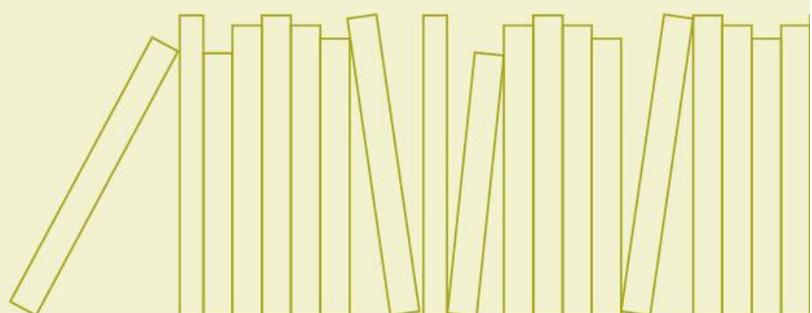


Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN



Report of the subregional workshop on implementing evidence-based policy planning for sustainable development



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

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evidence-based policy planning for sustainable development
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**REPORT OF THE SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON
IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY PLANNING FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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A. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Member States have to strengthen their statistical collection capacities in order to ensure that the Caribbean subregion effectively plans for and delivers on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All departments of Government engaged in data collection should coordinate with the National Statistical Office for efficient monitoring and reporting on the country's progress in achieving the SDGs.
2. The Caribbean subregion needs an innovative and home-driven funding mechanism for financing the SDGs and development activities in general. As small island developing States (SIDS), the countries of the Caribbean subregion should take advantage of their maritime space and oceans to pursue funding opportunities as a lot of resources are being invested to address the oceans' challenges and promote overall sustainable development.
3. Considering that gender inequalities still persistent in the subregion, in particular in the economic and social spheres, countries should include a gender perspective in all phases of the national development planning process, including the design, consultation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation processes. The production and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data will be critical in promoting a gender-sensitive approach to national development.
4. The stability and continuity needed to promote sustainable national development could be achieved through the establishment of an institutional framework for the implementation and follow-up and review of the SDGs. This institutional mechanism should be inclusive and participatory in order to leave no one behind.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date

5. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean convened a one and a half day subregional workshop to share country experiences in the implementation of evidence-based policy planning within the context of sustainable development. The subregional workshop took place from 13 to 14 December 2017 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

2. Attendance

6. The workshop brought together senior government officials with responsibility for statistics, sustainable development and foreign affairs, as well as representatives from other regional and international organizations. The following ECLAC Member States were represented: Grenada, Guyana, and Saint Lucia. The following associate members of ECLAC were also represented: Aruba, British Virgin Islands and Sint Maarten. Other participants at the workshop included the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the Former Assistant Secretary General (ASG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and the Former Special Adviser, Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, Office of the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

3. Agenda

1. Opening of the workshop
2. Implementation of evidence-based processes in development planning
3. Institutionalizing evidence-based policy planning in national development processes
4. Finalization of GIZ project activities and the proposed activities under the Development Account project
5. Other SDG-related technical assistance projects in the Caribbean
6. Priority areas for technical assistance in implementing the SDGs
7. Closure of the workshop

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of the workshop

Welcome remarks

7. The Coordinator of the Statistics and Social Development Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean welcomed all participants to the subregional workshop to discuss the implementation of evidence-based policy planning for sustainable development at the country level. He urged the participants to use the subregional workshop as a forum for peer learning and the exchange of experiences as well as to determine the technical support that ECLAC should provide to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.

8. He mentioned that ECLAC is currently implementing a GIZ-funded project on “Planning for the implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean” in Aruba, the Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Guyana, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Starting in early 2018, a Development Account project on “Strengthening institutional frameworks in the Caribbean for an integrative approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Sustainable Development Agenda” will also commence in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Sint Maarten. Both projects have the primary focus of strengthening the capacities of Caribbean countries to design and implement integrated national development plans in a sustainable manner, using evidence-based approaches. This is expected to advance the achievement of the SDGs in the subregion.

9. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean also welcomed the participants and advised them that the aim of the subregional workshop is to assist the Member States in shaping a national development strategy that speaks integrally to what their people and country need.

10. She emphasized that it was the intention of ECLAC to continue to provide the subregion with high-level expertise and support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. She made special mention of Elizabeth Thompson, Former Assistant Secretary General of UNDESA and Ambassador Dessima Williams, Former Special Adviser to the President of UNGA on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, who agreed to assist the Member States as special advisors on integrating the SDGs and other relevant international development platforms into national development strategies.

11. The Director mentioned the progress that Jamaica has made in the implementation of the SDGs and highlighted two main elements of what she perceived will contribute to early success in the Jamaica process. One element is the early establishment of an institutional framework to work on the country's development strategy that would be the mechanism to guide the implementation of the SDGs. This institutional framework comprises three agencies: The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) that serves as the Secretariat; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that maintains the link between international and local development engagement; and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) which is responsible for the reporting and monitoring of the SDGs to ensure effective implementation. The next important element of the Jamaica strategy is a committed and dedicated consultative process. The consultative process ensured that there was input into the country's development strategy (national development plan) from various stakeholders such as the government, private sector, local government, civil society, community groups and the youth.

12. The Director concluded her remarks by highlighting the importance of this process and recommended that it be embraced in every national strategy. She expressed her hope that Member States will continue to take advantage of the valuable and rewarding experiences that workshops such as this provide in the implementation of the SDGs.

2. Implementation of evidence-based processes in development planning

13. Participating countries provided updates on their activities with regards to the implementation of evidence-based processes in development planning.

14. Aruba had established an SDG National Commission since 2016. In 2017, the country received technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ECLAC, which led to the articulation of a Roadmap for the implementation of the SDGs in Aruba. The Roadmap, which focuses on several accelerators based on five pillars, is now awaiting the approval of the Government and will ultimately be incorporated in the government's programme. The SDG National Commission is also in the process of establishing different task forces for each accelerator, which will be responsible for the monitoring of policies and initiatives to achieve the SDGs.

15. Insufficient data are a major challenge to evidence-based policy planning in Aruba and the country needs financial assistance to work on this necessity. The country, therefore, looks forward to continued collaboration with ECLAC under the GIZ project to address this challenge. In this respect, an ECLAC mission to Aruba is planned for January 2018 and it will be very important for the various stakeholders involved in the SDG process to see the involvement of the United Nations as it gives them assurance of continuity of programme that transcends any particular government in power.

16. Sint Maarten already has a National Development Plan in draft as well as a National Recovery Plan. However, Sint Maarten still has a major challenge with data collection and lacks data processing capabilities. Although the Department of Statistics has been receiving technical assistance from ECLAC, there are still limited capacity and insufficient resources for the development of national statistics. As such, there is inadequate coordination in the collection of data for the SDGs.

17. Saint Lucia had a National Plan in 2008 and in 2014 there was the establishment of a National Vision Commission, which was eventually disbanded with the change in government. In 2016, the government commenced work on a new National Development Plan which was based on a situational analysis from various stakeholder consultations. These consultations resulted in the identification of seven development pillars upon which the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the SDGs was based.

18. The primary effort in the implementation of the SDGs in Guyana has been the articulation of the Green State Development Strategy (GSDS), which sets the strategy to have a green, cohesive and prosperous state by 2030. Guyana has completed a Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) and it showed that there is roughly an 80 per cent level of alignment of the strategy with the SDGs. The country hopes to have full alignment by mid-2018.

19. Grenada experienced some challenges with regards to the structural adjustment programme which took priority over the SDGs. The three-year period of structural adjustment informed the need to better plan and have sustainability in all aspects of development. The cabinet has approved a broad-based committee that will be responsible for the implementation of the SDGs. The principal national strategy is the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy which is a medium-term strategy and the committee is in the process of developing a long-term National Development Strategy. There have been stakeholder community consultations throughout the country and one of the main outcomes is the realization of the need to localize the SDG targets. Grenada looks forward to receiving technical assistance from ECLAC in the development of a long-term strategic plan.

20. The British Virgin Islands have had a medium-term development framework called Social, Economic, Environmental and Direction/Governance (SEED) from 2014 to 2016. There has also been the creation of a Recovery and Development Strategy which incorporates all 17 SDGs and builds on the principle of making the British Virgin Islands stronger, smarter, greener and better. The country is currently in the recovery phase after the passing of Hurricane Irma and the flood that occurred in August 2017, which highlighted the country's vulnerabilities to extreme weather events and climate change. The British Virgin Islands therefore, would need technical assistance from ECLAC in transforming the Recovery and Development Strategy into a long-term National Development Plan.

Discussions

21. The Former Special Adviser in the Office of the President of the UNGA stated that it is important for the Caribbean subregion to work together and learn from each other in the process of implementing the SDGs. She suggested a number of common themes that the Member States should take into consideration when developing a national strategy. This includes:

- i. History: It is important to know the history of planning in a country and what is needed to have a successful plan.
- ii. Perspective: What is the national perspective and how does it fit into the regional perspective?
- iii. National political framework: What is the current national political framework and what will it be in the next 30 years in relation to the SDGs?
- iv. State of plans: Do all the countries have plans and how advanced are they? What can countries learn from each other?
- v. Localization: The concept of localization can be integrated into the process of national development plans.
- vi. Strategy: What are the mechanisms in place to advance a clear strategy?
- vii. Assessment: What is the baseline information from which countries will be starting or going forward?
- viii. Accelerators: What will be viable accelerators across the subregion? Accelerators have to be investments.

22. She also mentioned three sectors where Member States can make considerable improvements:

- i. Tourism: The traditional model of tourism in the Caribbean subregion is constantly determined by the development in the North. Member States therefore need to take better control of the tourism product by making the shift to ecotourism. This shift can be a credible funding source for the SDGs.

- ii. Agriculture: The niche market is now in the area of organic produce. Member States in the subregion have the capacity to control this organic market with agricultural exports.
- iii. Resilience building: The notion of “looking good on paper” versus the actual experience must be addressed. An example of this is where many countries declare their achievements in gender equality in the educational sector, yet, when the evidence is examined, women are still more likely to be unemployed. The face of poverty in the subregion is still female. Governments must therefore have a qualitative profile of the country and this is where community-based consultations are important.

23. The Former Assistant Secretary General of UNDESA suggested that Member States should look at the process of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to assess what worked well and what were the challenges (lessons learned) to move forward with the implementation of the SDGs. She acknowledged that data collection is extremely poor in some countries and difficult to get in others, and if the SDGs are to be effectively implemented then countries have to strengthen their statistical collection procedures and how data are disaggregated for effective planning and delivery. There is also the need to promote the implementation of nexus approaches in planning to maximize the achievements of the SDGs.

24. She highlighted the significant change in the political landscape underscoring that the Caribbean subregion will need to be less dependent on traditional sources of funding. The Caribbean subregion needs an innovative and home-driven funding mechanism for financing the SDGs and development activities in general. Member States should consider a mechanism where funding can be acquired based on maritime space and oceans rather than a territorial space, as a lot of resources are being invested to address the oceans’ challenges and promote overall sustainable development.

25. She also recommended that the subregion determine the appropriate architecture for reporting in order to enhance implementation and delivery of the SDGs and other international development conventions. Member States should consider the use of enhanced partnerships like South-South cooperation or the opportunities of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) to explore green development funding for the implementation of the SDGs.

26. She ended her comments by reiterating that all development planning in the subregion should be underpinned by resilience at the social, economic and environmental levels. The Caribbean is vulnerable to exogenous shocks and if the issue of resilience cannot be addressed then the subregion cannot build a sustainable plan.

Funding for the SDGs

27. There was agreement that the Caribbean subregion needs a funding mechanism for the implementation of the SDGs. While the Green Climate Fund (GCF) provides an avenue for SIDS, it has been emphasized that the GCF will only fund resilience and not development. There should be special consideration for the Caribbean as resilience and development are interdependent in the subregion.

28. Some of the Member States also have to deal with the additional issue of being blacklisted as tax havens which creates even more challenges for them in attaining funds and moving forward with the 2030 Agenda.

Data collection for the SDGs

29. The Director of ECLAC reminded the participants of the workshop that the issue of data is intrinsic to the work of the organization. She emphasized the need for more disaggregated data by gender and encouraged statistical agencies and other data collection organizations to move away from working in silos to a more collaborative arrangement of data sharing. In the process of the roll out of the national

development strategies, Member States need to remember the emphasis on data for planning and monitoring national development.

Institutional frameworks for the implementation of the SDGs

30. The example of the institutional framework in Jamaica was used to showcase the importance of an arrangement that will help move the SDG process forward. The institutional framework in Jamaica is made up of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which is responsible for maintaining the link between the international and local processes in the implementation of the SDGs. On the other hand, the PIOJ acts as the Secretariat and has the understanding of the national priorities and STATIN is responsible for the data collection for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs. The coherence of these three agencies ensures a greater level of efficiency and is characteristic of the nexus approach. It should also be noted that this institutional framework was first visionary, and was brought to the local communities for there to be ownership before being presented to parliament. This bi-partisan support ensures that irrespective of the party in government, the strategies for national development coming out of this institutional arrangement should stand.

3. Institutionalizing evidence-based policy planning in national development processes

31. The Coordinator of the Statistics and Social Development Unit, ECLAC Caribbean presented on the institution of evidence-based policy planning in national development processes, which would set the tone for the advancement of the integration of SDGs into national development plans. He informed the participants that countries were at different stages of the development or implementation of a national development plan in the subregion.

32. He stressed the fact that a national development plan gives a national vision in order to transcend a specific administration. These development plans need to have sectoral goals, targets, and indicators in order to measure and evaluate progress towards the desired outcomes. The Coordinator emphasized that if a national development plan lacked evidence in its conceptualization, it will in effect be a wish list of political players and not necessarily reflect national aspirations and goals. Moreover, stakeholder engagement is necessary to inform the setting of realistic targets, especially in countries that experience frequent change of government in general elections. Therefore, Member States need to institute a more sustainable system of development planning by implementing evidence-based approaches and promoting long-term national development plans.

33. Using different examples, the Coordinator illustrated the gaps in evidence-based policy planning in the subregion. These ranged from national development targets that are ambiguous, targets that are without associated timelines for achieving them, indicators that are undefined or irrelevant, to indicators with no baselines. Participants underscored the importance of including evidence in the development of national policies, particularly regarding baseline information to measure progress.

34. He informed the participants that ECLAC is committed to providing technical assistance in evidence-based planning for national development. Evidence-based processes can promote effective data collection and sensitization to national issues that are country-specific. Hence, the GIZ and the Development Account projects represent opportunities for countries in the subregion to move forward in this direction. To that end, the establishment of an institutional framework would allow countries to progress in the implementation of their national development plans and the SDGs, as well as provide a means of reviewing strategies for greater effectiveness.

4. Finalization of GIZ project activities and the proposed activities under the DA project

35. The Director of ECLAC Caribbean introduced the GIZ project and the forthcoming Development Account project. Twelve countries in total will benefit from both projects. The GIZ project covers Aruba,

the Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Guyana, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, and the Development Account project will cover Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Sint Maarten.

36. She stressed that the aim of both projects is to have long-term national development plans that integrate the SDGs and other SIDS agendas in all Caribbean countries. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs are only a platform to reach this objective. In this process, ECLAC put emphasis on the needs of countries in order to offer tailored technical assistance on a case-by-case basis. She highlighted the experience and political sensitivity that ECLAC applies in helping to guide countries to design and/or implement national development plans; to design and/or identify the institution that will be guiding the implementation of the plans; and to identify those who could provide evidence for national development plans. The localizing of SDGs, the building of awareness and sensitivity on SDGs were also part of the activities included in both projects. The support to these countries will then focus on the design and/or implementation of evidence-based national development plans to facilitate policy coherence, integration and participatory implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other SIDS agendas in the Caribbean.

37. In order to have sustainability and continuity of development, she emphasized that it would be important to establish an institutional mechanism to follow-up the implementation of the national development plan. The importance of coherent and integrated cross-sectoral implementation was raised as well as establishing nexus approaches. The need to have data that are comparable and measurable, which will also help peer review and exchange processes was also underscored.

38. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean presented the status of affairs regarding the development of national development plans and the integration of the SDGs in the 12 beneficiary countries. She underscored the outcomes that are expected from the technical assistance provided by ECLAC, with particular attention given the countries that participated in the workshop.

39. In the case of Aruba, the country drafted a long-term National Development Plan, entitled ‘Nos Aruba 2025’, but the plan was not implemented. Since the country does not have an autonomous planning agency, technical assistance will be provided in order to strengthen the capacity to perform evidence-based policy planning, in particular with respect to baseline data. National development planning is currently centered on the SDGs, with the drafting of a SDG roadmap and ECLAC will support the country in successfully implementing this roadmap and in strengthening the SDG Commission established for the implementation and follow-up and reviews of the SDGs in Aruba.

40. The British Virgin Islands had a three-year Medium Term Economic Framework. However, following the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, focus is now on transforming the current recovery plan into a long-term national development plan. ECLAC conducted a Damage and Loss Assessment after the hurricanes and this will help the country in the design of a national development plan that adequately accounts for the challenges faced by the country because of climate change and extreme weather events. In addition, the technical assistance from ECLAC will focus on establishing an institutional arrangement for the development, monitoring and evaluation of the plan in order to assess progress.

41. Regarding Grenada, a Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy is being implemented and stakeholder consultations on drafting a national sustainable development plan have been conducted. Therefore, ECLAC support will focus on strengthening stakeholder consultations and raising awareness on the importance of including the SDGs in the new development plan at all levels of government. Additionally, ECLAC will support the formalization of the institutional framework for implementing the SDGs to ensure the continuity of the long-term national development plan beyond any particular administration.

42. In relation to Guyana, the Green State Development Strategy has been drafted and modelling exercises have been performed to inform investments in areas of quick gains and to accelerate the implementation of the new development strategy. ECLAC will support the government in the implementation of the Green State Development Strategy and in adequately broadening the scope to incorporate all the SDGs. ECLAC will provide technical assistance in strengthening the capacity to perform evidence-based policy planning, promoting indigenous capacity for economic modelling, as well as in the formalization of the institutional framework for implementing the SDGs. The Director of ECLAC Caribbean encouraged the Government of Guyana to present a voluntary national review (VNR) at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

43. Regarding Saint Lucia, the Department of Economic Development, under the Ministry of Economic Development, Housing, Urban Renewal, Transport and Civil Aviation, has drafted a Medium-Term Development Strategy, based on several consultations. The Government of Saint Lucia has also established a national coordinating committee for the implementation of the SDGs. Some concerns were raised regarding the continuity of the work done so far by the Department of Economic Development due to the change of administration and the absence of a long-term development plan that integrates the SDGs and other SIDS agendas. ECLAC will provide technical assistance to the government in drafting a new long-term national development plan aligned with the SDGs, strengthening the capacity to perform evidence-based policy planning, and in the implementation of a protocol, by the Central Statistical Office, for producing official statistics in order to inform evidence-based planning.

44. Sint Maarten is drafting its first National Development Plan, based on the experience with the implementation of the MDGs. The Department of Interior and Kingdom Relation with the Department of Statistics are the main institutions in charge of developing a new development plan, but there is no specific institution in charge of implementing the SDGs. Following the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the Government is now focused on implementation of a national recovery plan and there is need to transform this recovery plan into a long-term national development plan, that is aligned with the SDGs. ECLAC will provide technical assistance in developing a new long-term national development plan, based on an inclusive and participatory approach that considers the recovery plan and integrates the SDGs and SAMOA Pathway. The technical assistance provided by ECLAC will also be aimed at developing national capacity to perform evidence-based policy planning for the long-term; by designing and implementing a protocol for producing official statistics that informs evidence-based policy planning and the establishment of an institutional framework for implementing integrated sustainable development in the country.

45. Based on the proposed activities in each participating country under the two projects, countries made salient requests to ECLAC for consideration. These requests cover: statistical data management and measurement, development of institutional frameworks, recovery plan alignment with national development plans, localization of SDGs, public sensitization of SDGs within and outside the public sectors, 2019 VNRs preparation, and establishment of an autonomous coordinating body for the SDGs.

46. The Director concluded by reiterating that the common objective of the projects is to integrate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SIDS agenda into the national development planning processes of select Caribbean countries. This should be achieved through a series of activities designed to share information and build capacity, including: country assessments, technical meetings and workshops, and model and template design. The expected outcome is to have well-articulated national development plans that will help countries to simultaneously implement the SDGs. She thanked the participants for the rich and insightful exchanges and re-emphasized that ECLAC heard their concerns and needs and will provide tailored technical assistance to support them in this process.

Discussions

Gathering, management and dissemination of data

47. The SDG framework provides a very good platform for data collection and for financing statistical capacity. With better data and evidence-based approaches, government will be in a better position to identify the development priorities of the country and synchronise the interests of different stakeholders at the national level. The ECLAC Coordinator gave an example of the difficulty in sharing data, in particular considering the interest shown by the private sector and civil society organisations to provide data in Aruba. Addressing this will require a paradigm shift, especially in the public sector, from the current situation of difficulty in accessing official data to that in which data sharing and information dissemination is formalized and seen as the norm. The need to empower the National Statistical Offices so that they can effectively coordinate the National Statistical Systems was also highlighted.

48. The representatives of Grenada stressed the need to create a digitalized and centralized repository in order to improve the sharing and management of data. Similarly, the representatives of Sint Maarten informed the workshop that there were many departments collecting data but in which data collection was done by non-statisticians, hence there is the problem of non-adherence to standardized procedures for data collection. The national statistical office is only often contacted to assist in data processing after the fact. A good practice identified in Aruba involves engaging an external facilitator in all departments and informing all supervisors about the importance of including statisticians and other official data producers in the SDG implementation. This visit not only helped in raising awareness about the SDGs, it also assisted in establishing innovative and collaborative forms of sharing and analysing data.

49. In this context, the Former Special Adviser in the Office of the President of UNGA suggested that countries focus on the indicators that need to be met by 2020 in order to motivate data holders to work on those targets. She also advised on the need to change the terminology by emphasizing that data is science and serve a political purpose, which is to inform political choice.

Inclusion of a gender perspective into national development planning

50. The representative of Guyana informed the workshop that his country included a gender perspective in the Green State Development Strategy, achieving 100 percent of alignment with the SDG framework regarding this aspect and that the Ministry of Social Protection, where the Gender Bureau is located, has an active role in the process of drafting the strategy, in particular regarding social protection issues. Furthermore, the Government of Guyana has expressed its interests in amplifying the targets relating to gender equality in the strategy. Guyana is also in the process of finalising a national gender policy that will take into account their commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and has established a special court to address issues related to discrimination and violence against women.

Environmental data

51. Participants discussed the importance of collecting not only economic data, but also social and environmental data (both quantitative and qualitative). Aruba reported that their Department of Nature and Environment is a new department, therefore, they do not have environmental data at this stage. However, they are looking into alternative ways of collecting this kind of data, for instance by identifying potential partnerships with Finland. The representative of Guyana mentioned that based on the government's commitment to the REDD+ (Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) framework, the country has considerable capacity for environmental data, but there are concerns about using this information for evidence-based policy.

Inclusiveness, continuity, national ownership

52. Several countries highlighted the importance of the consultation phase in order to build national ownership and to localize the SDGs to national priorities. The representatives of Grenada informed the workshop about the different consultations held in the country, involving all political parties, civil society organizations, and youth associations, among others. These circumstances notwithstanding, there were concerns expressed regarding the continuity of the initiative and the future of a national development plan, given that elections are expected in the first quarter of 2018. Similar concerns were expressed in the case of Saint Lucia, where there is a new administration, and in the case of Sint Maarten, where new elections are expected in February 2018.

53. The former ASG of UNDESA, in response, made the point that national practitioners in charge of designing the national plans should prepare notes for cabinets that are politically and technically tailored to help political objectives and should include a multilateral and regional context in order to share advances made in other countries.

Merging National Recovery Plans with Development Plans

54. Countries affected by hurricanes Irma and Maria stressed the importance of having not only a recovery plan but a national development plan in order to give continuity and sustainability to their development strategies. However, the coordination of this process will present a challenge. For example, in Sint Maarten, the entities responsible for implementing the recovery plan and for developing a new development plan are not the same. Similar concern was raised in the case of The British Virgin Islands. The Director of ECLAC Caribbean underscored that the assistance provided by ECLAC will consider the needs of countries after the hurricanes to inform the success of SDG alignment and implementation.

Raising awareness of the SDGs

55. Many countries expressed the need to raise awareness about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs at the governmental level but also at the community level. The former ASG of UNDESA highlighted the importance of evidence gathering at the community level and encouraged engaging with the communities to gather data and to popularize the SDGs. Along this line, she underscored the importance of having a specific institutional framework with responsibility for planning, implementation, and follow-up and review of the SDGs in each country.

Caribbean priority set of SDG indicators

56. A draft list of core SDG indicators, with 109 unique indicators, has been compiled by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. While this list expressed a priority set of indicators for the subregion, it was still considered too long, especially for SIDS. There were some concerns regarding the pace of developing and the timeline for finalizing the list. Meanwhile, some countries have started to localize the SDGs to their national circumstances and others, such as Aruba, have identified some ‘accelerators’ for speeding up the SDG implementation process.

Regional and global reporting forums for the SDGs

57. The ECLAC Coordinator explained the two main reporting forums regarding the follow-up and review of the SDGs. The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, for which ECLAC acts as the secretariat, is the regional forum to follow-up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDGs and targets, its means of implementation, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The first meeting took place in Mexico City, Mexico during April 2017 and the next one will take place in April 2018 in Santiago, Chile. At the global level, there is the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which meets annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York, and all governments have the opportunity to share information on their progress in implementing the SDGs through the presentation of the VNRs.

5. Other SDG related technical assistance projects in the Caribbean

58. The United Nations Coordination Analyst, Trinidad and Tobago made a presentation on the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF). She mentioned that the SDGs are about transformation, and in response to that, the United Nations created the MSDF which would adapt to the transformative change across the region. The mantra of this framework is no one left behind, and this is essential to the measures used to create this particular framework, specifically looking at the vulnerabilities of the region.

59. This regional framework has key principles, one of which focuses on the commonalities of the 18 countries under the MSDF and on each country's individual national development priorities. It also focuses on joint ownership at the national and regional levels. Other key principles speak to the comparative advantage of the United Nations system and of course coherence through integrated work which reduces duplication and maximizes on the synergies that exist across the region and within the countries.

60. The timeframe for this MSDF is 2017-2021. It covers four pillar areas and their respective outcome statements which represent the core of the development system in the Caribbean. These include:

- i. An inclusive, equitable and prosperous Caribbean- Access to quality education and life-long learning increased, for enhanced employability and decent and sustainable economic development. Access to equitable social protection systems, and improved quality services.
- ii. A cohesive, safe and just Caribbean- Capacities of public policy and rule of law institutions and civil society organizations strengthened. Equitable access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety reinforced.
- iii. A healthy Caribbean- Universal access to quality health care services and systems improved. Laws, policies and systems introduced to support healthy lifestyles among all segments of the population.
- iv. A sustainable and resilient Caribbean- Policies and programmes for climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and universal access to clean and sustainable energy in place. Inclusive and sustainable solutions adopted for the conservation, restoration and use of ecosystems and natural resources.

61. The implementation of this framework would include a work plan called the Country Implementation Plan (CIP), specific to every country. These work plans are being done at the country level and the information from this is fed into the regional level where the United Nations will be able to do monitoring and resource mobilization regionally and report on this every two years.

62. The United Nations Coordination Analyst provided an example of what the country implementation plan should look like for the Caribbean. In terms of the government arrangement, there will be a National Joint Steering Committee, which consists of ministers, permanent secretaries, and other senior government officials, as well as the United Nations Heads of Agencies. Under this Joint Steering Committee, there would be a supportive role of the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group to ensure that gaps are identified and worked on.

63. She reiterated that this is the work that the United Nations has been doing across the region, and although the framework is new, it serves a need for countries to work together as a region because resources are becoming scarcer. The framework has encouraged an increase in cooperation.

Discussions

Activities and reporting requirements of the MSDF

64. Participants raised questions regarding the activities under the MSDF which seem to be ad hoc to the activities under the national development frameworks of countries. It was suggested that there is the need to define the scope of these activities and the requirements of the MSDF to ensure that they are flexible enough to be integrated in the national development plans and priorities.

65. Questions were raised regarding the differing reporting requirements for the SDG and CIP frameworks given the limited resources in most of the Member States in the subregion.

Capacity building in statistics

66. Member States acknowledged that there are limited resources for the collection of data to meet the demands of reporting for the SDGs. It was acknowledged that there are only a few experienced statisticians in the subregion. Countries therefore need to find ways to retain technical staff and to find avenues for training new staff, whether through on the job training programmes or university courses.

67. The Director of ECLAC mentioned that there are programmes that provide technical support in the area of statistics such as the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st century (PARIS 21) that Member States may want to explore. She also mentioned that ECLAC would pursue practical ways to build capacity for data collection in the subregion.

68. The Coordinator of the Statistics and Social Development Unit of ECLAC gave the suggestion of establishing an arrangement in the subregion where national statistical offices in the Member States can liaise and support each other for certain data needs. Furthermore, looking at the requirements of the SDGs, there may be value in having a train the trainers programme, given the reality of retention of statisticians in the subregion and ECLAC could work on providing this type of training.

6. Priority areas for technical assistance in implementing the SDGs

69. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean engaged the beneficiary countries of the GIZ and DA projects in a discussion to determine the technical assistance that they would require from ECLAC in the coming months. This led to the identification of priority areas in each country as follows:

70. **Aruba**

- Statistical capacity: setting of baselines, measurement of indicators
- Stakeholder engagement
- Public awareness of the importance of data
- Evaluation of country's current state in moving forward with the SDG alignment

71. **British Virgin Islands**

- Development of Recovery Plan to National Development Plan
- Institutional framework development
- Statistical systems management
- Public engagement
- Evaluation of country's current state in moving forward with the SDG alignment

72. **Grenada**

- Poverty assessment to inform SDG alignment and the NDP
- Stakeholder consultation
- Revisit institutional arrangement
- Validation of data exercises
- Localization of SDG targets and indicators

73. **Guyana**

- Statistical capacity/Modelling exercise
- Cohesive institutional arrangement for the SDGs
- Using the Green State Development Strategy to inform NVR in 2019

- Stakeholder engagement
- SDG alignment (assistance to increase 80 per cent capacity)
- Improved visibility of the social dimension in the Green State Development Strategy
- Assistance in targeting vulnerable social groups; indigenous, gender focus

74. **Saint Lucia**

- National development plan
- Planning and institutional framework
- Assessment of current systems, infrastructure and capacity in place to work on the SDGs
- Alignment of SDGs and national priorities
- Localization of SDGs
- Public awareness and outreach

75. **Sint Maarten**

- Multi-Country Agricultural Productivity Programme (MAAPS) Mission with UNDP in May 2018
- Alignment of recovery plan with national development plan
- Formal institutional and financial framework
- Set-up of a coordination body
- Statistical capacity for baseline indicators
- Stakeholder engagement
- Youth and public sensitization (localization of SDGs)

7. Closure of the workshop

76. The former Special Adviser in the Office of the President of the UNGA thanked ECLAC for such an important and informative workshop and reiterated her availability and commitment to continue to support the Caribbean subregion in the implementation of the SDGs.

77. The former ASG of UNDESA also acknowledged the work done by ECLAC in the Caribbean subregion in the area of the SDGs. She expressed her delight to be back in the Caribbean with the opportunity to assist Member States and make a valuable contribution to the sustainable development of the subregion. She emphasized that the sustainability of the Caribbean subregion is under constant threat due to economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities, which must be taken into consideration. Therefore, the way forward lies in regional unity and in pursuing a common approach as well as the duplication of best practices and skill sets which workshops such as the current one promote.

78. The Director, ECLAC Caribbean thanked the participants of the workshop for their engagement and contributions. She gave special thanks to the expert team of the former ASG of UNDESA and the former Special Adviser in the Office of the President of the UNGA for their enlightening contribution for the benefit of all the participating countries. She then informed the participants that they would be contacted in the first quarter of 2018 to be advised of the next stage of the projects. She ended her comments by highlighting that the way to make a difference is for the Member States to engage the creativity of their people and draw on the resources that are available to advance development.

Annex I**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****A. Member States****GRENADA**

- Issac Bhagwan, Senior Project Officer, Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic and Technical Cooperation
- Titus Antoine, Project Officer 1, Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic and Technical Cooperation
- Raphael Joseph, Head of National Sustainable Development Plan, 2030

GUYANA

- Troy Torrington, Director of Multilateral and Global Affairs

SAINT LUCIA

- Nadia Wells-Hyacinth, Chief Economist, Division of Economic Development
- Fercinta Louisy, Foreign Service Officer, Department of External Affairs

B. Associate members**ARUBA**

- Maria Loreto-Pita, Vice Chair, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Commission
- Marcelino Kock, Policy Advisor, Department of Economics Affairs, Commerce and Industry

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

- Elvia Maduro, Deputy Secretary, Premier's Office and Assistant to Deputy Regional Authorizing Officer

SINT MAARTEN

- Lucrecia Morales, Program Manager, Department of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
- Joy-Ann van Arneman, Senior Statistician, Department of Statistics

C. United Nations Programmes and Funds**United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO)**

- Narissa Seegulam, United Nations Coordination Analyst, Trinidad and Tobago

D. Special Guests

- Elizabeth Thompson, Former Assistant Secretary General, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Ambassador Dessima Williams, Former Special Adviser on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, Office of the President of the United Nations General Assembly

ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

- Diane Quarless, Director
- Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Artie Dubrie, Sustainable Development Officer, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit
- Francis Jones, Population Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Lydia Rosa Gény, Associate Social Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Candice Gonzales, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Colleen Skeete, Team Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Adanna Cudjoe, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Leeanna Seelochan, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit

Annex II**PROGRAMME**

Subregional workshop on implementing evidence-based policy planning for sustainable development

Distr.
LIMITED

Port of Spain, 13-14 December 2017

12 December 2017

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME**Day 1: Wednesday 13 December**

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 08:30 – 09:00 | Registration |
| 09:00 – 09:30 | Opening of the workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome remarks by Diane Quarless, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean |
| 09:30 – 11:00 | Implementation of Evidence-Based Processes in Development Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiary countries |
| 11:00 – 11:15 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 11:15 – 12:30 | Discussion |
| 12:30 – 14:00 | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 14:00 – 15:15 | Institutionalizing evidence-based policy planning in national development processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean |
| 15:15 – 15:30 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 15:30 – 16:15 | Finalization of GIZ project activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean |
| 16:15 – 17:00 | Proposed activities under the DA project |

- Diane Quarless, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

Day 2: Thursday, 14 December

09:00 – 09:30

Summary of Day 1

09:30 – 11:00

Other SDG-related technical assistance projects in the Caribbean

- Development partners

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee break

11:15 – 12:30

Priority areas for technical assistance in implementing the SDGs
Facilitator: Diane Quarless, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

12:30 – 13:00

Closing

- Diane Quarless, Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

13:00 – 14:30

Lunch



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