



United Nations

ECLAC

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN

FOCUS

Newsletter of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC)

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The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It was established in 1948 to support Latin American governments in the economic and social development of that region. Subsequently, in 1966, the Commission (ECLA, at that time) established the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain to serve all countries of the insular Caribbean, as well as Belize, Guyana and Suriname, making it the largest United Nations body in the subregion.

At its sixteenth session in 1975, the Commission agreed to create the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) as a permanent subsidiary body, which would function within the ECLA structure to promote development cooperation among Caribbean countries. Secretariat services to the CDCC would be provided by the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. Nine years later, the Commission's widened role was officially acknowledged when the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) modified its title to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Key Areas of Activity

The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean (ECLAC/CDCC secretariat) functions as a subregional think-tank and facilitates increased contact and cooperation among its membership. Complementing the ECLAC/CDCC work programme framework, are the broader directives issued by the United Nations General Assembly when in session, which constitute the Organization's mandate. At present, the overarching articulation of this mandate is the Millennium Declaration, which outlines the Millennium Development Goals.

Towards meeting these objectives, the Secretariat conducts research; provides technical advice to governments, upon request; organizes intergovernmental and expert group meetings; helps to formulate and articulate a regional perspective within global forums; and introduces global concerns at the regional and subregional levels.

Areas of specialisation include trade, statistics, social development, science and technology, and sustainable development; while actual operational activities extend to economic and development planning, demography, economic surveys, assessment of the socio-economic impacts of natural disasters, climate change, data collection and analysis, training, and assistance with the management of national economies.

The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean also functions as the Secretariat for coordinating the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The scope of ECLAC/CDCC activities is documented in the wide range of publications produced by the subregional headquarters in Port of Spain.

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Director's Desk

GUYANA: OUTGOING CHAIR OF THE CDCC

We have dedicated this first issue of Focus in 2014 to the country that has held the seat of the Chairmanship of the 24th Session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) for the past two years: the land of many waters, the Republic of Guyana.

This focus we consider fitting tribute to the vivacious, dynamic and astute outgoing Chair of CDCC, the Honourable Carolyn Rodrigues Birkett, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The first female Foreign Minister of Guyana, she has served in this capacity since 2008, bringing to her portfolio the passion and commitment towards improving the welfare of her people that she amply demonstrated during her tenure as Minister of Amerindian Affairs, a portfolio she held for seven years.

We at the subregional headquarters in Port of Spain became beneficiaries of the dedication and single-mindedness with which she embraced her remit to advance the cause of the Caribbean subregion within ECLAC when she assumed the Chair of the CDCC in May 2012. She invested in her leadership of the Committee an energy and interest that gave impetus to our resolve to bring renewed vigor and relevance to the work of ECLAC in the subregional space of the Caribbean. She challenged us to tackle issues that affected all, and that demanded timely investigation; she used our work as ready reference, our skills for needed inquiry and action.

She marshalled the proceedings of the Caribbean Forum: Shaping a Sustainable Development Agenda to address the Caribbean Reality in the 21st Century in Bogota, Columbia in March 2013 on the eve of the Conference on Sustainable Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, providing the Caribbean states with their first opportunity for exchange of views on the defining of a post 2015 agenda that responded to the urgent development challenges facing



Ms. Diane Quarless, Director, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

Dorle Alexander, ECLAC

the Caribbean. That meeting identified five critical areas of ongoing concern to the subregion: human development, citizen security and human rights in the Caribbean; the need to promote inclusive growth, through diversification, creativity and innovation; building resilience and social cohesion; enhancing institutional infrastructure and governance for sustainable development; and strategies for financing sustainable development in small middle-income countries.

In addition to hosting the Second Caribbean Development Roundtable and the 24th Session of the CDCC in 2012, she surpassed the call of duty by also hosting the 16th Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC and the Caribbean Forum on Population, Migration and Development the following year. These meetings offered Caribbean States an opportunity to assess how far the subregion had come in meeting the objectives articulated in the Cairo Programme of Action to respond to such development challenges as poverty and inequality; the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women; the need for continued attention to sexual and reproductive rights and health, particularly in respect of adolescents; and consideration of strategies to address important demographic trends, including

international migration and the aging of Caribbean populations.

She would text or email us for information while in meetings; challenge our team for data and research relevant to her cause of the day in serving the Caribbean. By using what we had to share, she gave meaning to our work. The rapport she established with the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Port of Spain exemplifies the relationship we hope to build with every member country of the subregion, as knowledge and appreciation of the support we are eager to offer expands.

During her tenure, we at ECLAC were also afforded the opportunity to gain more intimate knowledge of and appreciation for Guyana; the land, its vision, its people; and on every occasion we were treated to the legendary warmth and generosity of hospitality Guyana-style. As she relinquishes her role and passes the baton to Jamaica, we use this medium to convey to our outgoing Chair and to the people of Guyana our appreciation for the leadership given to every member country of the subregion.

The articles in this issue are intended to give both substance and texture to the many facets of this majestic and fascinating country; a land of paradoxes and contrasts; of untold natural beauty, a wealth of natural resources and rich diversity. I invite you to join us in paying tribute to the outgoing Chair of CDCC, the Honourable Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, and to the splendid country of her birth.

Yours in Focus,
Diane

IN THE WORDS OF OUTGOING CHAIR OF THE CDCC



The Honourable Minister Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Guyana

On 24 January 2013, the Honourable Minister Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Guyana was a feature speaker at the working luncheon of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) for Latin America and the Caribbean. The luncheon was hosted in Santiago, Chile. Among those present were Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson of the United Nations, Executive Secretary of ECLAC Alicia Bárcena, and other distinguished representatives of the United Nations Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Minister took the opportunity to encourage the high level UN presence to continue their work to support the development effort in the region. In her words...

"I cannot emphasize enough the value that we Member States place on this support and the importance of your continued commitment to partnering with each other, so as to leverage and enhance the quality in both product and delivery of the assistance that we receive collectively from all of you".

She pointed out that as chair of the Caribbean Development Cooperation Committee (CDCC) she represented the interests and concerns of 16 Member States, 12 Associate States member territories of ECLAC in the Caribbean subregion and thanked Alicia for the critical support to the forum through training and capacity building and other forms of engagement.

The Minister went on to lay out the challenges of the subregion and pointed out the following:

"The Caribbean economies are small and vulnerable; a consequence of their openness due to their small domestic markets and exposure to extreme events. They rely heavily on exports to a narrow range of markets, namely

the EU and the United States – the very economies that have struggled in 2012."

She went on to outline that high unemployment, high debt, current account deficits and fiscal challenges were the major obstacles to sustainable development and resilience of the subregion. She expressed particular concern about issues of poverty and lack of social protection,

"...Also of concern is the erosion of the social fabric of our societies, which continue to be plagued by crime and violence, fuelled in many instances by the drug trade, and high levels of social deviance particularly among our youth. As we approach the MDG post 2015 review, there are concerns that we are still lagging in meeting the poverty reduction targets, and of course, while we still remain the region with the second highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS, the rise in lifestyle and non-communicable diseases has increasingly become an urgent health and development issue for our leaders".

She was clear that a return to growth was necessary and further suggested that regional integration held the key to meeting some challenges. In her words...

"This is also a time to further advance the regional integration process and to encourage joint production and activities since unilateral adjustment in one economy affects others in the region."

She passionately articulated the threats to the viability of the subregion, saying as follows:

"The many challenges to development in the Caribbean that I have described can be summed up in a single word; vulnerability. Recent ECLAC studies point to significant potential risks to our island and low-lying coastal nations from climate induced sea level rise over the next three to four decades"..... A single hurricane can retard a decade of development, destroying physical and social infrastructure, from roads and bridges to hospitals and school, and devastating agricultural industries".

The Minister encouraged the UN to continue its capacity-building efforts for Caribbean SIDS. She ended her presentation by calling for comprehensive and collaborative support from the UN system as the subregion makes its case in the various fora in anticipation of a new post-2015 sustainable development agenda. ■

EXPLORING RUSTIC GUYANA



Photo courtesy Annette Arjoon

Young Amerindian dancers

The allure of the 'sun, sand and sea' tourism in Latin America and the Caribbean has traditionally been irresistible for many travellers. However, globally, the conservation thrust that seeks to secure economic benefits is the new trend due to threats by climate change and negative human impact on the environment. Reflecting on mass tourism, many studies confirm the detrimental effects of this type of tourism on several destinations in the medium to long term, despite short term economic benefits. This forms a strong case for developing the ecotourism product.

Ecotourism is built on the principles of cultural and environmental awareness, through conservation practices that empower local communities and promote sustainable travel. Ecotourism is defined by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people."¹

It was with the adoption of the JPOI on the global stage at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 Johannesburg, South Africa, that states reaffirmed that SIDS were a special case.

Although many places and countries market their destinations as eco-spots, this can be misleading. Ecotourism captures not only environmental sensitivity but ensures the sustainability of the local community and enhances the visitor's intrinsic feelings as well. Therefore, an ecotourist is a person who participates fully in their experience gaining a greater understanding for nature and the local society leaving deeply enriched from that experience.

In South America, countries such as Peru and Brazil have been hailed as ecotourism hotspots. But, Guyana offers a truly unique product of natural rainforests, majestic waterfalls, an abundance of wildlife, and an intriguing culture.

Guyana can be described as an emerging eco-tourism destination. Recognizing their valuable product, this country has responded by establishing eco-lodges and destinations specially tailored to the avid ecotourist.

Guyana is a large expanse of land encompassing a staggering 214,999 square kilometres, which is largely covered by pristine forest (approximately 80%). According to 2012 figures the estimated population of Guyana is 795,369 persons, but as large parts are uninhabited, this country has an extremely low population density. About 90 per cent of the population lives on the narrow coastal strip which represents 5 per cent of the total land area, thus exerting tremendous pressure on their coastal areas. Although only 9.4 per cent of the population lives in the rural interior, the traditional indigenous culture resonates throughout the glorious interior. The majority of nine Amerindian tribes live in the hinterland; these indigenous people are classed as a separate ethnic race and live in remote villages deep within the forest. They are committed to a reserved and traditional lifestyle and, as the original inhabitants of Guyana, have a rich and diverse heritage.

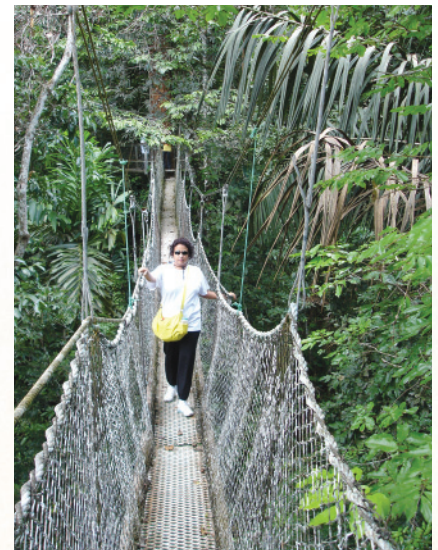
Perhaps it is the Amerindian's symbiotic lifestyle with the forest combined with lack of settlement that has rendered much of the land and forest inaccessible. Thus, the hinterland of Guyana remains mostly untouched, further allowing biodiversity to flourish and has given Guyana its

natural treasures.

Some of these are:

Kaieteur Falls

Guyana is home to the famous Kaieteur Falls, the world's longest single drop waterfall by volume. The falls are located in the heart of the forest and most visitors use a small aeroplane to visit the site. Once at the site, often times, the guide is an Amerindian.



Charmaine Gomes, ECLAC

The Iwokrama Canopy Walkway

Iwokrama Forest

The Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development² is truly unique, proving that a balance between research, conservation and economic activity is possible.

► (continued on page 11)

¹ The International Ecotourism Society at www.ecotourism.org

² <http://www.iwokrama.org/>

THE MINING SECTOR IN GUYANA: ITS IMPACT ON GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY



Photo courtesy Amette Ajioun

The mining industry in Guyana has a long history that is characterised by the production¹ of gold, diamond and bauxite. Early European settlers were drawn to Guyana by myths of “El Dorado” in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, gold was only discovered in the 1840s; since that initial rush, gold has remained important to the Guyanese economy. Though the industry was dominated by small-scale miners or “porkknockers”, it also included larger-scale producers since 1980 and especially in 1990s, when a joint venture of big Canadian companies came into the sector.

Diamond mining began with the discovery of precious stones in 1887. By the year 2000, Guyana was ranked as the 22nd largest diamond producer in the world. Production is dominated by medium scale miners that mainly produce diamonds for industrial use.

With respect to bauxite, foreign direct investment made bauxite mining possible in Guyana in the 1920s. The bauxite produced in Guyana is used for refractory, abrasive and chemical production processes. In the 1970s the industry was nationalised; since then it has struggled with falling prices and international competition. In the late 1980s the government attempted to re-privatise the industry, although the progress of the privatisation has been slow.

Today, mining is one of the largest sectors in Guyana, with more than 10 percent contribution to the country’s GDP. Given the significant impacts that the sector can have on the Guyanese economy, the sector should be seen not only as a main contributor to the economic growth, but due to its impact on the environment, as a factor which may affect the economy’s sustainability.

In the macroeconomic context, the mining sector has been a main driving force for the recent robust economic

growth of Guyana². The real GDP growth rates of the country in the last three years were 5.4%, 4.8% and 4.7% for 2011, 2012 and 2013, respectively, which was significant relative to other Caribbean countries. During the same period, the mining sector grew 19.2%, 14.5% and 11.8% respectively.

The sector has also contributed to foreign exchange earnings. In 2012, for example, the sum of gold and bauxite exports accounted for 62.1% of the economy’s total merchandise export earnings. A close look at the output of each mineral resource shows that the production of gold has been steadily increasing in the last three decades, while output of bauxite and diamonds experienced fluctuations. In 1980, gold output was only 11,003 Oz, and increased to 105,289 Oz in 2000 and 308,438 Oz in 2010³. The recent increase of the gold output was due to a steep rise in its price in the world market. It should be noted, however, that the output and export of gold significantly increased in 2013 as well, despite the fall of its price in the world market⁴. The recent strong performance of the gold industry can be attributed to the expansion of small- and medium- scale miners. According to the government, the number of small- and medium scale mining as of 2010 was over 14,000 and is still increasing⁵. A significant number of these are Brazilian miners that have been investing as well in the

industry. On the other hand, industrial-scale companies are also continuing their large operations in the country. Just as a Canadian-based company announced last December, their further investment towards a large scale gold production project, the mining sector, strongly driven by the gold industry, will remain one of the main contributors to the growth of the economy in the medium term.

The Guyana Mining School and Training Centre was launched in 2012 and conducted its first set of training courses in 2013, aimed at delivering training on mining methods and operations. GGMC is also working on developing Codes of Practice on mining to give guidance to small- and medium-scale mining operations. Although monitoring mobile miners is a hard task, the international community has tried to help the government strengthen capacities of these agencies and commissions, such as the co-financing grant agreement between Environmental Protection Agency and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 2013.

The government of Guyana has embraced a concept of wider notions of development – not only macroeconomic growth but also sustainable development – hence its Low Carbon Development Strategy. Therefore, despite the challenges, it is possible to expect that the mining sector in Guyana will continue to contribute to the economy’s sustainability in the long run. ■

¹ See Colchester, Marcus, Jean La Rose and Kid James (2002). “Mining and Amerindians in Guyana.”

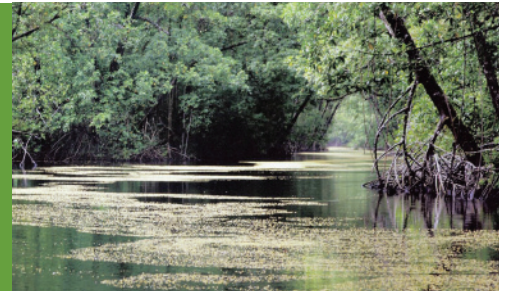
² Growth rate figures in this paragraph are from ECLAC’s Preliminary Overview.

³ Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC).

⁴ The government announced that the preliminary estimates of gold production in 2013 was 408,105 Oz, which is the record high in the history.

⁵ This figure does not include unregistered miners. A study in 2006 mentioned that the number of total small- and medium- scale miners could be over 40,000 (Roopenarine, Lomarsh (2006) “Small-scale gold mining and environmental policy challenges in Guyana: Protection or pollution”).

ECONOMIC PROSPECTS



Guyana is blessed with a variety of natural resources including gold and diamond, vast areas of arable land on which is grown sugar and rice and also considerable areas of lumber in the interior. A close look at the composition of the economy shows that agriculture, forestry and fishing contribute some 19.8% of the GDP, followed by mining and quarrying of 11.8%, wholesale and retail 14.4%, with all other sectors contributing less than 10%.

While the global economic crisis has had a negative impact on many countries in the Caribbean, Guyana has been fortunate in being able to avoid the more severe aspects. The elevated commodity prices has helped Guyana to generate substantial growth rates.

It is anticipated that growth will be in excess of 4% as well in 2014. As a result the percapita income of the population has also improved and this is exhibited in a steady improvement in the Human development index (HDI) which is a measure of progress. The high commodity prices in mining, especially gold has attracted considerable foreign direct investment (FDI) into Guyana in the last few years and this has been a source of foreign exchange in addition to export

agriculture (mainly sugar and rice).

Another important source of foreign exchange is from remittances from the Guyana diaspora mainly located in the United States of America and Canada. The size of remittances as a share of FDI was on average 108.8% from 1980-2008. While emigration is often conceived of as a loss of skills and expertise, the fact that this diaspora exists is an opportunity if persons abroad can be persuaded to participate in development related activities.

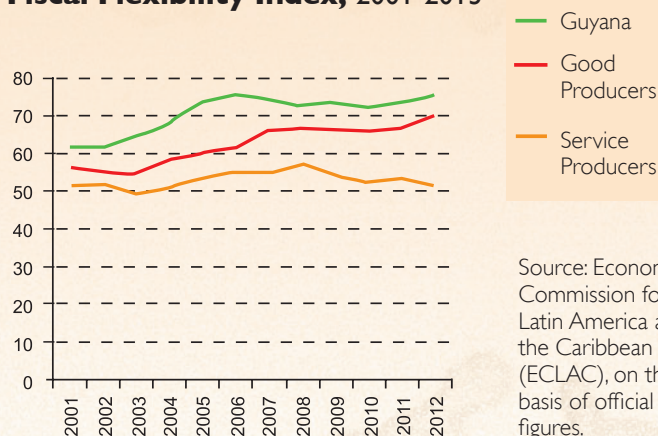
The economic conditions have been stable with exchange rates being relatively predictable and expected low levels of inflation. At the same time while the public debt level is relatively high at 60% of GDP, it has been in decline for some time mainly due to the fact that a large

share of Guyana's debt was multilateral and under the Highly Indebted Poor Country initiative, (HIPC) Guyana received some US\$256 million in debt forgiveness. Guyana has also benefited from the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) after graduation from the HIPC category due to rising percapita income, and a series of debt compensation programmes with Venezuela during 2012-2013. The country has also been sustaining large fiscal deficits and this has been partly due to government investment in infrastructure and in capital works that are likely to bring long term benefits. Notwithstanding the degree of fiscal flexibility¹ is high, relative to the goods and service-producing economies in the Caribbean, which means that there is an ability on the fiscal side to address external shocks. (Figure 1).

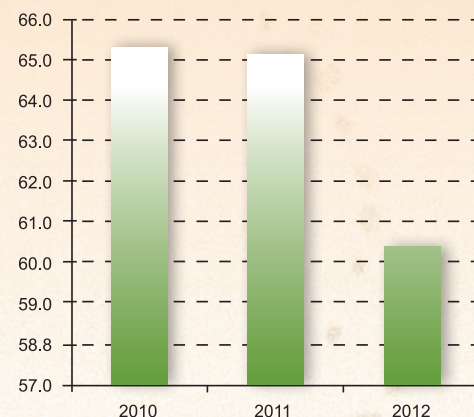
► (continued on page 11)

FIGURE I

Fiscal Flexibility Index, 2001-2013



Guyana Public Debt (percent of GDP)



¹ Fiscal flexibility is the ratio of non obligated expenditures to total expenditure.

EXPANDING TRADE AND INTEGRATION BETWEEN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



Photo courtesy Amette Aijoon

The Republic of Guyana is located on the northern coast of South America and is bordered on the east by Suriname, to the west by Venezuela and to the south by Brazil. Despite having roughly 75 percent of land area covered by forest, Guyana is a water-rich country with numerous rivers flowing into the Atlantic Ocean, generally in a northward direction. The Essequibo, the country's major river, runs from the Brazilian border in the south to a wide delta west of Georgetown.

The road network, though simple, connects Guyana with its South American neighbours, providing commercial access to Suriname, Brazil and Venezuela. Further, development cooperation initiatives between Brazil and Guyana have focused on enhancing Guyana's trade-related infrastructure as well as increasing its competitiveness and productivity. In this regard, the paving of the Linden/Lethem highway as well as port infrastructure and hydro-electric projects are in the pipeline. In addition, the process of establishing transportation networks through the Amazon is currently proceeding apace. In practical ways, by increasing the ease of access for containerized trucks and other ground transport to all these directions, the highway would facilitate increased trade between Brazil, South America, and the Caribbean.

Collectively, these initiatives are seen as fundamental antecedents to the expansion of bilateral trade between, and furthering the economic integration of, not only these two South American countries but Latin America and the Caribbean in general.

Guyana also has membership in multiple organizations inclusive of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (OTCA). Guyana's transregional ties, established through membership in a myriad of regional integration configurations, undoubtedly position it to play a pivotal role in facilitating dialogue on issues such as international trade and economic development, which are critical for furthering integration between Latin America and the Caribbean.

The CELAC, ACS, UNASUR and CARICOM are all engaging in dialogue and internal negotiations with regard to policy-setting towards furthering both trade and integration among their member states. Its strategic location, stable economic milieu and strong political ties with both the Caribbean and South America economies undoubtedly position Guyana as the natural interlocutor for trade and integration between the two regions. Through interlocking memberships, it has the potential to become a production and transshipment hub between Latin America and the Caribbean.

The proverbial language "barrier", which divides the English and Spanish-speaking economies of the Western Hemisphere, has traditionally been viewed as a formidable impediment to trade and investment between South American and the Caribbean. Guyana, as the only English-speaking South American nation, and as a Member of the Caribbean Community, can use its unique position as a platform to bridge this gap. The Caribbean Community's enshrined right of establishment allows Community investors to situate commercial entities

in Guyana for the purpose of producing for export to South American economies or importing for distribution; capitalizing on Guyana's trade and cooperation agreements, as well as transportation networks with its South American neighbours to expand bilateral trade between the two sub-regions.

Moreover, Guyana participates in the dialogue on trade facilitation and harmonization of customs procedures and business visas in the forum of the ACS. The momentum from these discussions within the space provided by the ACS can also be used by Guyana to propel these critical twin issues forward and encourage broader intra-regional cooperation between CARICOM and UNASUR. This is important since trade facilitation, customs efficiency and logistics costs are important determinants of competitiveness and trade performance.

Accordingly, Guyana's accelerated investment in trade-related public goods, particularly in the areas of transport and energy, coupled with its active involvement in South American integration processes, provide a much needed avenue for other Caribbean economies to exploit trade and export opportunities, while seeking to transform production systems to construct more robust trade structures where needed.

With the inability of the CARICOM Single Market to deliver the intended welfare gains thus far, many Member States grappling with fiscal challenges, and progress towards establishing a single economy within the Caribbean Community essentially stalled; whilst

► (continued on page 11)

TOURISM PERFORMANCE AND PROSPECTS



Photo courtesy Annette Arjoon

Guyana is well recognized as a traditional producer of both agricultural commodities and minerals. These include rice, sugar, timber and livestock, as well as bauxite and gold. Output from these sectors has been sufficiently strong to stimulate an average GDP growth rate of 4.3% since 2006. But Guyana has also been taking steady steps to grow its tourism sector, and after more than a decade of concerted efforts, the evidence suggests that these interventions are beginning to bear fruit. In this review, the strategic context for the development of tourism is examined, and the performance of the sector to date is reviewed. The long run growth potential of Guyana's tourism is also explored, in the context of the evolution of the sector in the Caribbean.

Guyana, as a continental territory, is unlike its Caribbean island neighbours in terms of its tourism offerings. While not possessed of palm-fringed beaches, coral reefs and blue scenic coastlines, the country is blessed an impressive range of natural and cultural assets, including extensive rainforests, mountains, large rivers, waterfalls, and rich plant and animal biodiversity. Moreover the presence of indigenous communities adds to the rich cultural milieu, thus providing visitors with good opportunities for an enhanced ecological and cultural experience. It is this factor along with the need to further diversify the economy which has informed the country's thrust towards the development of its tourism sector.

By way of strategic context, tourism was first identified as a key development pillar for Guyana in its National Development Strategy in 1996, and targeted for further development in the National Competitiveness Strategy in 2006. The sector was expected to benefit the wider economy through the generation of foreign exchange, employment creation, and support to the sustainable use of the country's natural resources. Over the period, the overarching strategic objective was therefore crafted to be one of "pursuing high quality, up-market

eco-tourism in controlled numbers that do not exceed scientifically determined carrying capacities of interior sites"¹.

Since the elaboration of this strategy, Guyana has made good progress in moving toward these policy goals. A specific Ministry of Tourism or variants of it has been established with ministerial responsibility for the sector, while the Guyana Tourism Authority was set up. A Tourism Studies Unit was also introduced at the University of Guyana, and private stakeholders were encouraged to organize themselves into the Tourism Association of Guyana. Over the past decade, efforts in destination management have also yielded results, so that Guyana has received exposure on renowned international television channels such as the BBC, The Travel Channel, the Discovery Channel and CBS Corporation in the United States.

As noted by the Tourism Department of the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, since 2006 an international conference centre, an Olympic swimming pool and a cricket stadium have been constructed. Additionally, bridges have been built across rivers at strategic locations to facilitate easier access to the interior, while the number of restaurants and nightclubs has increased significantly within Georgetown, the capital city. Possibly, the most significant indicator of the growth of the tourism sector in Guyana has been the expansion of the country's room stock which has increased from 1,500 to 2,500 rooms between 2006 and 2012. Finally, Guyana's efforts in tourism have been closely integrated with the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy, in which eco-tourism and other sustainable tourism activities have been identified for development support. ■

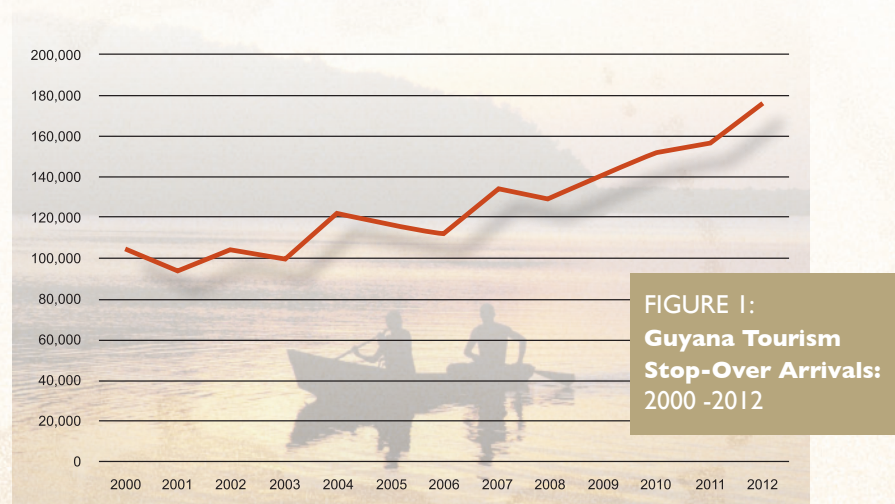


FIGURE I:
Guyana Tourism
Stop-Over Arrivals:
2000 -2012

¹ Guyana National Development Strategy, 2006

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN GUYANA



Photo courtesy Amette-Ajoom

Gender inequality and women's empowerment have been at the centre of policy debates on human development for the past few decades. This has resulted in dialogue, research and advocacy at the national and regional levels which illustrate the notion that reducing inequalities and inherent discrimination against women leads to further development.

At an expert group meeting hosted by ECLAC on unpaid work and gender in the Caribbean, that was held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2013, it was acknowledged that the importance of fully recognizing women's economic contributions to all forms of productive work, both paid and unpaid, is a critical precondition for achieving gender equality. However, in the Caribbean subregion, the economic value of women's unpaid work is not recognized and as a result it is not reflected in the system of national accounts.

Whilst governments have been charged with developing inequality-reducing policies, the champions of much of the advocacy work to generate the evidence comprise a core group of individual activists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), many of whom work in partnership with governments. A growing trend in the Caribbean region is for governments to provide annual financial subventions to NGOs to assist with implementation of programmatic activities.

One such NGO is the Red Thread Women's Development Organization of Guyana, which is well known for its support, education, and advocacy for victims of various forms of violence and for the lowest-waged sectors of women. Founded in the 1980s, Red Thread focused much of its attention on income generating activities which provided an

income for women to be more empowered. The name of the organization itself derives from the embroidery the women made to sell.

The research work of Red Thread is perhaps one of the most outstanding of their activities. In early 2002-2004, with the assistance of the International Women Count Network, Red Thread conducted the first systematic time-use survey in Guyana and the Caribbean amongst grassroots women to measure the contribution of women's unpaid work in the household. The NGO was critical of the fact that the fundamental work that women perform to ensure the continuation of Caribbean societies remained uncounted and invisible, in spite of the thirty years of conferences, papers and international commitments about women's unwaged work.

The survey was conducted amongst women from all racial groups, including women who were unable to read and write. The highlights from the findings showed that women from all racial/ethnic groups had a typical working day which "ranged from 14 to 18 hours, with little help from anyone, often with minimal or unreliable technology, limited access to amenities and with very little leisure or free time for themselves". The limited access to amenities included the lack of pipe borne water and electricity, which impacted on the length of their day and the types of activities in which they engaged.

Red Thread, in its analysis, was critical of the lack of attention paid to the goal of measuring and valuing women's unpaid work won by governments at the Beijing

Conference and lamented the fact that women's work continued to be hidden. Several reasons were given for this, namely the fact that (i) sexism continues to trivialise and refuses to acknowledge the importance of what women are doing and (ii) the design and outcome of surveys are increasingly determined by agendas that would push women into waged jobs on the pretext that this would deal with poverty. Such agendas justify this policy by trying to show that waged work can be easily fitted in with housework ... flying in the face of universal experience, including of women's desperate overwork, even before this second job for wages".¹

This seminal research has provided a glimpse of reproductive and productive work that women perform on a daily basis in one Caribbean country. As such, it is time for authorities in the Caribbean to begin the regular conduct of time-use surveys in order to understand how unpaid work contributes to the national economies. Use of time-use statistics could also assist in effectively addressing social security gaps, income gaps and care policies. Time use statistics and studies can also be used to measure the contribution of women to gross domestic product (GDP), to provide the information necessary to promote gender sensitive policy, and to change the perception of women's work and their role in the society and their contribution to national production.

It is worthy to note that one of the founding members and Head of Red Thread, Ms. Karen De Souza was earlier this year selected as one of the 2014 Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awardees for Excellence for Public and Civic Contribution. ■

¹ Red Thread report on Time Use Survey by the International Count Network, 30 November 2004.

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EXPLORING RUSTIC GUYANA

Visitors and researchers alike are eager to visit Iwokrama to experience the vast biodiversity and are treated to a multitude of butterflies, jaguars, birds and turtles. The centre invites local community members to participate in tourism and research activities and the funds realised from activities are funnelled into capacity building, with a focus on environmental stewardship and social and management skills in the youth.

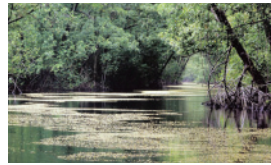
Rupununi Region

Visitors can lose themselves in the beauty of the open savannah on a jeep ride to the Dadanawa Ranch in South Rupununi. The founders of the ranch work closely with local communities and organize conservation programmes.

In essence, Guyana has a diverse and rich culture and with more than 800 species of birds and over 1000 species of plants, is truly an ecotourist's dream. As an emerging ecotourism destination, it is likely that many more lodges and sites may be developed in the future.

However, it is noteworthy that despite the country's increasing popularity, the principles of ecotourism – of conservation, low environmental impact and benefit to local and indigenous people – must be adhered to so as to ensure that tourism development does not stain the natural beauty of rustic Guyana. ■

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ECONOMIC PROSPECTS

Government investment in the last five years has tended to outstrip private domestic investment.

With respect to forest resources, Guyana has been pursuing a Low Carbon Development Strategy in concert with the Norwegian government that involves a commitment by Norway to provide the country with up to US\$250 million by 2015 for not destroying the forests but using the resource more sustainably. Guyana has earned a total of US \$115 million.

Guyana is also mitigating against climate change through increased development of the renewable energy sector. For example, an initiative to utilise the Amaila Falls to generate hydroelectric power is being discussed with the international community and the country has been researching the use of biodiesel in the transport sector. These initiatives together with the proposed liberalisation of the telecommunications sector and rationalisation of public enterprises should help Guyana to maintain its robust economic performance. ■

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EXPANDING TRADE AND INTEGRATION BETWEEN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



many Latin American economies are now on the ascendency, it may be prudent for the Region to reconsider its preferred path towards achieving economic convergence. Moving forward, broadening and deepening trade and economic integration with Latin American economies should undoubtedly be an essential element of any modality for generating the trade-led economic growth many Caribbean economies so desperately seek.

Guyana, with its strategic location, diversity of resources, interlocking membership in Caribbean and South American regional integration configurations, increasingly robust trade-related infrastructure and improving macro-economic performance, is therefore ideally poised to be a central player in any process to deepen Caribbean-Latin American integration. Moreover, it should be seen as the natural interlocutor, pivotal player and gateway to increasing commerce and strengthening economic ties between two sub-regions; and embraced, championed even, as the natural conduit for expanding trade and strengthening integration between South America and the Caribbean. ■

LIST of Recent ECLAC Documents and Publications

Listed by Symbol Number, Date and Title

No. W.4

December 2013

An assessment of fiscal and regulatory barriers to the deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies in Saint Lucia

No. L.426

November 2013

Report of the subregional workshop on information and communication technologies for disaster risk management in the Caribbean

No. L.415

October 2013

Report of the expert group meeting to explore and promote wider use of the results of the 2010 population and housing census

UPCOMING EVENTS 2nd QUARTER 2014

15 April, 2014

Sixth meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Port of Spain, **Trinidad and Tobago**.

23 - 24 April, 2014

Third Caribbean Development Roundtable. Kingston, **Jamaica**.

24 April, 2014

International Year of SIDS (High-level event). Kingston, **Jamaica**.

25 April, 2014

Twenty-fifth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee. Kingston, **Jamaica**.

5 - 9 May, 2014

Thirty-fifth session of ECLAC. Lima, **Peru**.



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