



Caribbean Preparatory Meeting to the  
Annual Ministerial Review (AMR)  
Joint meeting of the UNDP Office for Barbados and the OECS  
and ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean  
in collaboration with the Government of Barbados  
Christ Church, Barbados  
14 June 2007

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## **REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REVIEW**

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## **REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REVIEW**

### **Background**

The Caribbean Preparatory Meeting of the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)<sup>1</sup> was held at United Nations House, Barbados, on Thursday 14 June 2007.

The meeting was hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in collaboration with the Government of Barbados.

The opening ceremony was chaired by Ms. Leisa Perch, UNDP Programme Manager, Poverty, HIV/AIDS and Gender Relations. Remarks were made by Dr. Rosina Wiltshire, UNDP Resident Representative and United Nations Resident Coordinator (Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean); Mr. Neil Pierre, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean; and Ms. Simone Rudder, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Barbados.

The following countries were represented: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

Organizations represented at the meeting were: the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI).

The following United Nations agencies were represented: UNDP, ECLAC, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The objectives of the meeting were to advance the agreed upon United Nations Development Agenda, at the national and regional levels through:

- (a) An exchange of views by governmental actors on key social development issues;
- (b) An increased understanding of countries' policies and practices through sharing best examples of progress and identifying constraints to achieving the MDGs and other development goals;
- (c) Provision of a forum for their preparations for the AMR scheduled for July 2007;  
and
- (d) Provision of a forum in which governments can review outcomes of relevant preparatory meetings that could lead to further collaborative action.

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<sup>1</sup> The AMR was formed in 2005 to monitor governments' progress towards the IADGs, including the MDGs.

### **Agenda item 1: Welcome and opening**

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Dr. Rosina Wilshire, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Systems and Resident Representative UNDP, Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), reiterated that the ECOSOC presentation provided Barbados with an “exceptional and unique platform to present a number of critical issues facing Barbados as a Small Island Developing State, the Caribbean in general and also to highlight the development challenges of the Latin American and Caribbean region”. She noted that the high development indices recorded by Caribbean countries in the Human Development Report “mask many issues which continue to challenge and hinder sustainable and long-term development including Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), high youth unemployment, crime, and violence against women”.

Mr. Neil Pierre, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, noted that the meeting was an excellent forum for regional governments to highlight their own experiences in relation to efforts to achieve the MDGs as well as to identify useful inputs which could inform local programming. He noted that this information would also be very useful as regional governments made their own preparations to ensure the fullest participation and representation of the regional issues at the AMR. He reminded governments of the theme of the upcoming ECOSOC forum, “Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development”.

Ms. Simone Rudder of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Barbados, in her opening remarks, noted the need for continued international support to sustaining the achievements made by the Government of Barbados; and the need for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) agenda to be fully operationalized within the context of the Millennium Development Goals.

The meeting agreed to the agenda as follows:

1. Opening
2. Presentation of NVP – Draft Barbados Report
3. Exploration of key Caribbean issues for achieving the MDGs
4. The Way Forward
5. Closing

### **Agenda item 2: The NVP – Draft Barbados report**

The representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade acknowledged the support provided by UNDP and the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in the preparation of the Barbados Report. The lead role played by the Ministry of Social Transformation (Barbados) was also acknowledged. She then walked the meeting through the draft report, highlighting what was identified as points of interest.

The meeting was informed that the primary focus of the National Voluntary Presentation (NVP) would be national but that this would be supplemented with regional information in order to better highlight the challenges peculiar to regional SIDS.

In addition, the delegates were made aware that the focus of the AMR would be on issues of poverty, hunger and food security and strengthening global partnerships to achieve the development goals, whereas the scope of the Barbados NVP report would be broader, to look at strategic plans employed by the Barbados Government (and regional governments) to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

The meeting was also informed that the Barbados position on financing for Caribbean SIDS would be clearly articulated at the AMR. The position was that since Caribbean countries were generally ranked middle-income, the development challenges peculiar to the subregion were not taken into account at international forums where decisions on development aid were made.

The initial areas where gaps existed, or were in need of bolstering, in the Draft Barbados Report were identified as:<sup>2</sup>

(a) Regional strategies to achieve the Internationally Agreed-upon Development Goals (IADG) (and Millennium Development Goals) – p. 69;

(b) The Way Forward: Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development (in particular to include specific short-to long-term recommendations on global support) – p. 76; and

(c) The statistical annex - p. 80.

### **Supplementary resources**

Secondary sources identified as critical to enhancing the quality of the Barbados Report were:

(a) The Global ICT Report;

(b) The MDG Progress Report on Latin America and the Caribbean;

(c) Global Competitiveness Report;

(d) Caribbean Commission on Health and Development Report; and

(e) Report of the CDB Conference on the MDGs (for quantitative and qualitative data on the MDGs).

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<sup>2</sup> It was agreed that the section entitled “Human Development: Vulnerability and the Sustainability of the MDGs”- p.19 would be re-titled “Vulnerability and the sustainability of human development and the MDGs”.

### **Agenda item 3: Caribbean issues**

#### **Poverty reduction strategies – Trinidad and Tobago**

The representative of Trinidad and Tobago made a comprehensive presentation on a “Tri-Sector Approach for the Elimination of Poverty”, a case study of the European Union (EU)-sponsored project in Trinidad and Tobago. His presentation included: a look at a number of preliminary findings of the Trinidad and Tobago 2005 Survey of Living Conditions (SLC); an overview of the Poverty Reduction Programme; and information on the Network of Civil Society Organizations and the Regional Social and the Human Development Councils. He closed by highlighting the achievements of the project.

In regard to the preliminary findings, he cautioned that the findings were still a work in progress and that they had not yet been formally approved by the Cabinet of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. He, however, indicated that preliminary results would suggest that poverty levels in the country declined relative to estimates for 1997/1998. Preliminary data suggested that whereas in 1997/1998, 8.3 per cent of the population was indigent, new data for 2005 suggested only 1.2 per cent of the population could be so defined. In addition, whereas 24 per cent of the population in 1997/1998 could be defined as poor, the data for 2005 suggested that 16.7 per cent of the population could be so defined. He cautioned that methodologies in both instances had inherent differences, but all things being equal, this is what the new data suggested. He thus felt confident that in regard to the goals of hunger and poverty, Trinidad and Tobago would achieve the MDGs.

He advanced that the decline in the poverty rate might be attributed to such factors as the upswing in the economy, the low unemployment rate which stood at approximately 4.5 per cent and the relatively large number of social programmes. In regard to the social programmes, he listed the Micro Project Fund as among one of the outstanding examples. He reported that the Fund, since its inception, had been successfully implemented in 15 municipal regions, had 285 Projects approved totaling \$6.2 million and had disbursements made to 267 Projects totaling \$5.7 million.

#### **Food security and vulnerability – Jamaica and Saint Lucia**

The presentation was a joint report from the representatives of FAO and CFNI, which covered areas including food availability, access and utilization, in the context of a stable supply and analyzed factors underlying food insecurity and vulnerability in Jamaica and Saint Lucia.

In addition to outlining the work of FAO in the Caribbean, the report advanced a number of threats to food security in the Caribbean. These were outlined as: high dependence on imports; loss of trade preferences; growing incidence of food-related illnesses; and the increasing incidence of pockets of poverty.

It was concluded that despite initiatives aimed at enhancing food security – much vulnerability and childhood malnutrition existed and this was exacerbated by poverty and inequity. Countries, where research was conducted, with high rates of childhood malnutrition

included Belize, Guyana and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Moderate levels of childhood malnutrition were found in Jamaica and Grenada and low levels of childhood malnutrition were found in Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis.

The meeting heard that the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) research (2000) conducted in 75 countries examined the main factors contributing to food (in) security/childhood malnutrition and found that although food availability was critical (26 per cent), the main factor was women's education (43 per cent); other key factors were health environment (19 per cent) and women's status (12 per cent). Thus, any strategy aimed at enhancing the well-being of children must address women's empowerment.

In order to better assess the complex nature of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (a quantitative and qualitative assessment tool) was used to show how various factors impact on household well-being and that of children. Contributing factors to food insecurity, using the case of Saint Lucia were the fact that 42 per cent of the urban poor earned less than the minimum wage; there was also a high dependency ratio – 28 per cent of households had a dependency ratio exceeding 5. Significant was the coping strategies identified which suggested that fewer child meals was one such strategy. The common issues however were: the high rates of urban vulnerability and the coping mechanisms were similar, with persons in crisis using their personal savings first and seeking a bank loan as the least used option<sup>3</sup>. Other factors were that reduction in income also resulted in the reduction in quantity and quality of meals for adults and children and the sale of assets and valuables.

### **Youth in the Caribbean: A look at selected countries – Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago**

The presentation on “Caribbean Youth: a look at selected issues,” was made by the representative of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. It sought to highlight not only a number of key issues but the data deficit which impinged on informed policy formulation. It also highlighted the current position of the subregion in regard to achieving Goal 8, Target 21 of the Millennium Development Goals. In doing so, the paper highlighted Caribbean youth issues which could impact on the achievement of the Goals. These included: the social construction of femininity and masculinity; the building or disintegrating of family bonds; issues of safety, crime and violence; the sense of identity; self-worth and esteem; the management of sexuality; and the application of social justice. Youth unemployment in the Caribbean, like that of Latin America, was in most instances more than double the average unemployment rate for adults<sup>4</sup>.

The study explored the case of the data deficit in regard to a number of the issues identified. Specifically, it was suggested that although a number of the concerns required data collected and stored through administrative functions, such as crime and violence, the quality of education and the ensuing results, and the health status of the populations, it was advanced that efforts needed to be increased to ensure that these data sets were made available to policy makers

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<sup>3</sup> The consensus was that this phenomenon may not reflect a preference but may be a reflection of the difficulty vulnerable groups face when seeking to access credit.

<sup>4</sup> ECLAC (2005) The Millennium Development Goals: A Latin American and Caribbean Perspective.

in a timely manner so as to improve decision-making and the monitoring of the Development Goals. In regard to data which required survey methodologies to collect, such as employment levels, and changing household structure, it was necessary not just to increase frequency of the collection of these data, but to strengthen capacity in the analysis of the data and ensure data dissemination.

Data was presented for three countries drawn from the 2000/2001 Population and Household Census to illustrate the position of youth in regard to the key issue in Goal 8 – Develop a Global Partnership for Development, target number 21, which states “in cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth”. In focusing on action which could impact on the achievement of this target, the ECLAC representative turned her attention to three aspects of the status of youths in the Caribbean: (a) the educational attainment of the youth population; (b) the occupational group in which young persons were employed; and (c) their participation in education and training. The countries of Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago were selected for examination.

In regard to highest educational qualification attained, when the three countries were examined, Saint Lucia appeared to have the highest proportion of young males and females in both categories 15-19 and 20–24 with no reported educational qualification (see presentation attached in Annex 2). This did not augur well for the quality of employment which these groups could attain in the future, as educational qualification was a key determinant of the quality of the category and quality of employment to be enjoyed. The data for Trinidad and Tobago suggested that in regard to occupational category, the majority of employed young males in the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups were found in the elementary category of employment. This group comprised predominantly unskilled labour. Young women predominated in the clerical, services and sales categories.

Following the presentations the floor was open for discussion. The meeting suggested that regional strategies should include a discussion on both the threats and the regional resilience to development. The following points were highlighted:

(a) Despite the middle-income status of Caribbean States they remained vulnerable with lack of resilience to natural hazards<sup>5</sup>, external global shocks, drug trafficking and use, and violence;

(b) The need for development strategies to encompass programmes for enhanced child protection and early childhood development which is linked to enhanced well-being of the population and thus reduction of societal ills including crime and violence;

(c) The delegates agreed that there should be greater focus by national governments on increasing the number of university graduates to ensure adequate numbers of highly-skilled employees;

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<sup>5</sup> The discussion centred on the most recent example of the rapid erosion of development gains as a result of natural hazards - the impact of Hurricane Ivan on countries of the Eastern Caribbean and Grenada in particular, September 2004. In Grenada thousands were left homeless and jobless and their key export crop, nutmeg, was severely affected. In less than 24 hours the development gains of decades were erased.



- (d) The need for enhanced communication and information sharing among regional countries to enable synergies on development initiatives;
- (e) The role of civil society and the private sector should be highlighted;
- (f) The role of the United Nations and their collaborative efforts which will be enhanced by the planned harmonization of their programme cycles by 2012;
- (g) Delegates agreed that the achievement of Goal 8 was not limited to aid but included political will and commitment from national governments and the private sector;
- (h) Development should be seen from a gender perspective and not limited to a male or female-centred perspective;
- (i) The regional framework should be included to highlight regional cooperation on development including – Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) and Caribbean Cooperation in Health (CCH);
- (j) The discussion on non-communicable diseases was critical to a regional discussion on development as various non-communicable diseases were the top five causes of death in the subregion. So a discussion on the health challenges accompanying development and relevant strategies for well-being must be addressed;
- (k) Governance as regards governments' ability to deliver services in a culture of trust as it was impossible to efficiently serve constituents;
- (l) The challenges of rural to urban migration and the resulting food insecurity among vulnerable groups;
- (m) The root causes of crime, violence and other negative behaviours among youth;
- (n) The impact of deportees and their integration into Caribbean societies in the development process;
- (o) Increased attention must be paid to the contribution made by workers in the informal sector and to mechanisms to enhance their security; and
- (p) The lack of a tradition of Research and Development in the development planning process.

### **Data management**

- (a) It was agreed that the statistical annex should not be seen as an appendix to the Barbados report but as an integral part of the process, focusing on the data management process as opposed to limited to data availability and quality concerns.

(b) The delegates agreed that the data available was not always comparable across years or across countries but that there was much data available. The challenge to accessing the data was often due to a lack of proper data management.

(c) The delegates agreed that there was significant progress being made in the subregion to enhance the data management process - including Support to Poverty Assessment and Reduction (SPARC), SLCs, Dev Info, Country Poverty Assessments (CPAs).

(d) The data management process needed to be de-politicised and legislation surrounding the use of data modernized.

(e) National governments must be encouraged to use research findings to guide policy direction.

(f) Need for increased training on data analysis.

(g) The delegates agreed that there was greater need for skills-building and sustainable management of skilled human resources.

(h) The need to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals using quantitative and qualitative tools.

### **Best practices**

The meeting identified a number of regional best practices:

(a) The strengthening of the Monitoring and Evaluation environment in Saint Lucia, to promote a culture of evidence-based planning and programming using, through the use of various complementary systems for data management, Helen Info, Dev Info and SPARC in the Caribbean;

(b) The Antigua and Barbuda Millennium Development Goals Media Sub-committee – the rationale for the establishment of this sub-committee was to address the lack of national buy-in to the Millennium Development Goals which were seen as a United Nations agenda. The Media Sub-Committee develops communication strategies to encourage national ownership of the development process. The pursuit of national development goals falls under one ministry working on the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) and the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) to form an integrated approach to meeting development goals under the slogan “Our Goals, Our Development, our Country”;

(c) The Social Partnership Arrangement of Barbados (tri-partite - Government, Labour and Private sector) involving collaborative efforts by leaders of the various constituents to achieve a national development agenda;

(d) The decentralization of poverty reduction initiatives undertaken by Trinidad and Tobago; and

(e) The continuous monitoring of poverty status and social conditions through the conduct of SLCs and the resulting evidence-based policy processes as undertaken by Jamaica.

**Agenda item 4:  
The Way Forward: Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty  
and hunger including through the global partnership for development**

**Caribbean participation in the AMR**

The delegates agreed there should be strong numerical representation to ensure that the regional perspective could be presented. Should a representative from capital not be attending the AMR, a request would be made to have the input compiled in capital and delivered by one of the country representatives based in Geneva.

**Achieving Goal 8**

***Building resilience***

(a) Attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and providing an enabling environment for the development of new and creative business ventures was identified as necessary.

***Strengthening policies and programmes***

(a) Policies to enhance well-being of children including emphasis on early childhood development and child protection;

(b) Policies to encourage a culture of entrepreneurship;

(c) Policies to increase numbers accessing tertiary level education; and

(d) Commitment to de-politicising the data management process.

***Strengthening partnerships***

(a) Enhanced linkages with civil society and the private sector;

(b) Increased regional organization support to the process of data management;

(c) Enhanced role of the media; and

(d) Increased and deepened support to qualitative research on the youth and factors contributing to negative behaviours, poverty alleviation, support to the process of developing measures to monitor the quality of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

***What can the global community do?***

(a) Consider the peculiar needs of Caribbean SIDS and vulnerabilities in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) decision-making processes; and

(b) Provide financial and technical assistance to facilitate the development of social provisioning for deportees, non-communicable (development) diseases, governance as it relates to service delivery and trust, research and development, food security and diversification and the informal sector.

***The way forward***

The meeting used the social development matrix (Annex 2), as a guide to the discussion of the way forward and interagency collaboration in support of Caribbean governments.

**Agenda item 5: Closing**

The meeting took note of the outcomes of the Regional Preparatory Meeting hosted by the Government of Brazil on May 17-18 2007. One of the key messages emerging from this forum was the need for the Latin American and Caribbean region to carry forward concrete and specific development issues to the AMR.

The early position taken was that in order to achieve the IADGs and Millennium Development Goals was that there had been much discussion on Goals 1-7 (or Goals 1-7+), but that achieving these would not be possible without first achieving Goal 8. It was also agreed that the development agenda of the region should be on deepening and broadening progress regarding international commitments made by governments and not limited to achieving the “minimal” Millennium Development Goals.

The meeting agreed that during this period the region had significant opportunities to demonstrate leadership and political and economic commitment, at an international level with representation at several international forums:

- (a) Barbados has become a member of ECOSOC;
- (b) Antigua and Barbuda will sit on the Board of UNICEF; and
- (c) Antigua and Barbuda is slated to take up the Chairmanship of G-77.

In closing, the meeting expressed its thanks to the Government of Barbados for sharing its draft NVP, and the other presenters for their studies on the situation of youth in the Caribbean, issues of vulnerability and hunger and malnutrition in the Caribbean, and poverty.

The meeting concluded with the usual exchange of courtesies.

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Annex 2

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MATRIX  
FOR ADVANCING THE SOCIAL AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CARIBBEAN SIDS**

<b>Broad Area for Consideration</b>	<b>Recommended Approach</b>	<b>Supporting Regional Partners</b>
Sustaining Investment in Human Capital	i. Strengthen cohesion in poverty reduction programming; ii. Enable the formal sector; iii. Ensure quality education and skills training are available; iv. Embark on public education programmes to communicate the social concerns of communicable and non-communicable diseases, particularly the impact of productivity and economic and social crisis.	CDB CARICOM OECS ILO DFID UNDP UWI FAO CFNI PAHO UNESCO ECLAC
Redesigning Social Integration and Inclusion Policies	i. Address the causes and consequences of crime and violence; ii. Deepen the thrust for gender equity and equality; iii. Reduce inequality and promote social justice; iv. Reduce stigma in HIV/AIDS, increasing prevention, treatment and care; v. Ensure social provisioning for deportees; vi. Provide support for the Kingston Accord which support the promotion of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities; vii. Address issues of youth development.	CARICOM OECS UNECLAC UNDP UNIFEM UWI UNAIDS CDB UNICEF



<b>Broad Area for Consideration</b>	<b>Recommended Approach</b>	<b>Supporting Regional Partners</b>
Extending Social Protection and Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Seek to reduce the proportion of children living in poverty;</li> <li>ii. Reduce the risk of natural disasters;</li> <li>iii. Extend coverage of social security to include the self-employed and those in the informal sector;</li> <li>iv. Consider the use of mobile national insurance offices to increase coverage;</li> <li>v. Reform public health systems to increase quality, efficiency and availability.</li> </ul>	CARICOM OECS CDERA UNICEF UNECLAC UNDP PAHO/WHO
Ensuring evidence-based social protection and provisioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Collect household data on regular basis to assess how households address poverty, vulnerability and the effectiveness of social protection instruments;</li> <li>ii. Collect labour market data on a regular basis, including information on skills;</li> <li>iii. Engage in social impact assessments of poverty initiatives;</li> <li>iv. Develop strong, transparent and effective monitoring and evaluation tools for social protection initiatives;</li> <li>v. Support policy analysis and research.</li> </ul>	CDB CARICOM OECS ILO UNECLAC DFID UNDP
Strengthening the enabling environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Introduce Policy Analysis Units in Ministries with responsibility for Social Development;</li> <li>ii. Strengthen the capacity of Ministries with responsibility for social development through examination of internal structures and functioning and ensure best use of personnel attached;</li> <li>iii. Share best practices of Management of Social Development programming within and across the region;</li> <li>iv. Review legislation (with a view to regional harmonization) that addresses social protection, in light of the free movement of persons in the CSME.</li> </ul>	CARICOM OCES UNECLAC UNDP WB CDB