



UNITED NATIONS



Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

Meeting on the High-Level Advisory Committee (HLAC)
of the Project: A Review of the Economics of
Climate Change (RECC)
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
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**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE
HIGH-LEVEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HLAC) OF THE PROJECT:
A REVIEW OF THE ECONOMICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE (RECC)**

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Introduction

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland convened a High-Level Advisory Committee (HLAC) meeting of the project “Review of the Economics of Climate Change (RECC)”. The meeting was held at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on Thursday 12 March 2009.

An agenda and list of participants are annexed to this report.

Agenda item 1 Welcome and opening remarks

Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Neil Pierre, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean and Ms. Simone Banister, Head, Corporate Management, DFID of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Barbados,

Mr. Pierre recalled the proceedings of the Expert Group Meeting of 13 February 2009 that was convened in Barbados at which the project studies were presented. He indicated that this meeting was the follow-up that sought to, once more, present the project document for future phases of the project for discussion and approval by the HLAC. He presented the new proposed organizational structure of the project and stressed the necessity to mobilize resources in support of continuation of the initiative. Mr. Pierre mentioned that the European Union (EU), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), DFID, the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) had been approached as collaborators and, to date, there had been positive feedback from these organizations. In closing, he reiterated that economic growth in this current climate might not be sustainable and this therefore needed to be at the core of climate change in the world today.

Ms. Simone Banister began by expressing enthusiasm that DFID was the co-sponsor of the project and made reference to the other RECCs that are currently being implemented in Central and South America. She acknowledged the important role of the HLAC, indicating that these representatives could influence policy makers, ensure that the study had an effect and was relevant to each country. Also, HLAC members were needed to bring on board local expertise for the future phases of the project and to make certain that the individual studies coming out of each country were of a high standard. She focused on the impacts of climate change on economic development, especially to the economies of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Ms. Banister articulated DFID’s priority with climate change in the Caribbean within the context of the largely coastal populations. She indicated that the responsibility to mitigate against climate change should be that of the developed countries which contributed the most green house gases while developing countries should give priority to adaptation. She indicated that the United Kingdom was providing funding to ensure that concrete measures be put in place for both adaptation and mitigation. The United Kingdom had allocated £800M globally for climate change of which £35M would be allocated to the Caribbean under the Pilot Programme for Climate Change Resilience (PPCR) to support work on highly vulnerable sectors. Working with

the link between disaster management and reducing climate change was of importance here. She stressed that disaster risk reduction (DRR) needed to be climate sensitive in reducing vulnerability. Ms. Banister indicated that DFID was providing support in terms of establishment of a Centre for Climate and Development, which included the setting up of a climate centre help desk, which would provide support for the countries that requested it. She reminded the participants that the cost of acting now would be less than coping with the effects of climate change.

Ms. Elizabeth Thorne of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean expressed gratitude to DFID for supporting ECLAC with the project, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) for technical support to ensure efficient execution of the project, and the government representatives for their role as HLAC members.

Agenda item 2

The Review of the Economics of Climate Change in the Caribbean

During this session, the final study of Phase 1 consisting of a project document for the future phases of the project was presented by the CCCCC. The discussion sessions were aimed at collecting feedback and comments from the members of the HLAC on the proposed project document in order to realize its finalization.

The main comments were as follows:

1. The project should aim at building on the work that had already been done in the region on climate change. The Caribbean was far ahead in its adaptation planning as compared to other regions and many countries had undertaken impact studies and vulnerability assessments in Stages I and II of their adaptation plans. The project should build on such initiatives as well as maximize on existing institutional capacity especially at institutions such as the Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), the Caribbean Environment and Health Institute (CEHI), the Institute of Meteorology of Cuba, and regional universities.

2. It was suggested that in addition to adaptation the region should explore its mitigation potential and its contributions to the global agenda on emissions reductions. It was emphasized that a strategy to avoid deforestation be considered for inclusion in section 8.9 on page 28 of the project document, and that mention be made of the conservation of forests as part of a mitigation policy in section 12.6 on page 29. Reference to floods should also be inserted in section 6.6 on page 27. It was stated that adaptation should be viewed as part of a mitigative strategy for the region. The suggestion was also made that 10.5 be adjusted to read 'Assessment of policies to conserve water, reduce water use and enhance supply, including technologies like desalination'.

3. Suggestion was made for the findings of ongoing country studies that might be relevant to climate change to feed into the RECC process in the Caribbean. For example, the ongoing study being done by McKinsey in Guyana on the opportunity costs of deforestation could inform the sectoral study on forestry. On the other hand, findings from the RECC studies in the Caribbean could also inform the papers to be submitted by the region to the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ahead of the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009 as well as inform policy makers at the event.

4. It was suggested that Phase 4 of the project on institutional strengthening be mainstreamed into Phases II and III. In order to speed up progress on Phase II ahead of Copenhagen 2009, a first set of countries comprising the nine in which consultations were held be identified as priority countries for participation (Phase IIA) and, subsequently, a second set of countries would comprise the 13 that were not part of Phase I (Phase IIB). For countries participating in Phase IIA, there would be less emphasis on national capacity-building and, therefore, international technical expertise would be brought in to support the work of the national focal points. National capacity-building would be emphasized in countries participating in Phase IIB. The studies in phase IIA should also be representative of different sectors vital to Caribbean economies in order to meaningfully inform the COP15 negotiations.

5. It was highlighted that transfer of technology would be a key component of the COP15 negotiations and that the region needed to reflect on mitigation policies, namely the shift to low carbon energy systems and the role of technology transfer in that process. The tourism study of the RECC in the Caribbean should analyze the effects that the inclusion of emissions from the aviation industry in the post-Kyoto accords might have on Caribbean tourism. It was suggested that ECLAC present the RECC in the Caribbean at the forthcoming ministerial meeting of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) on tourism in April 2009.

6. The point was reiterated that mitigation in the region should consist mainly of shifts to low carbon energy systems, such as shifting to renewable energy sources and articulating national energy policies and, in this context, the important work of ECLAC in the areas of promoting biofuels and geothermal energy in the region was cited. Mention was also made of a project funded by the IDB aimed at analyzing the use of energy in the tourism sector in pilot countries in the region. In the area of tourism, it was suggested that the region should aim at branding itself as a carbon neutral destination in the future.

7. Recommendation was made for the ACS to be part of the Steering Committee of the project. The potential role of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Climate Change Task Force in the governance structure of the project should also be explored.

8. It was recommended to insert on page 27 a reference for funding of specific adaptation programmes and projects as part of Stage III of the adaptation planning of countries.

9. Section 8.4 on page 28 should reflect the position of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) on carbon capture and storage.

10. It was felt that the project document could define a strategy for disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change. It was suggested that the disaster risk reduction initiative being carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Barbados Office and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) could inform the analysis of extreme events that would be covered in the RECC in the Caribbean. In this respect DFID referred to a six-month project that was on course in five pilot countries in the region and that aimed at informing the disaster management plans of these countries through the conduct of detailed climate change impact assessment in the tourism sector. This type of bottom-up

initiative was considered to be relevant in terms of linking adaptation on climate change to disaster preparedness.

11. It was mentioned that the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has lent support for the project and/or wider involvement in other climate change-related projects; such projects include CARIBSAVE, CHENACT and two disaster risk management projects with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA). It was noted that that organization's involvement in these projects was important for two main reasons: firstly, tourism would be accorded priority in the RECC project; and, secondly, that HLAC recognize the need to collate information about which related initiatives were being undertaken/planned in the region as a guide for the project, to avoid duplication of efforts, create synergies among them and as inputs to the Copenhagen meeting preparations

12. It was suggested that the tourism section in the project document – *Section 17-Item 17.7* – should include mitigation as an option as the region's focus is on both adaptation and mitigation strategies.

13. It was suggested that the use of general guidelines would be effective in developing the tools of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which could be integrated into the climate change public policy-making process. The SEA was identified as an appropriate process indicator of Result 4 on page 24 of the project document and should be included.

14. It was suggested that an inventory be made of ongoing initiatives in the area of sustainable development in the Caribbean so that the project could build synergies with these existing initiatives as far as was relevant (for example, the UNDP disaster risk management initiative).

15. The setting of guidelines on strategic environmental assessment should be included as a desired activity within the project.

16. The RECC in the Caribbean should aim to address Haiti's special challenges and needs and identify avenues for interventions in Haiti. It was suggested that work on adaptation cover both Haiti and the Dominican Republic and, in particular, opportunities for joint intervention by both countries in relation to preserving any common resources they might share.

17. It was proposed that ECLAC, the CCCCC and DFID approach the Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (UWI) and discuss opportunities of collaboration with the university in the RECC process. The Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions was also cited as a potential collaborator.

18. The forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2009 was viewed as an excellent opportunity to highlight the issue of climate change and the RECC project in the Caribbean with an aim of engaging the political directorate on the climate change debate ahead of COP15 in Copenhagen.

19. It was pointed out that this RECC in the Caribbean was only one of 14 RECCs being conducted globally and that the aim of these RECCs was to inform policy makers on the

global climate change debate and the responsibilities of each region regarding taking actions to address climate change. It was necessary for these regional studies to be comparable to a certain extent in terms of methodologies used and assumptions made. There was a set of assumptions that would need to be common across all these studies (for example, assumptions made on the course of future world energy prices, world population growth rates). The assumptions made in the RECC studies will need to be clear and transparent as the results achieved would be sensitive to the assumptions made. There would be a need for sensitivity analysis. The RECC studies in the Caribbean might consist of a mix of both qualitative assessments and quantitative modeling, under a range of various emissions scenarios. The HLAC would have an important role to play in terms of verifying the assumptions made for the Caribbean studies and commenting on the credibility of the results reached.

Agenda 3

Roles and functions of the High-Level Advisory Committee

ECLAC presented the Terms of Reference for the HLAC to the meeting for finalization and approval. The meeting was also apprised of the present status of nominees to the HLAC.

Clarification of the roles and functions of the HLAC

There was much discussion on the roles and functions of the HLAC. The first point that was raised was whether or not the HLAC had functions of governance. The importance of having ministers on the HLAC was emphasized as it was felt that this would promote political endorsement of the project.

It was stated that the HLAC was technical in nature while the Steering Committee would engage political representatives. However, ministerial representative of the Steering Committee would designate the technical expert of the HLAC.

There was a call for a clarification of the roles and functions of the HLAC. There was specific query as to whether the HLAC would function as an advisory or review body. It was noted that functions suggested a specific task - reviewing the studies; whereas the role was the overall responsibility of the HLAC. It was agreed that these specifics had to be fleshed out in the project document. Advocacy was suggested as an additional function of the HLAC, but there were doubts as to how this would be incorporated.

In developing country teams it was suggested that there might be a need to bring in foreign expertise as needed. Member States felt that the HLAC should have an input in approving these foreign technical persons. It was explained that the suggestion for the inclusion of foreign expertise was made in an effort to hasten the pace of the project in preparation for Copenhagen. However, it was noted that national climate change groups or teams could liaise with the HLAC to determine this, as needed. In this regard the HLAC representatives were expected to collaborate closely with the chairperson for the national climate change committee. It was suggested that this relationship be reflected in the overall organizational structure by constructing a direct line from the national climate change bodies to the HLAC. The meeting then suggested that the language on page 36, section 7.1.2 National Climate Change should be changed.

Another point that was raised was that the HLAC focal point should have the responsibility of sensitizing national teams ensuring that were fully appraised of the activities required in the project. It was emphasized that the HLAC was not a decision-making forum, but was responsible for reviewing the RECC studies which would then be referred to the Steering Committee. One representative cautioned against the possibility of this committee duplicating work already being done by similar committees addressing climate change. It was then suggested that a scoping study would identify such activities.

The meeting was informed that the CCCCC would be the sole implementing agency. CDERA would function as a collaborative agency.

It was recommended that ECLAC negotiate with CARICOM to use the HLAC to make interventions at Copenhagen, especially with respect to the findings of this study. ECLAC agreed that CARICOM, ECLAC and UNDP would have to sort through the most suitable response structure for the region. The advantage of having ECLAC spearheading this project was applauded as it covered 23 countries, including those of CARICOM.

One representative suggested that the goals and objectives be clearly linked to each activity with specific reference to the logframe. It was noted that the logframe provided good guidance as it highlighted specificities regarding measurable data.

Regional collaboration

A representative queried the involvement of the University of Havana in the project, especially considering their expertise in the area of modelling. The meeting was assured that the Cubans had always been and continued to be very supportive and willing to share their expertise with the region.

Evaluation of the HLAC

The meeting agreed that monitoring and evaluation of the project extended to the HLAC as it was felt that the committee's impact should be so assessed.

HLAC meetings

It was agreed that the number of meetings could be increased and would not have budgetary implications as the redirection funds from Phase IV could accommodate this. The meeting agreed that the HLAC meetings could comprise a mixture of face-to-face, virtual (teleconferencing) meetings and via email. The meeting agreed that outcomes of the HLAC meetings could take the format of a communiqué which would be shared with the Steering Committee, national bodies, implementing agencies and the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) and these parties could decide the best way of disseminating this information.

Election of a Chairperson

It was suggested that the chair of the HLAC should be a governmental representative who should also serve as the chairperson of the Steering Committee. It was widely agreed that this

might be most effective as policy makers would respond best to their peers, however, the duration of the chairmanship was still to be determined. A recommendation was made for Trinidad and Tobago to serve as the first chair, given the advantage of having the PCU (ECLAC) and the chair located in the same country. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago, however, noted that she would first have to consult with her government before responding to the chairmanship.

Another suggestion highlighted the possibility of a roaming chairmanship among the Steering Committee groupings. A reformulation of the groupings was proposed based on geographical characteristics:

Barbados, OECS
 Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas
 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT)
 Guyana and Suriname
 Dominican Republic and Haiti

The meeting noted that the original groupings were in accordance with political and economic structure, noting the larger economies were more diversified (Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago) whereas the OECS had similar political structures and economies.

Structure of the Steering Committee

Some delegations stated that where member States were not represented on the Steering Committee there should be a mechanism to inform non-member States of decisions taken by the Steering Committee, as well as to bring to the attention of the Committee, concerns of these States. One proposal put forward was the possibility of implementing a hybrid structure of the Committee, which would comprise a finite number of members, and although not fully open-ended it should have a mechanism for other States to make interventions when needed. The representative of ECLAC emphasized that although inclusion was favorable, such a structure might be cumbersome. Another representative suggested a core group that was open-ended. It was also suggested that the structure of the Committee should be left up to the member States for consultation. The chair noted this intervention but stated that representatives should have an idea of the structure and still consult with their governments.

Although it was proposed that the representation on the Steering Committee in Phase II consist of the nine countries that were involved the national consultations to secure political buy-in, the preferred composition was that of inclusion of all member States on the Committee.

It was reiterated that the chair of the HLAC would revolve around the following areas of action:

1. The chair should always be a governmental representative;
2. The ministerial representative should chair the HLAC and this person should also chair the Steering Committee;
3. There should be rotation between the regional groups;
4. Haiti should be included in the structure.

ECLAC nominated the Netherlands Antilles as chair of the HLAC given that support for this initiative was being championed by the Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles. The representative noted that he would have to consult with his government before accepting. However after discussion the meeting agreed that because Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) were usually a part of the delegations of their metropolitan countries at United Nations conferences they would not be in an effective position to negotiate on behalf of the Caribbean region. In this regard the meeting agreed that an OCT country could not function as the chair.

It was decided that ECLAC would consult with the member States regarding the election of a chair to the HLAC and Steering Committee and the outcome communicated to the HLAC.

Agenda item 4
Phases II, III and IV of the RECC Caribbean –
Opportunities for collaboration and resource mobilization

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean indicated that the budget for the future phases of the project amounted to US\$3 million. He then gave an account of efforts to mobilize resources for future phases of the project, as follows:

- The IDB was interested in collaborating in this initiative and promised to examine ways of fast forwarding funding namely through an existing project currently being implemented by the CCCCC;
- The World Bank – ECLAC met with the Head of the Caribbean Division who promised to discuss collaboration with the climate change focal points;
- CIDA indicated that no resources were dedicated to climate change for the Caribbean. However, of the Can\$100 million allocated for global initiatives on climate change, it was expected that 60% would be allocated to Africa. There was no indication of the possibility of any being of these funds channeled to the Caribbean. However, CIDA funds may be accessed through CARICOM;
- European Commission (EC) – ECLAC met with the EC in Trinidad and was informed that resources through that office can only be allocated to Trinidad and Tobago. As with CIDA, EC funds would be channeled through CARICOM. The Assistant Secretary General of CARICOM was contacted in this regard and he promised to discuss the matter with the CARICOM official with responsibility for the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), so as to place the matter on the agenda of the next meeting to obtain the endorsement of ministers.
- DFID was amenable to continue funding the initiative but would require the revised project document to send to their headquarters;
- CDB – ECLAC was encouraged by the response of the CDB. Officials of the bank requested the Phase I project document and the project reports. The President promised to have internal discussions on commitment of funds within

the limits of his authority and to also present the matter at the May meeting of its Board of Governors;

- The Kingdom of the Netherlands was approached for funding, given that climate change was important to the Caribbean partners of the Kingdom and they were exploring ways of supporting the future phases of the project;
- Government of Finland – The Ambassador of Finland was interested in the project and ECLAC was awaiting a response from him;
- Government of Spain – The project document had been sent to the representative of Spain and ECLAC was awaiting a response;
- Government of Australia – ECLAC would be approaching this government through its High Commission in Trinidad.

The Director also noted that the Caribbean had made greater progress in the area of climate change than had the Pacific region and in this regard, it was expected that some of our experiences and information would be shared through the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC). This might be an additional lobby with Australia which supported these countries. Also, the CCCCC indicated that the Australian High Commissioner would be visiting the Centre and the project would be discussed with him.

The ACS suggested that the Governments of Brazil and Turkey be approached in the formation of partnerships. Also, with Haiti being included as a member of the HLAC, this might well increase advocacy for funding.

Agenda item 5 Preparations for Copenhagen

Guyana gave a brief synopsis of the issues that would be addressed at the 15th Conference of Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC that would be convened in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009. This focused on the close alliance with the AOSIS and with the CCCCC in addressing adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and financing for climate change.

It was agreed that the technical team from the Caribbean region would have concluded its position to AOSIS which would be sent to the *Ad Hoc* Working Group in time for the meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technological Advice (SBSTA) and working groups in Bonn in June 2009. The process for presenting the Caribbean's position was regarded as more important and, in this regard, the importance of political support at the highest level was stressed. The CCCCC had resources from DFID for preparations for Copenhagen and these funds could also be used to prepare for the subsidiary bodies and ad hoc working groups in Bonn in June.

The meeting noted that there should be representation at the highest possible political levels at the 15th COP to the UNFCCC, given the following:

- The meeting of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) that took place in New York in September 2008 placed climate change high on its agenda, and ministers actively participated in this meeting. The meeting concentrated on effective coordination among CARICOM membership and indicated that representation at the highest political level would occur at the COP;
- The upcoming Summit of the Americas would focus on energy and climate change;
- The CHOGM to be held in November 2009 would again focus on climate change and the discussions at this meeting would play a major role in advancing the negotiating process of the Caribbean at the 15th COP;
- The Permanent Representatives to the United Nations would also play a crucial role in influencing COFCOR.

The meeting noted that Heads of State should be encouraged to attend the 15th COP in Copenhagen and, as such, CARICOM Heads of State should prepare a programme for Copenhagen in terms of representation at the meeting. The CCCCC mentioned that climate change was indeed included in the declaration for the Summit of the Americas, but it was not emphasized enough.

The meeting noted that OCTs were represented by their metropolitan countries at the COPs but, even so, they could still be the face of the Caribbean on climate change issues.

The following closing points were made:

- The CCCCC had resources from DFID for preparations for Copenhagen and these funds could also be used to prepare for the SBSTTA through the convening of a regional preparatory meeting prior to the SBSTTA;
- ECLAC, CARICOM and the CCCCC would identify opportunities for lobbying for action in terms of high-level representation in Copenhagen;
- The outputs of all RECCs would be presented to a Latin American and Caribbean meeting so as to arrive at a common regional position for Copenhagen.

Annex I

Agenda

1. Opening
2. The Review of the Economics of Climate Change in the Caribbean (RECCC)
3. Roles and Functions of the High-Level Advisory Committee (HLAC)
4. Phases 2, 3 and 4 of the RECC Caribbean - Opportunities for collaboration and resource mobilization
5. Preparations for Copenhagen
6. Closure

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