



United Nations

ECLAC

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN

# FOCUS

Magazine of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC)

A stylized map of the Caribbean region, rendered in shades of green and white, with a grid overlay. The map shows the outlines of the islands and the surrounding sea.

## MONITORING THE SDGs IN THE CARIBBEAN

ISSUE 1 / JANUARY - MARCH 2016

## ABOUT ECLAC/CDCC

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 Organisation's mandate. At present, the overarching articulation of this mandate is the United Nations Sustainable 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 specialization 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.

### MEMBER COUNTRIES

Antigua and Barbuda	Haiti
The Bahamas	Jamaica
Barbados	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Belize	Saint Lucia
Cuba	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Dominica	Suriname
Dominican Republic	Trinidad and Tobago
Grenada	
Guyana	

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

Anguilla
Aruba
Bermuda
British Virgin Islands
Cayman Islands
Curaçao
Guadeloupe
Martinique
Montserrat
Puerto Rico
Turks and Caicos Islands
United States Virgin Islands

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## DIRECTOR'S DESK:

# MONITORING THE SDGs IN THE CARIBBEAN

On 1 January 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) succeeded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the new set of Internationally-Agreed Development Goals (IADGs) that will serve as yardsticks for global development efforts for the next 15 years.

**T**he SDGs provide a platform for advancing the achievements recorded with the MDGs while making development broader in scope than it was under the MDGs. Moving from eight goals and 22 targets under the MDGs, nations and indeed the world are now pursuing an ambitious agenda for sustainable development with 17 goals and 169 targets.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides yet another opportunity for the Caribbean to further its sustainable development vision. Since the Barbados Programme of Action to the SAMOA Pathway, the peculiarities of and challenges to sustainable development in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including those of the Caribbean, have been emphasized. In recent times, however, the international community has been challenging SIDS and other developing countries to take ownership of their own sustainable development and be more accountable for the progress made in achieving same. National governments are expected to mainstream the SDGs in their development plans as well as devise strategies to achieve these goals within their national context and circumstances. Regional and Subregional organizations are also expected to provide support and coordination for regional follow-up and review mechanisms.

The ECLAC subregional headquarters

for the Caribbean kick-started this process in June 2015 by hosting a Symposium on sustainable development goals for the Caribbean within the post-2015 development agenda in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. ECLAC also commissioned a study on “The Caribbean and the post-2015 development agenda” which provided an in-depth review of sustainable development in the Caribbean and set the tone for Member Countries and Associate Members’ consideration of a set of SDGs as priorities for the subregion. In addition, across all themes, the symposium underscored the paucity of data in the subregion for sustainable development planning, monitoring and evaluation as a major obstacle. Symposium participants emphasized the need for quality, timely and accessible data for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs. This is squarely in line with the Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development’s proclamation that:

*Data are the lifeblood of decision-making and the raw material for accountability. Without high-quality data providing the right information on the right things at the right time; designing, monitoring and evaluating effective policies becomes almost impossible. (A World That Counts, November 2014, p.2).*

At the global level, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

(IAEG-SDG) is finalizing a global indicator framework for the SDGs and the associated targets. Once concluded, this framework will provide a template for countries to develop national and subnational level indicators as appropriate but in line with the 2030 Agenda. Complementing the work of the IAEG-SDG is the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Post-2015 Monitoring tasked with promoting national ownership of the post-2015 monitoring system and fostering statistical capacity-building, partnership and coordination. Implementing the recommendations of these two Groups in the Caribbean will demand a regional approach of knowledge-sharing, inter-agency coordination, and statistical capacity-building.

ECLAC is poised to play a key coordinating role as the regional mechanism for monitoring the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). In the Caribbean, the ECLAC subregional headquarters will convene an inter-agency taskforce on SDG monitoring. This group will assist Member Countries and Associate Members in implementing the global SDG indicator framework at the national and sub-national levels to enhance knowledge-sharing among Caribbean countries, bring efficiency to the implementation of

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## ATTAINING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS IN THE CARIBBEAN: CAN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS HELP?

Lystra Fletcher-Paul and Terri Raney\*

The World Food Summit (WFS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set targets of reducing by half the number and proportion, respectively, of people suffering from hunger between 1990 and 2015. While most Caribbean countries made significant progress towards these targets, the food security situation remains precarious for many households and individuals.

**H**unger remains a serious problem in several countries and the obesity epidemic has reached alarming proportions, especially among women.<sup>1</sup> Food and agriculture systems – including crops, livestock, fisheries, and forests – throughout the subregion are under stress and face unprecedented challenges due to climate change. Can the more comprehensive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) help us tackle these challenges?

### FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Progress towards food and nutrition security remains uneven in the Caribbean (see Figure 1). Barbados, Guyana, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines achieved both the WFS and MDG targets on hunger.

Barbados and Dominica both have historically low levels of undernutrition and were the only two Caribbean countries during 2011-2016 with levels of undernutrition regarded to be negligible. Although Belize, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago all have low levels of undernutrition, the reduction in the level of undernutrition was not significant enough for them

to meet the MDG target. On the other hand, Haiti, a special case in the Caribbean, continues to have more than half of the population undernourished. Despite the progress made in some countries, the prevalence of undernourished people in the subregion still stands at 19.8 per cent of the population.<sup>2</sup>

Food access, linked to poverty and high food prices, is a key food and nutrition security problem in the Caribbean. Wide income inequality and high unemployment rates mean that many Caribbean countries have a high proportion of the population living below the national poverty line. Six countries in the subregion have poverty rates above 30 per cent.<sup>3</sup> High food prices are a major problem for the poor as it means that high quality fresh foods are often beyond their reach. In the absence of effective social protection measures, these people are vulnerable to inadequate nutrition and may even become food insecure.

Obesity, due to poor food choices and sedentary lifestyles, is one of the most serious nutrition problems in the subregion. There is a clear link to poverty in which individuals lack both

adequate knowledge and resources to purchase the elements of a balanced diet, choosing instead relatively cheaper, high energy foods which are readily available and cheaper but poor in nutritional content. These diets are linked to the epidemic of obesity and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease and cancer, for which the Caribbean countries have some of the highest rates in the world.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, inadequate nutrition contributes to higher risk pregnancies and promotes a cycle of poor nutrition behaviours in subsequent generations.

The food and nutrition security of Caribbean countries can be described as precarious, given the region's trade dependence (almost all CARICOM countries import more than 60 per cent of the food they consume)<sup>5</sup> and susceptibility to tropical storms, floods, droughts and earthquakes. The increasing intensity and unpredictability of natural disasters and the impacts of climate change further threaten the production capacity of countries in the region. As open, small economies, Caribbean countries, especially the small tourism-dependent islands, are also extremely vulnerable to global

<sup>1</sup> Adult female obesity rates: Antigua and Barbuda (34.5%), Bahamas (38.7%), Barbados (67.6%), Belize (29.9%), Dominica (65.3%), Grenada (32.7%), Guyana (28.1%), Haiti (33.6%), Jamaica (58.9%), Saint Kitts and Nevis (35.0%), Saint Lucia (56.9%), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (30.6%), Trinidad and Tobago (65.9%) and Suriname (28.4%). Source: World Health Organization (WHO), Global Infobase 2015.

<sup>2</sup> FAO. The State of Food Insecurity in the Caribbean, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Poverty rates: Belize (41.3%), Grenada (37.7%), Guyana (36.1%), Haiti (58.9%), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (30.0%) and Suriname (31.0%). Source: World Bank, Last Available at: [www.worldbank.com](http://www.worldbank.com).

<sup>4</sup> Healthy Caribbean Coalition, Chronic Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the Caribbean: The FACTS, n.d.

<sup>5</sup> Food imports as a per cent of total consumption: Antigua and Barbuda (92%), Bahamas (92%), Belize (40%), Barbados (87%), Dominica (55%), Grenada (81%), Guyana (41%), Haiti (44%), Jamaica (63%), Saint Kitts and Nevis (95%), Saint Lucia (83%), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (68%), Suriname (64%), Trinidad and Tobago (85%). Source: FAO 2015 The State of Food Insecurity in the CARICOM Caribbean. Bridgetown, Barbados <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5131e.pdf>.

economic shocks and changing trade regimes, against which they have limited resilience capacity.

## AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGES

Some of the food and nutrition security challenges the Caribbean subregion faces can be addressed through the consumption of healthy, diversified diets that incorporate more locally produced foods.

Many Caribbean countries have the potential to supply a larger share of their domestic market, including in the tourism sector, and to also export to regional markets. However, despite the history of Caribbean countries as agricultural exporters (mainly sugar and bananas), local food and agriculture systems are inadequate to supply current and future needs. Primary production in the farming and livestock sector is characterized by family farms, rain-fed production, small farm sizes, and high labour and other input costs. Fragile and degraded soils, limited water supplies, and endangered coastal and marine environments are severe threats. Several additional factors undermine agriculture in the region. Many countries lack adequate land and water management systems. Pests (including wild animals such as birds, dogs, feral pigs and monkeys), diseases, invasive species and praedial larceny continue to pose severe threats.

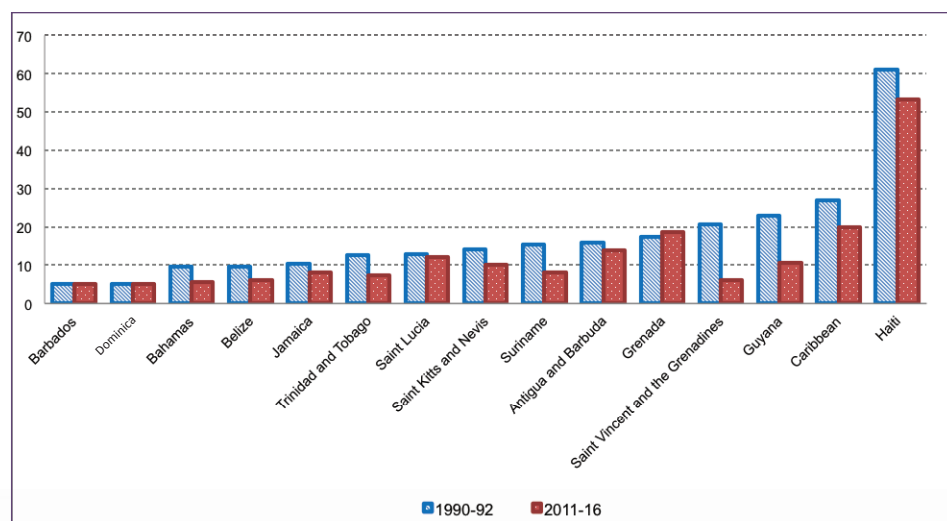
## CAN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS HELP?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the new internationally-agreed upon development goals which will shape national development policies for the next 15 years. Food security and its link to natural resources and rural development feature in almost every goal.

The way food is grown, produced, consumed, traded, transported, stored and marketed, provides a nexus between people and the planet, and paves a path to inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The SDGs, therefore, could play an important role in addressing the challenges the Caribbean faces in attaining food and nutrition security as the subregion also works towards

investment in rural development (also emphasised in **SDG 9**), establishing social protection systems (e.g. gender equality as promoted by **SDG 5**) and improving the livelihoods of the farmers, fisherfolk, rural women and youth rural poor (as an integral element of **SDG 8** on promoting economic growth, full employment and decent work) is fundamental to ending poverty.

FIGURE 1: PREVALENCE OF UNDERNURISHED PEOPLE IN THE CARIBBEAN (Percentages)



Source: FAO. *The State of Food Insecurity in the Caribbean, 2015*.

instituting sustainable agricultural systems.

**SDG 2** – on ending hunger – is a goal specifically dedicated to eradicating hunger and food insecurity in a comprehensive manner while promoting sustainable agriculture. It speaks to transforming food and feed systems, and is well aligned with **SDG 3** that focuses on ensuring healthy lives by addressing the troubling issue of the high incidence of non-communicable diseases and by promoting healthy diets and lifestyles.

**SDG 1** – on ending poverty – recognizes that the battle to end poverty must be fought in rural areas where people depend on farming, fishing and forestry for their income and food. Promoting

The sustainable management and use of natural resources such as water, energy and land which constitute critical inputs to agricultural production, is promoted through **SDGs 6, 7, 12, 14 and 15**.

The impact of climate change poses a serious threat to Caribbean agriculture and, by extension, to food security. **SDG 13** – on combating climate change – therefore recognizes that agriculture can play an important role both in adaptation and mitigation. This SDG promotes actions which improve livelihoods by building resilience.

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# FINANCING THE SDGs IN THE CARIBBEAN

Sidonia McKenzie\*

The sustainable development of Caribbean countries, as part of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), has received special attention since the Barbados Programme of Action in 1994. However, it was not until the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation in 2005 that the financial constraints confronting SIDS in implementing development strategies were broadly acknowledged.

**T**he commitment of the international community to support global partnership for the development of SIDS was reinforced in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a specific target to “address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.” Unfortunately, the 2007/2008 financial crisis worsened the fiscal situation of many Caribbean countries and presented an added challenge to financing sustainable development efforts.

The challenges to financing development in the Caribbean, however, go beyond the fallout arising from the global financial crisis. Despite their many vulnerabilities, the high and middle income status of most Caribbean countries<sup>1</sup> has been an obstacle to their accessing concessional financing from international agencies.<sup>2</sup> The small, open nature of these economies also makes them overly exposed to negative external economic shocks including fluctuations in terms of trade. In addition, the subregion faces other challenges such as high public debt, large current account and fiscal deficits, and vulnerability to climate change impacts, all of which have consequently reduced the fiscal latitude needed to address sustainable development in the subregion. For

example, over the period 2004 to 2013, the subregion recorded average fiscal deficits (as a percentage of GDP) ranging from 1.1 per cent in Dominica to 8.2 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda (see Figure 1). These fiscal imbalances have given rise to the high level of accumulated debt across the subregion. To contextualize this, in 2013, ten Caribbean countries had debt-to-GDP ratios that exceeded the internationally accepted debt sustainability benchmark of 60 per cent.<sup>3</sup> In addition, debt-to-GDP ratio exceeded 100 per cent in five countries.<sup>4</sup>

Financing development in the Caribbean is, therefore, a challenging task and calls for a new approach where dedicated resources are identified and mobilized for the SDG implementation. Although Goal 17 of the SDGs aims specifically to “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development,” the traditional means of financing development will play a diminished role in the new dispensation given the substantial financing needs. Currently, there is no readily available estimate for the cost of financing SDGs in the Caribbean subregion. However, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimated that between US\$3.3 and US\$4.5

trillion is needed annually to address the basic SDG (such as infrastructure, food security, agriculture and rural development, and climate change adaptation and mitigation) initiatives in developing countries. More importantly, UNCTAD estimated an annual funding gap of US\$2.5 trillion using current levels of investment in developing countries.<sup>5</sup>

## INNOVATIVE FINANCING

In the context of the aforementioned, the international conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico and follow-up conferences in Doha, Qatar and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia have highlighted that the means to finance the SDGs will not be found in one solution or sourced from the traditional set of actors.

It has been widely acknowledged that given the challenges faced by many developing countries, there is need for more innovative ways of financing development, and in this regard, several strategies, which include a number of non-traditional financing initiatives, have been proposed. The most feasible of these strategies for the Caribbean subregion include the following:

<sup>1</sup> Upper-middle income countries include Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname. The high-income countries are Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago.

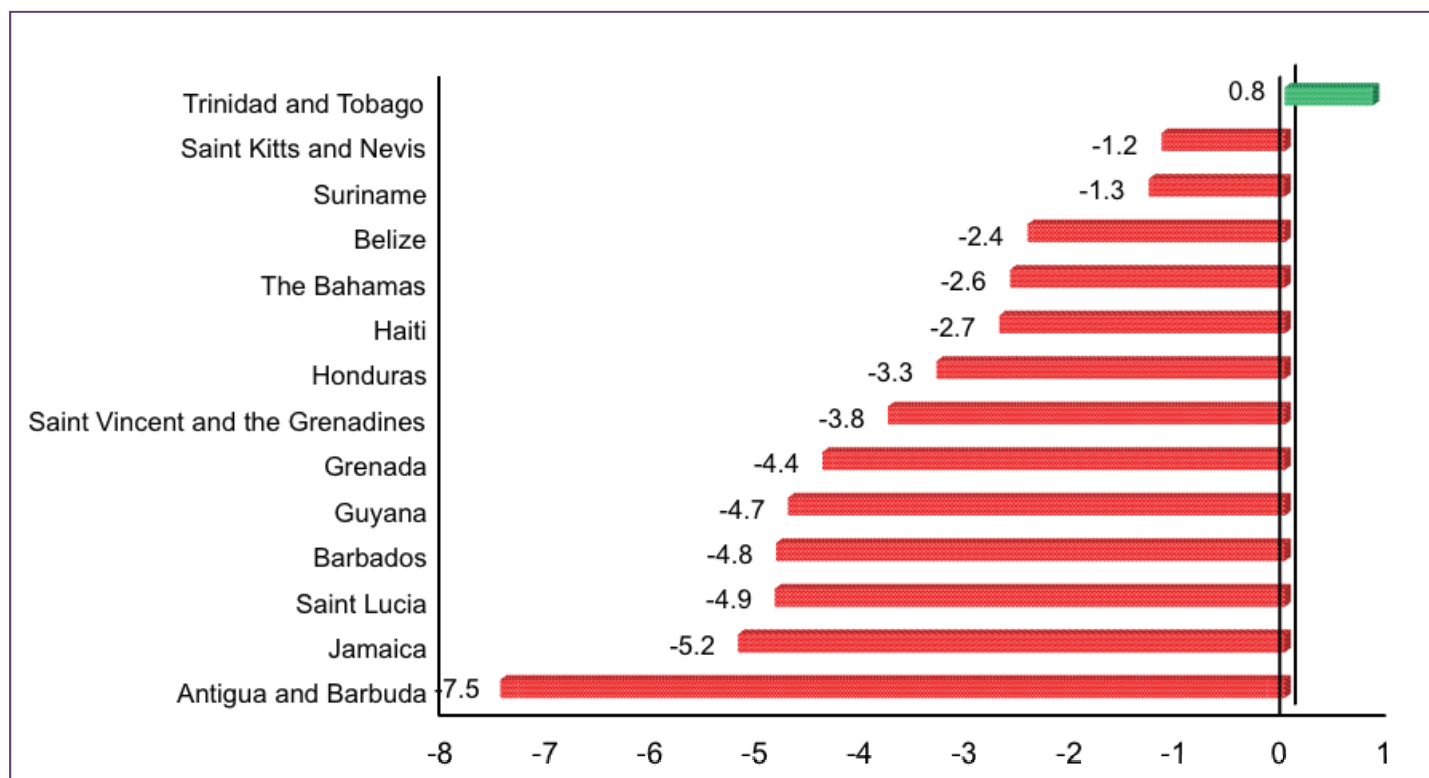
<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2015). *Financing for Development Challenges in Caribbean SIDS: A Case for Review of Eligibility Criteria For Access to Concessional Financing*. UNDP Trinidad & Tobago Country Office.

<sup>3</sup> These countries are Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

<sup>4</sup> Namely Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

<sup>5</sup> See UNCTAD. (2014). *World Investment Report 2014, Investing in the SDGs: An Action Plan*. Geneva: UNCTAD.

FIGURE 1: AVERAGE FISCAL BALANCE<sup>A</sup> OF CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES 2004 – 2013  
(% of GDP)



<sup>A</sup> General government net lending (+)/borrowing (-), the difference between government revenue and expenses.

Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2015.

### Adopting a national development financing strategy that takes into account all financial flows.

This approach requires concerted efforts from Caribbean governments to mobilize domestic resources, including those of national and regional development banks. With respect to domestic resources, the private sector needs to play a greater role in fostering public-private partnerships to harness private resources and channel them towards growth-enhancing investments that also promote sustainable development. In this respect, creating effective public-private partnerships that achieve the maximum development financing impact will require rigorous planning, effective implementation, a supportive policy environment, clear legal framework, and well-equipped institutions for supervision and

transparency. Towards this end, regional development banks can complement the provision of credit to the productive sector by channeling funds towards investment in strategic areas, particularly infrastructure development that complement climate change adaptation and mitigation. Another area that Caribbean governments could tap into is their domestic tax base. Although the scope for mobilizing resources through taxation may be limited, governments need to tackle tax avoidance and evasion in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of tax revenue collection.

### Utilizing innovative ways to raise additional resources to fund sustainable development.

Given the subregion's debt burden and the magnitude of the financing need, it is imperative that modes of financing

the SDGs be innovative in order for debt accumulation to be minimized. This requires tapping into non-traditional sources of financing. New institutions were established in 2015 which offer prospects for transforming the development landscape for many developing countries. For instance, the New Development Bank (NDB) was established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to finance infrastructure in both member and non-member countries. The New Silk Road Fund (NSRF), founded by the Government of China, was established for a similar purpose.<sup>6</sup> Given the subregion's climate vulnerability and proneness to weather-related events, as well as the specific energy, transportation, and industrial infrastructural needs, these institutions may offer opportunities for Caribbean countries to attract international financing for development purposes.

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<sup>6</sup> Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago. (2015). *Financing the Sustainable Development Goals: Issues Paper*. Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago.

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# ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN

Willard Phillips

Energy is pivotal to the well-being and development of any society, as it is necessary for supporting economic and social activities which provide food and shelter, sustain health, and guarantee security for all peoples.

**F**or over one hundred years, humans have sought to meet their energy needs through the use of fossil fuels. This has resulted in the increase of atmospheric carbon dioxide which, along with the emission of other greenhouse gases, now poses a major global challenge to human existence through the stimulation of anthropogenic climate change. Over the past 25 years, the United Nations has undertaken many global initiatives in order to facilitate the forging of global consensus and actions for confronting and redressing this challenge. Notable among the early efforts are the Earth Summit, held in Rio, Brazil in 1992, which focused on climate change as a possible human challenge, and the establishment of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, an institution that has engaged countries in continuous dialogue on joint global action to both mitigate against and adapt to the potential impacts of climate change.

Although long recognized as a major contributor to climate change, the issue of energy did not receive frontal attention within the UN framework as a strategy for reducing global greenhouse gasses. This, however, was remedied with the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 7 of the SDGs seeks to “ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for

all” by 2030, and its five targets relate either directly or indirectly to the provision of energy in a manner that meets the basic energy requirements for all, while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability. These targets aim to substantially increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix; double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure; and expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, including Small Island Developing States (SIDs).

These targets hold particular implications for Caribbean SIDS which are, at once, among the least energy secure and the most vulnerable countries with respect to the impacts of climate change. All Caribbean countries except Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago are net importers of energy, and have energy mixes that are dominated by fossil fuel sources, with the largest shares of this energy directed to power generation and domestic transportation. Energy imports are dominated by oil, with the 2012 ratio of net oil imports to total energy consumption approximating 1.7 for the Bahamas, 1.5 for Barbados, 0.8 for Jamaica, and 1.2 for Guyana.

At the same time, the primary energy supply as a share of total consumption remained low with this ratio ranging from 0.03 (Bahamas) to 0.83 for Jamaica.<sup>1</sup>

From the point of view of energy sustainability, these ratios suggest a high degree of insecurity of supply, with high reliance on imports, as well as inefficiency in energy use, despite the high economic cost of procuring energy by Caribbean countries. Energy insecurity is further reflected in the prevailing energy mix for most Caribbean SIDS, with countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Cayman Islands, Grenada and Saint Lucia having a minimum of 97 per cent of their energy supply provided through oil. Renewable energy supplies remain low with only Guyana meeting roughly 29 per cent of its energy needs from biomass in 2011. In the same year, solar energy supplies were also low at less than 2 per cent among all the islands, with Aruba (1.5 per cent), Dominica (0.3 per cent), Grenada (1 per cent) and Saint Kitts and Nevis (1.8 per cent) being the most significant solar energy users. In the case of wind energy, this supply reached its maximum at 13 per cent for Aruba, and 3.9 per cent for Saint Kitts and Nevis.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding these challenges, many Caribbean countries have

<sup>1</sup> Guerra, Sergio (2015). Energy Efficiency Policies in the Caribbean Region: Elements for the discussion. Unpublished paper.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



made efforts to enhance their energy sustainability and security through initiatives to bolster their use of renewable energy. For example, Aruba has implemented energy efficiency and renewable energy measures through the establishment of a windfarm to interconnect with the national power grid. It has also installed a solar photovoltaic (PV) power plant to supplement electricity supply to its national airport. Jamaica which has established a number of wind farms, is currently investing in solar power to support power generation, and has introduced ethanol as a biomass-based fuel supplement for the national transportation sector. Similar initiatives with respect to solar energy are either being implemented or planned in Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia, while Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis continue to

explore prospects for the application of geothermal energy. In the case of Barbados, a long standing energy policy has resulted in the maturity of the application of solar water heating for both residential and commercial use, particularly in the tourism sector. Increasingly, solar water heating is now being expanded in other Caribbean countries such as Grenada and Saint Lucia. Mini-hydro power generation plants providing between 2 – 5.7 MW of power have also been established in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the piloting of an Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) power plant is now being contemplated in the Cayman Islands.

It is expected that, over time, the total impact of these measures will redound to the benefit of the subregion through improved energy security, reduced

energy cost and reduced carbon emissions. And while the Caribbean's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions remains relatively miniscule, these efforts demonstrate the region's commitment to act in its own self-interest to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and to enhance its energy independence from its current high reliance on imported fossil fuels. The prevailing low oil price on the world market, therefore, provides an opportunity for most countries to use savings on oil imports to ramp-up investments in renewable sources. In all, these measures place the region firmly on the road towards meeting the global 2030 energy targets, as specified in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. ■

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## ATTAINING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS IN THE CARIBBEAN: CAN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS HELP?

### CAN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS HELP?

**SDG 17** – on global partnership for sustainable development - recognizes that the goal of eradicating hunger, malnutrition and food and nutrition insecurity, among others, requires partnerships for greater synergies and more efficient use of resources so that the collective efforts of different stakeholders yield greater returns.

In the United Nations system, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the lead agency in supporting governments and development partners to design the right policies,

programmes and legal frameworks that promote food security and nutrition. FAO supports countries in strengthening governance for food and nutrition security and building capacity for planning and policy making for coherence and continuity. FAO also assists countries seeking to access public and private funding for agriculture and rural development. The Organization has identified five Strategic Objectives<sup>6</sup> to sharpen its focus on fighting hunger and to create more sustainable food systems. This puts FAO in a strong position to support countries that are taking the lead in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Through its

international expertise, FAO is also well-positioned to assist broad regional and international partnerships, including South-South cooperation, required to achieve zero hunger by 2030. The SDGs, therefore, provide a good platform for engaging policy makers and stakeholders in the public and private sectors in the Caribbean to work together, not only to attain food and nutrition security, but also to build the foundation for sustainable agricultural systems in the subregion. ■

<sup>6</sup> FAO Strategic Objectives: 1 Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; 2 Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable; 3 Reduce rural poverty; 4 Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems; 5 Increase resilience of livelihoods from disasters. Source: FAO 2013, Our Priorities: The FAO Strategic Objectives, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/mi317e/mi317e.pdf>.



# GENDER, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN

Sheila Stuart

In 2015, two key international development frameworks were adopted, namely, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change. While the 2030 Agenda aims to chart “a new era of sustainable development,”<sup>1</sup> by eradicating poverty and eliminating gender inequalities, among others, the new climate change agreement will tackle the core drivers of climate change. These are all part of the global effort to bring harmony between people and the planet without halting prosperity.

**G**ender equality which is a necessary condition for social justice, and the equal participation of women and men in the economic, social and political areas of life is integral to the attainment of sustainable development. Both the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda and the Secretary General’s High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda underscored the central place of gender equality in the emerging Agenda, and drew attention to the crosscutting and intersecting nature of inequalities.<sup>2</sup>

One of the first international forums to highlight gender inequality as an obstacle to sustainable development was the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration, states that “*women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.*”<sup>3</sup>

The 2030 Agenda, which builds on a number of international development agreements, presents not only the global community but the Caribbean subregion with a real and perhaps unique opportunity to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the

empowerment of women.

While two of the SDG goals speak directly to equality, namely the stand alone goal 5 on gender equality which seeks to “*achieve gender equality and empower women and girls*”, and Goal 10 to “*reduce inequality within and among countries*”, Goal 13 requests countries to “*take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.*” Target 1 of Goal 13 seeks to “*promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and Small Island Developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities*”. It is important to note that there are synergies between Goal 5 and the call for action to promote and enhance gender equality as contained in the SAMOA Pathway.

Climate change is also critical to the attainment of gender equality because it not only impacts men and women differently, but their behaviour contributes in different ways to the factors that drive climate change. This can be assessed in relation to the different activities men and women undertake in fulfilling their roles and tasks with respect to their livelihoods, their security and their health.

The ECLAC 2005 Gender Impact Assessment of Hurricane Ivan undertaken in Grenada found that *the*

*existing gender inequities in the society rendered women and their dependent children uniquely vulnerable.*<sup>4</sup> The women employed in agriculture and tourism both within the formal and informal sectors were found to be disadvantaged as a result of Hurricane Ivan. The mass destruction of nutmeg plants decimated an industry from which many low-skilled women earned their livelihood. Similarly, women employed in the services sector were severely affected by the damage to the tourist sector and the resulting slow-down in tourist arrivals.<sup>5</sup>

In the context of the projected increases in occurrence and severity of extreme weather events related to climate change, women and girls are at greater risk of falling into poverty when impacted. In this regard, the 2030 Agenda provides an avenue for the Caribbean to improve the resilience of women and girls to the impacts of climate change. For example, water security is becoming an urgent priority issue for the subregion, which continued to record very low levels of rainfall that resulted in inadequate water supply to many homes, schools and businesses in Barbados, Saint Lucia and other countries in the subregion.

It is in recognition of the ongoing water security challenges that Goal 6 of

<sup>1</sup> UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in DESA News, Vol. 19, No 09, September 2015.

<sup>2</sup> The Report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda emphasizes that a “people-centred agenda must work to ensure the equal rights of women and girls” (pg.17) and the UN System Task Team’s ‘Report to the Secretary General - Realizing the Future We Want For All’ offers that the “empowerment of women and girls and the protection of their rights should be centre-pieces of the post-2015 agenda” (pg.25).

<sup>3</sup> Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992. Principle 20.

<sup>4</sup> ECLAC, UNIFEM, UNDP. 2005. Grenada: A Gender Impact Assessment of Hurricane Ivan – Making the Invisible Visible. Page vi.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Page vii

the SDGs calls on countries to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.

In Barbados, during the last quarter of 2015, daily water outages severely impacted the lives of many women, elderly and children. For the women affected, it meant a return to harvesting water in order to undertake their daily household chores, such as bathing, cooking and cleaning.<sup>6</sup> It also meant that some schools had to be closed due to the ongoing water shortage.

Agriculture is a sector that relies very heavily on water, and the scarcity of water is impacting on efforts to increase food production. In Saint Lucia, one female farmer reported that the drought

affected many of her crops due to the lack of irrigation. She lamented the fact that *the installation of an irrigation system was a very expensive endeavour*,<sup>7</sup> which many small farmers could not afford because many did not have access to financing, which also made it difficult for them to diversify crop production.

Lack of water also increases health risks, and has already led to some minor health challenges in Barbados, with the potential to become a major public health problem, including a serious food security issue.

Men and women are known to play different roles in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Therefore, climate policies and programmes must

be inclusive of both genders in order to deliver social and economic benefits, including social transformation, which can support the broader processes of sustainable development. In other words, there must be substantive equality which recognizes that *one size does not, and will not fit all*. To achieve substantive equality, however, it must be understood that generic policies and programmes which may, on the surface, be considered to be non-discriminatory, may in effect have discriminatory outcomes. To address this ongoing challenge, there is need for greater gender awareness, which recognizes that women, as do men, have a major role to play in climate-change related decisions, and should benefit from them equally. ■

<sup>6</sup> The Barbados Advocate, Tuesday January 12, 2016. Pages, 1 & 3.

<sup>7</sup> Inter Press Service News Agency, December 02, 2015, Women Farmers Strive to Combat Climate Change in the Caribbean

► (continued from page 7)

## FINANCING THE SDGs IN THE CARIBBEAN

### ISSUING THEMATIC BONDS

Another innovative investment option that Caribbean countries should consider is thematic bonds, particularly diaspora bonds.

It is well-known that the Caribbean’s diaspora is vast and has generated substantial flows of remittances annually. Remittances are an important source of finance and illustrate the possible means by which the Caribbean diaspora can contribute to the development of the subregion. In this regard, Caribbean countries could issue attractively priced bonds targeted at the diaspora community to raise additional financing. Countries such as India and Israel have issued diaspora bonds for a number of years and have been successful to varying degrees. Overall, the success of this type of financing will largely depend on the

regulatory requirements governing bond contracts in the desired target market for bond issuance.<sup>7</sup>

### CREATING A SOVEREIGN DEBT RELIEF OR DEBT RESTRUCTURING FRAMEWORK

In addition to the aforementioned initiatives, the subregion should continue to advocate for debt relief, which has been officially championed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

In addition, the Commonwealth Secretariat proposed a Multilateral Debt for Climate Swaps Initiative which aims to unlock funds to finance climate change adaptation and mitigation projects or for leveraging private sector involvement in critical areas such as infrastructural

development. While multilateral debt accounts for a small percentage of the Caribbean debt stock, the subregion will have to employ a multi-faceted approach to bridge the financing gap. Therefore, any form of debt forgiveness or debt swap would contribute to closing this gap.

As the global community begins implementing the SDGs, sourcing the necessary finance will be critical for the Caribbean and efforts should be ramped up early in the implementation process to ensure that financing does not constitute the ultimate bottleneck to realizing the SDGs in the Caribbean. To this end, research is needed to estimate the quantum of financial resources required to implement the SDGs in the Caribbean. ■

<sup>6</sup> See Ketkar, S., & Ratha, D. (2009). Innovative Financing for Development . Washington DC: The World Bank.



# YOUTH AS AGENTS OF CHANGE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Rianna Gonzales\*

The clichéd expression “youth are the leaders of tomorrow” has been used to drive home the importance of protecting our planet for future generations. What has not been emphasized enough though is the critical role that young people have played and continue to play in advocating for sustainable development.

**T**he 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that “children and young women and men are critical agents of change.” According to a United Nations Report,<sup>1</sup> there are more young people on this planet than ever before in human history—1.8 billion to be exact. In the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region alone, there are over 156 million young people between the ages of 15 and 29, accounting for a quarter of the region’s population. This youth constituent possesses the political capital to hold their leaders and governments accountable to their commitments, including to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Compared to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the process to decide the SDGs was more inclusive. Various groups, including young people had the opportunity to submit and share their opinions at different levels. However, despite the role of the youth during the development of the SDGs, the goals have not sufficiently focused on this group. In the final SDG document, youth or young people are only mentioned eight (8) times in all of the 169 targets. Most of which were in reference to education or employment, with one additional target on climate change.

It is understandable that education and employment are vital first steps in building a foundation for the future, but it is not enough. If the purpose of this development agenda is to ensure that no one is left behind, then the SDGs should bring attention to youth involvement in political participation, financial inclusion, infrastructure development, as well as health, security, and environmental issues.

As a young person from a developing country which is also a small island

State, I count myself fortunate enough to have participated in the SDG process. However, there were visible gaps in the representation of the youth opinion. For example, in comparison to the youth of the Pacific region, Caribbean youth were not as involved in the process through national avenues. Also, there was an unshakeable feeling that youth participation was more of a “tick the box” requirement than an honest invitation to gain our views and utilize our suggestions.



<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-regional-eclac.pdf>

Caribbean Governments have not been able to fully solidify the “how” for a young person to participate in the political process, except in the case of Saint Lucia that has shown great progress in including young people in shaping the political climate change agenda through the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) process.

As highlighted by the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY) in their review of the SDGs, the accountability mechanisms in the SDGs lack substance. Target 16.7 calls for the United Nations to “ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.” However, this language is open to different interpretations and does not include specifically-designated targets of meaningful youth participation in governance and national development affairs. There needs to be well-resourced mechanisms for youth participation in and monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. This should be factored into the development of all national indicator frameworks in order to address the numerous data gaps that currently exist.

This is where young people have a critical role to play. If countries, in particular Caribbean countries, are to succeed in achieving the SDGs, leaving no one behind, governments must seek to actively and substantively engage young citizens from diverse backgrounds in national-level planning, implementation, and monitoring. The overall success of the SDGs will

depend on strong youth engagement because young people are:

**Critical thinkers:** We are open to new ideas and are not constrained by how things “should be” or confined by the phrase “this is how it’s always been done.” Youth have the capacity to identify and challenge existing power structures and barriers to change, and to expose contradictions and biases.

**Change-makers:** Young people are not desensitized to injustice. The sight of suffering drives us to make a difference and we have the power to act and mobilize others. Youth activism is on the rise the world over and we are optimistic that we can be the CHANGE that we want to see in the world.

**Innovators:** In addition to bringing fresh perspectives, young people often have direct knowledge of and insights into issues that are not accessible to adults. Youth best understand the problems they face and can offer new ideas and alternative solutions.

**Communicators:** Outside the international development sector, very few people are aware of the SDGs. Young people can be partners in communicating the 2030 Development Agenda to their peers and communities at the local level, as well as across countries and regions. They utilize communication technology to share information across the region and the world in an instant. Their networks have no boundaries, they have the youth population at their fingertips!

**Leaders:** When young people are empowered with the knowledge of their rights and supported to develop leadership skills, they can drive positive change in their communities and countries. Youth-led organisations and networks in particular should be supported and strengthened, because they contribute to the development of civic and leadership skills among young people, especially marginalised youth.

The Sustainable Development Goals are a universal agenda for “transforming our world.” To achieve this transformation, we must rethink the approaches of the MDG era that left youth out of the process. Governments that recognize the value of collaborating with young people as partners and establish clear and explicit pathways for their meaningful participation from the outset will be much better positioned to achieve the 17 SDGs and related targets.

As the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated during his Youth Day message in 2015: “No one knows better than them the issues at stake or the best way to respond. That is why I am calling on young people to speak out – and I am urging leaders to listen.” We must be cognizant of this call by the Secretary-General and commit to make the youth the agents for change for sustainable development in the Caribbean. ■

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## DIRECTOR'S DESK: MONITORING THE SDGs IN THE CARIBBEAN

the framework in the subregion, and facilitate subregional concordance in the national SDG indicators used for global reporting.

As we continue to take stock of the achievements recorded by the Caribbean with the MDGs, we should realise areas of shortcoming and acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead in the implementation of the SDGs. With many countries in the subregion grappling with high levels of public debt and fiscal deficits, financing the SDGs will constitute a major challenge in the years ahead and this could have implications for the attainment of these targets. We need to be well-positioned and enabled to show how the Caribbean stands, not just within the LAC region, but in comparison with other SIDS as well as other middle- and high-income countries, for the sustainable development

story of the Caribbean to be fully told. This means that disaggregated data should be made available, and on a timely basis for the many indicators that will be agreed on for measuring progress towards the achievement of the goals and targets.

It will no longer be sufficient to claim that eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is not a relevant goal for the Caribbean, when most countries do not have poverty data although unemployment is high and rising in some countries. No longer will we be content that the Caribbean has attained Universal Primary Education simply because we have high enrolment rates. The SDGs will require that we show that children, youth, and adults have achieved literacy and numeracy by achieving minimum proficiency levels commensurate with their level of education.

These are by no means easy tasks given the current state of the National Statistical Systems but they are not insurmountable either. What is needed is an early appreciation of the tasks that lie ahead and for governments, and indeed all stakeholders, to make the necessary investments in statistical capacity and institutions that will prove critical in implementing a successful SDG monitoring framework.

Yours in Focus,



Diane Quarless



Official photo of the participants of the Symposium on Sustainable Development Goals for the Caribbean within the Post-2015 Development Agenda.— June 2015.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER

# 2016

### APRIL

21 April

Fourth meeting of the Caribbean Development Roundtable Basseterre, Saint Kitts and Nevis

22 April

Twenty-sixth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee Basseterre, Saint Kitts and Nevis

### MAY

Date to be announced

Launch of the annual report on Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

## LIST of Recent ECLAC Documents and Publications

Listed by Symbol Number, Date and Title

**No. LC/L.4122**

January 2016

Towards a demand model for maritime passenger transportation in the Caribbean: a regional study of passenger ferry services

**No. LC/L.4135**

February 2016

Economic Survey of the Caribbean 2015: Balancing economic recovery and high debt in the Caribbean

**No. LC/L.4130**

January 2016

Ageing in the Caribbean and the human rights of older persons: Twin imperatives for action

**No. LC/L.4133**

January 2016

An assessment of big data for official statistics in the Caribbean: Challenges and opportunities

**No. LC/CAR/L.482**

January 2016

Opportunities and risks associated with the advent of digital currency in the Caribbean

**No. LC/L.4132**

January 2016

Regional approaches to e-government initiatives in the Caribbean

**No. LC/L.4134**

February 2016

Dissemination of Caribbean census microdata to researchers: Including an experiment in the anonymization of microdata for Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago



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