann von Gersdorff, Senior Economist, The World Bank.

This session attempted to address the need to generate a flow of ideas on issues facing Caribbean society. New departures were being sought in the reform process, however, the problem had intensified. To avoid an emerging policy crisis new models to bring about sustainable development should be developed.

#### a. Economic developments in the Caribbean: An analysis of recent performance and policies

Mr. Trevor Harker presented the above-captioned paper. He gave a brief sketch of the structure of Caribbean economies highlighting five aspects of current performance, namely: exports and the balance of payments, fiscal performance, prices, unemployment and economic expansion.

Mr. Harker concluded by stating that it was clear that the policy objectives facing Caribbean countries in 1996 were remarkably similar across the broad spectrum of countries surveyed. They were essentially twofold and interrelated. The first objective was to apply those policy reforms which would enable countries to integrate more effectively into the global economy. This implied continuing reform of trade regimes and concomitant changes needed in fiscal and incentive policies; in addition

to reforms in payments regimes and the concomitant changes necessary in domestic financial institutions. Finally, it suggested the search for broad-based policies which would improve productivity and bring forth tradable goods and services. The second, interrelated policy objective related to the development of human resources, mindful of the benefits to be provided in human welfare and productivity, on the one hand, and yet conscious of the need to maintain a fiscal burden that would be sustainable and not erode systemic efficiency, on the other.

**b. Macroeconomic management: Is it working?**

Mr. Bertus Meins approached the topic of macroeconomic management and its efficacy in the Caribbean context. He stated that effective macroeconomic management was essential to reduce economic volatility and thereby improve the potential for sustained economic growth.

However, he believed that economic performance, despite the implementation of the Washington Consensus, was disappointing and there was a need to restore economic stability to ensure that economic growth was sufficient. He stated that both investment and exports, and especially a well-balanced export diversification and marketing programme were key instruments for fostering economic growth, as were the investment in human capital, productivity enhancement and productive infrastructure, all of which should be accorded a high priority.

Among the issues to be confronted by the region were: real growth rates; the twin deficits of current account and fiscal account; export growth; savings and investment ratios; real effective exchange rates and inflation.

He recommended that it was of paramount importance that all avenues be explored for creating a larger economic space for the Central American and Caribbean subregions. This should help them to establish economies of scale and move out of products with low value added or with shrinking markets. Accordingly, emphasis should now be to encourage the productive sectors to identify those products, services, and market segments, that could generate higher added value.

**c. Growth, savings and capital formation in a rapidly changing environment: Challenges facing Caribbean policy makers**

Dr. Ramesh Ramsaran noted that a critical look should be taken at structural adjustment programmes as several shortcomings had become evident in recent adjustment policies. He commented that some policy options available three or four decades ago were now more difficult to exercise in the current environment and that Caribbean States would have to increase the pace of change, perhaps skipping some stages of experience in order to catch up with States over which they had a head start as recently as in the early 1960s.

Despite the fact that internal and external balances had improved and growth had returned in some instances, fundamental challenges remained, including an undiversified, uncompetitive production structure and high levels of unemployment. He recommended that the development of

the human capital base and the intelligent use of technology were critical complements to capital accumulation in the growth process.

He stated that financial resources remained a key factor in economic development, however, few countries made a systematic effort to encourage savings, always assuming that the existing low levels represented the natural limits. The policy framework should also be one that encouraged growth with equity.

He noted that in the Caribbean, the development of capital markets had been slow and had failed to reflect the importance of financial mobilization. The absence of a wider range of instruments had affected both mobilization and allocation. At the regional level, he recommended, that the removal of barriers to capital movement could be an important step in opening up new opportunities and improving resource allocation.

**d. External economic performance: Is it sustainable?**

Dr. Shelton Nicholls noted the important contribution which the external sector made to sustained development and progress in the Caribbean. He argued that the importance of the sector was best captured in St. Cyr's five axioms as to how Caribbean economic systems work. He also argued that the decade of the 1990s would present developing countries with several new and difficult challenges which were quite different from those which had existed hitherto.

He stated that the conclusion of the Uruguay Round had witnessed the formation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which completed the global institutional trilog. The trilog, consisting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the WTO would dominate, coordinate and manage all global economic matters in the future.

In conclusion, Dr. Nicholls stressed that the CDCC countries must lobby effectively to ensure that their voices were clearly heard in the new dispensation. The Round had resulted in significantly reduced tariff barriers in developed countries and an overall increase in the level of bindings in developing countries. Unfortunately, the reductions in agricultural and mineral products would result in little overall benefit for the small CDCC countries. The failure of these countries to achieve fully diversified economies could prove to be a major disadvantage in both the short- and long-term. Hence, the need to create a multilateral environment that would facilitate the expansion of trade in services and service-related activities - activities in which they already possessed both a comparative and competitive advantage - thus ensuring the continued growth of their economies in the twenty-first century.

**e. Open markets for increased Caribbean competitiveness**

Mr. Hermann von Gersdoff attempted briefly to examine the enabling environment for achieving sustainable private sector-led growth in the Caribbean subregion. He stated that an adequate macroeconomic framework was a necessary condition for private sector-led economic

development and suggested some of the reforms that were required to reposition the subregion to take advantage of the opportunities that had arisen from changes in the global economic environment.

In his presentation, opening markets in the infrastructure and services sectors received special emphasis. The suggested reforms covered numerous areas for institutional development, including improving incentive and regulatory frameworks, simplifying tax structures, eliminating duty and tax concessions, speeding up decisions on investor's applications, increasing labour and capital mobility, eliminating trade controls, removing foreign exchange controls and implementing currency convertibility. However, he recommended that the creation of a business environment which could be perceived as open, transparent and non-discretionary was much more important than any of the individual actions. Only where entrepreneurs perceived an even playing field, where profits arose from market opportunities and not from granted privileges, could there be sustained private sector-led economic development.

## SESSION 2

### Social process for Caribbean development

The session had as its theme the following issues: Adjustment policies had given rise to a complexity of pressures in the social economy and had also raised critical issues in the areas of environmental management, communication strategies, gender and equity issues. Public policy had retreated from an active State involvement, and in some ways may have 'passed the buck' to the social partners. Was the time not ripe for radically different approaches, and was there not a need for a new social development framework?

#### a. Social capital and economic policy

Dr. Karl Theodore, of the Health Economics Unit of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, introduced the above-captioned paper which examined the concept of social capital. He stated that social capital had emerged as one of the key concepts in discussion of social and economic development. On the one hand, it was seen as an important ingredient in bringing about the required amount of physical investment, appropriate technology and human capital to boost the process of economic development. On the other hand, it was seen as one of the vital instruments of rehabilitation and reconstruction in dealing with the social problems of both urban and rural communities. In this regard, he felt that there was a need to pin down the concept by identifying different means of measurement; the relationship between social capital and other forms of capital; and the negative aspects of social capital. Accordingly, it was necessary to identify the optimal levels of social capital as opposed to merely striving for the maximum levels.

He stated that in a real sense the work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and others on the impact of adjustment had once more brought us face to face with the reality that there was much more to development than getting fiscal



and external balances in order. Even with this recognition, however, it was not always clear how we could make use of the social capital concept in designing and implementing public policy.

He explored a few suggestions along these lines and argued that social capital would be given its rightful place in policy formulation when the links between this concept of capital and its related income stream were projected in terms of specific programmes or projects.

**b. Strategies for poverty reduction in the Caribbean: How to be effective?**

Dr. Neville Duncan, Acting Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), UWI, Mona Campus, made reference to changes in social capital and poverty reduction and its impact on development. This paper reviewed the successes and failures of efforts at poverty reduction in the Caribbean undertaken by governments (national and local), business, labour, credit unions, international agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Community-based organizations (CBOs). Lessons were adduced in order to propose an effective strategy for poverty eradication.

These tasks were undertaken within the framework of a discussion on alternate models of national and regional development in the Caribbean which were rooted in an understanding of social systemic and cultural features of these societies, and on the new role of the State within a reformed system of governance. The aim was to break the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next while trying to deal with urgent issues now.

He noted that it was crucial for governments, since it was their responsibility, to take the lead in this process. The leadership issue needed to be resolved because it was only with proper leadership that the different social actors could act in a cohesive manner, and it was only the government that had the legitimacy to perform the leadership role.

**c. Which globalization: Opening spaces for civic engagement**

Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie stated that to date traditional approaches to development had not placed people at the centre nor had sustainability issues been much emphasized. Civic engagement had always been an important area of concern in the context of development and was really about two things: people's participation in the socio-economic and political process and the social infrastructure that supported the democratic decision-making process.

He felt that if Caribbean society was to adopt the sustainable development approach then the ordinary citizen and the organizations in which they assembled should play a pivotal role in the development process. There seemed to be region-wide agreement that increased participation by all sectors of society was necessary if the countries of the western hemisphere were to engage in sustainable development strategies.

He stressed that governments were now fully convinced that no major national, regional or international initiatives could succeed without the inclusion and involvement of people. Multilateral agencies were also strongly supportive of a stakeholder approach to sustainable development, one which facilitated the involvement and participation of people, and they were currently paying a great deal of attention to the management of the process of participation.

In the post-structural adjustment period, it would seem that the climate was especially conducive to civic engagement in the development process. The Caribbean needed to concentrate on building social capital if civic engagement was to create democratic institutions and expand the democratic process. In summary, the issue of stakeholders was examined and suggestions made for a new role for the State, incorporating stakeholders as they could assist domestic and regional institutions to penetrate, capture and maximize the changes taking place in the global environment.

**d. Building and using social capital: A state-society synergy approach**

Dr. Peter Evans commented that the realities of the Caribbean presented a good opportunity in testing theories of development. He stated that social capital was inherently the property of groups and not individuals. Instances existed where the utilization of social capital increased returns to particular groups as against the society as a whole. Social capital played a role in the provision of collective goods; the distribution of these goods, however, could become inequitable where certain groups benefited more than others and could be detrimental to the society as a whole. The State, therefore, had the responsibility to ensure that there was a more equitable distribution of these goods. People needed to be more aware of the importance of their roles in achieving the aims of their organizations and a higher level of professionalism might be the solution. People often became so concerned with large-scale solutions that they lost sight of the potential benefits which might derive from changes at the community level.

**Discussion**

In the ensuing discussion, it was agreed that the concept of social capital was difficult to define but that any definition needed to be clear enough to be measured and hence included in a production function.

There should be an involvement of a wide cross-section of groups in policy planning, that is, policies should focus on the needs of as many groups as possible because people only participated in reforms that were beneficial to them.

Participants recognized that poverty eradication/alleviation programmes had not been as successful as they could be since some of the potential beneficiaries had chosen not to take part for one reason or another. Therefore, it was suggested that programmes could focus on activities already being undertaken by the impoverished so that they could improve their own situation.

**SESSION 3****Information and governance**

The presenters for this session were keynote speaker, Professor Merilee Grindle, Professor of International Development, Harvard University, and Ms. Fay Durrant, Director, Association of Caribbean States.

**a. Demanding a supply of good government: A coalition for the reform of the State?**

Professor Merilee Grindle noted that, beginning in the 1980s, efforts to reform the State in most developing countries focused on the issue of too much State and emphasized reducing the size, expense, and responsibilities of the public sector. These were often included in the first generation reforms, which focused on stabilizing economies, liberalizing markets, privatizing State-owned enterprises, and downsizing public administration. During the same period, democracy advocates focused attention on the need to dismantle structures of control and corruption that had held discredited authoritarian regimes together. Both economic and political reformers were convinced that the State should shed functions in order to increase opportunities for dynamic growth and political freedom.

By the mid-1990s, however, these first generation reforms had been succeeded by a second generation of reform concerns, that is, the inadequacy of State action. Governments, development professionals and international institutions have all called for the creation of capable States rather than minimal ones. This perspective has emerged out of increased recognition that only States can provide conditions that are essential to both economic and political development. Second generation reformers argue that reducing the State does not automatically make markets work well nor allow democracy to flourish. Indeed, the problems of too little State can be as stifling to development as those of too much State.

The difficulty of devising and implementing second generation reforms must be recognized. Nevertheless, there is broad support for changes that can assist reformers to cope with the difficult challenge of developing new institutions, ensuring that organizations perform more effectively, and increasing the capacity of human resources within the public sector. This support comes in the form of several loosely defined groups demanding that governments become better at supplying efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness and include market reformers, democratic reformers, social reformers, sustainable developmentalists and fed-up citizens.

She stated that, in general, the current discussions about the reform of the State were laudable and important in pulling together a broad coalition of groups and networks around second generation reforms. But efforts to reform the State would invoke conflict and resistance as would issues relating to the nature of the reforms that were being advocated. Problems would be encountered in identifying the priorities for reform and in addressing the process of reform.

The speaker recommended that in addition to the discussion of what kinds of reforms were needed to create more capable States, societies needed to be engaged in a broader discussion about "What kind of State do we want?" and "What kind of State do we need?". A part of the current challenge for those concerned about the problem of too little State was how to encourage a broad and deep public discussion about the role of the State in economic, social and political development so that when specific reformist initiatives were undertaken, they were done within the context of a widely shared vision and understanding of the role, functions, and activities of the State and its relationship to the economy and to civil society.

**b. Information requirements for strategy change**

Ms. Fay Durrant of the Association of Caribbean States addressed the issue of information and strategic change in the Caribbean. She stated that policy reform cut across the political, social, economic and the information sectors. The information sector included the information industry, information economy, information networks and services, the information society, telecommunications and spectrum management.

She stated that the concept of information infrastructure might seem distant to the concerns of the Caribbean where we might consider that these were problems at the micro level. Present policies needed to be reformed to recognize information issues and to ensure their incorporation in the policy reform process. In addition to providing the vehicle for information networks and services, development of the information infrastructure (national or regional) would provide the basis for new industries.

She indicated that CARICOM had constituted a Regional Information Infrastructure Task Force which had identified a set of critical issues and recommendations for the development of the Regional Information Infrastructure. She concluded that developing a Policy Reform Network would provide the opportunity to exploit the existing information facilities and to establish linkages with other regions.

## **SESSION 4**

### **Policy change and strategic thinking**

The session considered the fact that in the management process for change, emphasis was now going into new frontiers of development and towards specific strategies that would build momentum for change in a global economy. Strategic thinking, therefore, was a tool that should be consistently applied. It sought answers to two questions. How to identify those strategic opportunities and plan to make use of them and whether the politics would rise to the demands of development.

The presenters for this session were Mr. Gary Reid, Fiscal Economist, The World Bank; Professor Arthur Goldsmith, Professor of Management, University of Massachusetts; Professor

William Ascher, Professor of Public Policy Studies, Duke University; and Ms. Auliana Poon, Managing Director, Caribbean Futures Ltd.

**a. Policy implementation: Meeting the organizational challenge**

The presenter, Mr. Gary Reid, focused on policy design issues and said that there was a distinct need to create pressures to reform and to meet the challenges attendant in the reform process. In the design of economic policy, account must be taken of government action, the market mechanism, social capital and State-society synergy. In order to execute policy, Mr. Reid noted that it was necessary to ensure that emphasis was placed on the leadership challenge and the implementation of policy directives. Part of the leadership challenge was to find a remedy for existing economic challenges, i.e. adapting and blending the insights of competing development approaches.

In the implementation of policy, it was necessary to keep focused on real objectives. In particular, it was necessary to focus strategy, tactics and activities; provide a touchstone for assessing progress; and inspire commitment and support. He advocated the use of the specific devices to keep actions focused on objectives. In particular, he emphasized the necessity to publicize objectives, reward good performance and sanction poor performance.

He stated that one of the key issues was “getting managers to manage”. In particular, it was necessary to establish modern financial and personal management capacities as well as to establish a performance-oriented management framework.

Finally, he spoke of the need to address transition risks and challenges. In particular, he stressed the need to sequence poverty interventions, have the right management teams, carefully target interventions, link real budgetary actions with management strengthening, serve the interests of stakeholders, face unavoidable personnel policy tradeoffs, sensibly target compensation improvements and approach reform implementation realistically.

**b. Missing elements in strategic policy making: Are we clear about them?**

Professor Arthur Goldsmith focused on the need to form capable governments and capable States. He stressed the need to prioritize government and said that there were important lessons to be learned from successful companies, namely: that strategic management had enabled business organizations to realize their objectives, while the use of mission statements, SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and stakeholder analysis had also been found to contribute to their performance. He emphasized that it was also necessary for modern corporations to re-visit their mission statements as these articulated the reason why businesses existed. The use of stakeholder analysis was also necessary as stakeholders should be intimately involved in the decision-making process.

**c. Strategic planning of institutional reform: Improving policy outcomes through more accountable structures**

Professor William Ascher's presentation focused on the need to indicate where we were with respect to policy reform. He emphasized the need to eliminate distortions, to appreciate the need to internalize negative externalities, to ensure that there was greater transparency in policy-making, to adopt adequate resource policy, to protect environmental rights, and to structure tax policy to ensure that revenue collection and other economic objectives were achieved.

According to Professor Ascher's diagnosis, muddled mandates precluded the technical assessment of optimality. These muddled mandates not only reduced discretion and accountability, but also resulted in incomplete internalization of costs by government officials and minimal recognition of the legitimacy of agency "interests".

He emphasized that narrower single mandates led to greater agency discretion and greater rewards. This system also contrasted with system management. Some of the other issues which Mr. Ascher addressed were the need for prioritization through the central budget, the complexity and non-transparency about corruption and the lack of accountability as indicated by rent-seeking theory and calls for bringing agents' interests into line.

**d. New implementation challenges: A flexible specialization paradigm**

Dr. Auliana Poon, in her presentation, stressed that old strategies had become obsolete in achieving increases in growth in the developing world and that it was now necessary for developing countries to emphasize: technology application, services as an increasingly important contributor to GDP, competitive advantage as king, global networking as increasingly important to survival in today's rapidly changing environment; the need to use tourism to overcome entry barriers and the need to adopt a flexible specialization strategy.

Key to the successful implementation of strategy of flexible specialization were the selection of focus sectors/niches for development and the development of the eight key sector-related capabilities. These were education and training, management, design, production, marketing, networking, the regulatory environment, research and development and supporting institutions.

**Discussion**

In the discussion which ensued, the following points were raised. Three approaches to narrow mandates of government agencies could be used, namely to revise mandates, make financial arrangements consistent and to adopt regulatory activities to cope with the problem of a proliferation of agencies and separate functions. It was agreed that there was need to divide agencies with respect to formal mandates and make suitable economic arrangements.

Participants discussed the problems with evaluation models being used across the board. Nevertheless, evaluations could serve a variety of purposes, notably a fundamental learning function. Accordingly, it needed to be ongoing so as to lead to institutional learning. It was recommended that evaluation procedures should be institutionalized.

It was agreed that accountability was a huge issue that needed to be addressed. Politicians needed to be made accountable to citizens as there was disillusionment where politicians were not accountable.

The participation of social groups in the tourist industry was recognized as essential. Tourism was an important avenue for the involvement of NGOs, government, the citizenry and the private sector. It was felt that tourism would not survive unless locals were convinced that they would benefit.

Participants recognized that it took a long time to implement reform effectively, therefore, the process of reform should be continuous. Additionally, the time horizon over which change was implemented should be considered. To ensure sustainability, public support for the reform process was increased by drawing attention to success stories. Pressure from grassroot organizations and good government agencies was necessary for the reform process to succeed. There was a need to punish poor performance and to evaluate and reward good performance.

## **ROUND-TABLE**

### **New directions in the political economy of the Caribbean**

The Round-table was constituted to explore why some governments worked and others did not, while some countries failed and others succeeded? Structural adjustment also implied changes in the political system, shifts in the relative power structure of societies and political business cycles that sustained forward expectations.

The presenters for this session were: Professor Merilee Grindle, Professor of International Development, Harvard University; Mr. Sarath Rajapatirana, Economic Adviser, The World Bank; Mr. Uziel Noguiera, Director a.i., Institute for Latin American Integration; Mr. Demetris Papageorgiou, Associate, Enterprise Research Institute for Latin America; Mr. Wendell Mottley, Senior Adviser, Credit Suisse First Boston Corporation; and Mr. Winston Dookeran, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ECLAC.

#### **a. Challenging the State: Crisis and innovation**

In delivering the above-captioned topic, Professor Merilee Grindle emphasized that governments could no longer sustain new institutional capacity. Indeed, she stressed that there was

an important role for technical decision-making and there was a need for appropriate macroeconomic policies to achieve increases in economic performance. One of the key challenges for business corporations was the need to acquire a proper cadre of managers to provide an insight into policy change.

As the deep economic and political crisis of the 1980s indicated, there was great need for policy analysis units and technocrats in national policy-making. To maintain welfare levels, it was also important to ensure that appropriate social and health care programmes were implemented.

Professor Grindle noted that crisis had encouraged innovation, governments were no longer capable of fulfilling all roles, hence the need to establish parallel actors, such as NGOs, and the process of contracting out services.

Political capacity needed to be strengthened and this could only be achieved through the development of civil society. To this end, governments should be made more participatory, accountable and transparent.

**b. The integration movement in the Caribbean at crossroads**

Mr. Uziel Noguiera, in his presentation, emphasized the need to integrate small countries into the global economy. He said that import substitution had been a massive failure and had achieved no robust impact on growth or any positive spillover effects.

Some of the additional main issues which were addressed in his presentation were: the need to integrate economies through the new wave of integration since there was no chance of membership in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) for Caribbean economies. Nevertheless, additional time was needed by smaller economies to comply with the membership requirements of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Other factors were the need to negotiate market access as the last part of the FTAA agenda, the necessity of dealing effectively with the issue of non-tariff barriers and the need to implement domestic economic reforms so as to reap the benefits of integration.

**c. Unshackling the private sector: A second generation agenda**

In his presentation, Mr. Sarath Rajapatirana noted that if developing economies were to achieve economic prosperity and increased living standards they would need to undertake incentive reforms, regulatory reforms and take proper account of macroeconomic balances.

He emphasized that in order to ensure that these goals were achieved, they would need to address three main issues, namely, the role and responsibilities of the State, property rights and income distribution. Institutional reform was also necessary, for while governments were in power for five years, the adjustment process usually took at least five years.



**d. Trading places: The future for preferences**

Mr. Demetris Papageorgiou spoke of the need to continue policy reform as initiated by the IDB, the World Bank and the IMF. He stated that a successful reform package required the removal of non-tariff barriers; depreciation of real exchange rates and trade liberalization.

He noted that since the adjustment process was more difficult the higher the level of protection, there was a need to ensure that protected trade and currency regimes were dismantled. He noted that trade preferences between small trade partners were irrelevant as this could lead to trade diversion.

**e. Global framework for policy reform**

Mr. Wendell Mottley, in his presentation stressed the importance of the current trend towards globalization and noted that globalization led to the erosion of previous borders; the emergence of an urban global culture; the need to achieve global competitiveness; winners and losers in corporations and potentially widening income inequality.

He stressed the importance of both Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Portfolio Investment to developing countries, stating that Foreign Direct Investment flows to developing countries had expanded by a multiple of 10 in the last 10 years. There was need for domestic capital markets to be improved as Caribbean countries were not very well equipped to access foreign capital while infrastructure needed to be improved to attract FDI. There was also need to ensure access to global markets as the region moved towards the attainment of freer trade.

Several other issues were touched, such as the need for Open Reciprocal Trading Arrangements, the development of inter-bloc trade, the new global architecture which had the potential to generate huge amounts of wealth and the need to maintain flows of information between the region and the rest of the world.

**f. Caribbean development: The premises of an emerging agenda**

Mr. Dookeran addressed the issue of competitiveness of the Caribbean economy and commented that it had now emerged as a key requirement for the successful integration of these economies into the global economic system. He stated that serious issues did arise in determining the path and process for improving competitiveness. These included matters of macroeconomic policy, changes in the structure of specific industries, the financing of infrastructure development and institutional systems to promote competitiveness.

He stated that there was a new agenda for global trade and, as such, the need for an international agreement on competition policy had emerged. There was no entity responsible for ensuring that global markets were competitive, the WTO currently did not require its members to

meet binding obligations to implement competition policies. He recommended that a single set of rules could, in principle, provide more coherence than the current system.

The negotiation of these rules would cover a wide range of topics, including, the elimination of anti-dumping and countervailing duties, antitrust laws, control of business practices that restricted market access, the creation of an international competition office which would have implications for preferential tax treatments and constrain domestic competition policy.

He concluded that whatever the agenda items, it was clear that an international competition policy would have direct impact on trade and commercial practice and have differential effects on countries. This might lead ultimately to the categorization of countries on the basis of their degree of integration with the world economy. However, the incremental approach to incorporating competition policy within the international trading system was likely to be the more feasible approach. Whatever the outcome, the Caribbean's framework for negotiations was in urgent need of reform.

### **Discussion**

The issue of transition was raised in the ensuing discussion. It was felt that transition took place once structural change had occurred. It was noted that there was a fundamental role for the private sector in effecting these changes, since it could be made more costly if the private sector did not believe in the permanency of economic policies adopted. Further, the view was expressed that there was a need to prepare the Caribbean economies for structural change, since the transition to improved living standards was more costly in small economies than in large ones.

Participants also expressed the view that it was necessary to create a new generation of sustainable exports for the Caribbean subregion and this would require a re-examination of the development strategy being followed.

### **Closing session**

In his closing remarks, Mr Dookeran expressed his thanks to the presenters and other participants for their active participation which had ensured the success of the meeting. He also paid tribute to all those agencies which had provided support to the meeting, in particular the IDB, whose support was invaluable.

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