



DEBT SWAP

ECLAC BUILDS SUPPORT FOR
DEBT SWAP ADAPTATION
INITIATIVE

REGIONAL DIALOGUE

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PRESIDENT
VISITS ECLAC CARIBBEAN TO ADDRESS
REGIONAL DIALOGUE

DISASTER GUIDE

ECLAC'S NEW DISASTER
ASSESSMENT EXERCISE GUIDE



ECLAC

CONTENTS



4

Article

ECLAC builds support for debt swap adaptation initiative

6

Feature Article

Trinidad and Tobago President visits ECLAC Caribbean to address regional dialogue

10

Article

BVI Parliament presented with ECLAC DaLA assessment report

12

Article

ECLAC's Debt Swap proposal shared at UNCTAD meeting

18

State of Affairs

Recent activity by Caribbean governments

22

ECLAC Caribbean Family

ECLAC staff coordinates flood relief drive for Trinidad and Tobago

Issued on a monthly basis, The Hummingbird offers strategic insights into the latest projects, publications, technical assistance missions and research carried out by ECLAC Caribbean. In addition to these, sneak previews are provided of the most salient upcoming events, alongside enriching follow-ups to previously covered issues. With a view to featuring a variety of facets of Caribbean life and lifestyle, The Hummingbird also zooms in on cultural activities and landmark occurrences through an eye-opening regional round-up.

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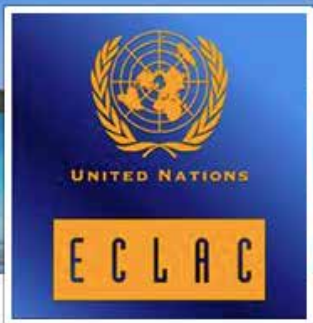
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ECLAC CARIBBEAN



UNITED NATIONS



ECLAC Caribbean
Non-profit Organisation

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Timeline

About

Events

Photos

More



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January Events

1

New Years Day
1 January 2019

8

UN-Women, Executive Board, Election of Bureau,
New York
8 January 2019

21

Executive Board of UNDP/ UNFPA/UNOPS, First Regular
Session, New York
21 - 25 January 2019

24

International Day of Education
24 January 2019

28

UNCCD, Committee for the Review of the
Implementation of the Convention, Georgetown
28 - 30 January 2019



ECLAC Caribbean

Posted Nov 24

Scientists have been telling us for decades. Far too many leaders have refused to listen. Far too few have acted with the vision the science demands - UN SG Antonio Guterres



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ECLAC Caribbean

Posted Dec 7

#ECLACCaribbean has taken steps recently to advance its Debt for Climate Adaptation Swap Initiative.



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ECLAC Caribbean

Posted Nov 29

"We share the view of American abolitionist and statesman, Frederick Douglass, who said "it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." H.E. Paula-Mae Weeks



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ECLAC BUILDS SUPPORT FOR DEBT SWAP ADAPTATION INITIATIVE

In 2019 Caribbean countries will continue to grapple with the ongoing challenges posed by the high debt burden and debt servicing costs, which limit the ability of many governments to meaningfully address such development aspirations as the Sustainable Development Goals.

ECLAC Caribbean acknowledges that the debt accumulation should not be viewed simply as the result of policy missteps, but is the consequence of structural factors, including the increased expenditures required to address the impact of extreme climactic events, such as hurricanes, as well as negative economic shocks. In addition, many countries have been experiencing low growth, especially since the global crisis of 2008/09 which has made it difficult for them to meet their debt servicing obligations. In this context, the Commission recently

took steps to advance its Debt for Climate Adaptation Swap Initiative, which was first presented to its Member States at the Caribbean Development Cooperation Committee meeting in 2016.

A mission led by Deputy Director, Dr. Dillon Alleyne, met with senior government officials and policy makers in Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to discuss progress and to build support for the initiative from 20-22 November 2018. These countries including Saint Lucia were identified as ideal candidates to be part of the first phase of the initiative.

The initiative is designed to assist Caribbean economies with financing, climate change adaptation and mitigation projects, and helping to jump start economic growth, while at the same time providing debt relief.

In Antigua and Barbuda, Dr. Alleyne met with the Permanent Secretary, the deputy Permanent Secretary and Ambassador of the Ministry of Finance, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister Gaston Brown.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, meetings were held with the Minister for Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development, Industry, Information and Labour, the Honourable Camillo Gonsalves, along with representatives from the planning, budget and debt management departments of the Finance Ministry and the Sustainable Development Unit.

The meetings addressed modalities for the sharing of critical data required to fully understand the debt challenges of these countries. They also offered an opportunity to update the governments on



MONTSERRAT HOLDS SUCCESSFUL LITERARY FESTIVAL

progress being made on shaping the initiative, including recent discussions advanced by ECLAC Caribbean Director, Diane Quarless, with the Green Climate Fund during its structured dialogue with the Caribbean, held in Grenada during 6-9 November 2018.

Following these meetings, both Prime Minister Brown and Minister Gonsalves reaffirmed their continue commitment to pursuing the debt swap initiative with ECLAC.

As part of the continuing effort to advance the initiative, Ms. Quarless and Dr. Alleyne met with representatives from the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) to discuss the next steps on 28 November 2018. The ECCB is a member of the initiative's Task Force, which was set up to facilitate strategic engagement leading to the successful launch of the Debt for Climate Adaptation Swap Initiative. ■

Now in its 10th year, Montserrat's Literary Festival, the Alliouagana Festival of the Word, was held during November 2018, with the theme 'Understanding Legacies, Celebrating Achievements, Embracing Tomorrow'.

The Festival is organized every year by the head of the local Open Campus of the University of the West Indies, Gracelyn Cassell, with the help of staff and volunteers. Once again, the ministry of education collaborated with the Open Campus, and very appropriately held their Reading Week to coincide with the Festival.

Events included interactive visits to schools by government representatives, along with visiting authors and UWI professors. There was an impressive Book Parade, as children dressed as characters from storybooks, paraded from Carr's Bay to the Little Bay basketball arena.

Primary school children were also the focus of the challenging spelling and reading competitions, organized and coordinated by

librarian Sonja Smith and bookshop owner Barbara Arrindell.

Premier Donaldson Romeo also hosted a reception in honour of the Festival's patron, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles. This was followed by the Alphonsus 'Arrow' Cassell annual lecture, this year presented by recently retired Jamaican UWI professor Carolyn Cooper, who spoke about 'Making work: Capital investments in the creative/cultural industries'.

In discussing the sexual and violent content of some Jamaican music, Professor Cooper pointed out that even Shakespeare plays contain sex and violence. There was also an ingenious and well received medley of Arrow's songs sung by a group of volunteers, in tribute to the international singer.

The feature address at the opening ceremony of the Festival, was Professor Beckles, whose topic, 'What next for Caribbean people?' dealt with issues ranging from reparations for slavery and colonialism to cricket. ■



FEATURE ARTICLE

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PRESIDENT
VISITS ECLAC CARIBBEAN TO
ADDRESS REGIONAL DIALOGUE



The President of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), Her Excellency Paula Mae-Weekes, delivered a keynote address during the first regional dialogue “On the road to equality: 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child”. The event was held at ECLAC’s central headquarters in Santiago, Chile and provided an opportunity for children’s authorities, government officials and young people from Latin America and the Caribbean to reaffirm the urgency of guaranteeing, protecting and promoting the rights of boys, girls and adolescents.

[READ MORE](#)



Trinidad and Tobago President visits ECLAC Caribbean to address regional dialogue

The gathering was organized by ECLAC and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

President Weekes, who communicated via videoconference from ECLAC Caribbean's office in Port of Spain, affirmed that there are shared challenges in the region, arising from underdevelopment, that undermine efforts to give effect to the rights established in the Convention.

Notwithstanding, she noted that strides have been made in strengthening the legislative framework around the care and protection of children in the Caribbean.

"In 2017, we (Trinidad and Tobago)

progressed in the realm of child protection with the eradication of child marriage, a significant milestone given the multicultural and multi religious nature of our society. Prior to 2017, legislation peculiar to the Muslim, Hindu and Orisha faiths permitted marriage of girls as young as 12 and boys as young as 16," stated President Weekes.

The President highlighted that the majority of islands and territories in the Caribbean, including Trinidad and Tobago, now has universal access to primary and secondary education, an achievement that reduces gender inequalities. She pointed out that Trinidad and Tobago had also proven itself a regional leader in child development with the establishment of the Children's Court in 2016. The court, which deals with all child related matters involving persons

under the age of 18, is the first of its kind in the CARICOM region. President Weekes lamented that protecting and promoting the rights of children with disabilities remains a significant legislative gap in Trinidad and Tobago. "Although the Framework for the Care and Protection of Children with Disabilities policy is in the pipeline, we lack comprehensive legislation and our education system is geared towards those who learn via traditional approaches. We are making concrete steps to attain structural and social progress in this area."

Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC's Executive Secretary, stated that since its approval in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by all the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, demonstrating the region's deep



commitment to the fundamental values of children.

In the framework of the dialogue's inauguration, ECLAC's ES presented the document, 'Latin America and the Caribbean 30 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child'. This document was produced jointly with UNICEF, and examines the progress and pending challenges regarding the main indicators for a selection of 10 rights contained in the Convention. "Poverty has the face of a child because, despite the achievements made in recent years, it continues affecting boys, girls and adolescents from 0 to 14 years of age to a greater extent, moving from 60% in 2002 to 47% to 2016," she warned. ■

“

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by all the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Alicia Bárcena - Executive Secretary of ECLAC

”





BVI PARLIAMENT PRESENTED WITH ECLAC DALA ASSESSMENT REPORT

Director of ECLAC Caribbean, Diane Quarless, attended a sitting of the British Virgin Islands' (BVI) parliament on 29 November 2018, to which she had been invited, to officially present a report on ECLAC's findings from a Damage and Loss assessment (DaLA) exercise. Last year, Hurricanes Irma and Maria caused widespread damage to assets, infrastructure and wildlife in the BVI, following which ECLAC was invited to carry out a DaLA.

At the parliamentary session, which included the Premier, the Honourable Dr. D. Orlando Smith, as well as various other officials, Quarless, who was accompanied by a technical team, outlined the various economic effects observed throughout the territory's major islands of Tortola, Anegada and Jos van Dyke.

The head of the Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit (SDDU), Dr. Omar Bello, who

formed part of the technical team, accepted questions from the members of parliament related to ECLAC's assessment, provided insights into the data, and explained several economic projections. In his key messages to the parliament, Dr. Bello emphasized that the process of rebuilding and recovery in the BVI must be well planned and executed.

As a follow-up to the presentation of the results of the DaLA, the ECLAC Caribbean team led a training session that showed officials and technical personnel how to use the same methodology. ECLAC team members, Dr. Bello and Blaine Marcano introduced attendees, with appropriate examples, to the methodology used for assessing the costs of a disaster to the infrastructure, social and the productive sectors.

Coordinated by the Office of the Premier, the training course's participants included

representatives from various ministries, including those responsible for public works, utilities, communication and tourism, as well as technical staff from the utility and telecommunications companies. Participants were keen to ask questions about how ECLAC had carried out the assessment of the effects of Hurricanes Irma and Maria the year before. One of the sectors of great interest during the sessions was the tourism sector, as many tourists visit the BVI every year via cruises and yachts.

The training programme came as a part of a series of courses that ECLAC Caribbean, with funding from the CCRIF SPC (formerly the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility), is offering to the islands in which ECLAC led DaLAs during the 2017 hurricane season. ECLAC's goal with the series of training sessions, is to transfer the disaster assessment knowledge



SMOKEY ROBINSON SIGNS ON FOR SAINT KITTS MUSIC FESTIVAL

to these countries. Other countries benefited by these trainings have been Anguilla and The Bahamas. ■

The ECLAC Caribbean team led a training session that showed officials and technical personnel how to use the same methodology.



Music legend Smokey Robinson has signed on for this year's 23rd edition of the Saint Kitts and Nevis Music Festival. Robinson will be joining a lineup that already includes artists French Montana, Popcaan and Davido.

"It is gratifying to see these top musical artists join the roster for the 2019 Music Festival," said Tourism Minister, Lindsay Grant. "Each year, this event features top international acts along with a mix of local and regional talent showcasing a broad range of musical genres. It is one of the reasons that our Music Festival is a unique event and appeals to such a wide audience."

In recent years, the festival has become one of the premier music gatherings in the Caribbean and provides a significant summertime boost for the island. Robinson has been making (and breaking) records since the 1960s, when his group, the Miracles, produced 26 top-40 hits. While the summer fiesta is about fun and entertainment, it also has great economic value to the 45,000 citizens of the island and also the

sister island of Nevis, which lies to the south, across the two-mile Narrows.

The birth of the festival in 1996 was driven mainly by economic factors that were characterized by very low occupancy levels in local hotels and a reduction in overall business activity on the island. The main objectives were to increase visitor arrivals; improve hotel occupancies; stimulate greater economic activity across all commercial sectors; create greater international awareness for the destination as a viable option for visitors; while also producing a world class entertainment event attractive and appealing to Kittitians/Nevisians and tourists.

There was also another objective. The organizers were determined to use the festival as a platform to roll out Kittitian talent and to also expose local performers to visiting artistes, promoters and tourists. Two decades later, there is no doubt that the festival has enhanced the tourism product and strategically positioned St. Kitts as an attractive tourist destination. ■



ECLAC'S DEBT SWAP PROPOSAL SHARED AT UNCTAD MEETING

The second session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development (IGE FfD), which was held in Geneva, Switzerland in early November 2018, focused on the areas of debt and debt sustainability and interrelated issues, as outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA).

The AAAA is the outcome document the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which was held in Addis Ababa in 2015 and is a global framework on financing for development.

ECLAC Caribbean's Deputy Director, Dr. Dillon Alleyne, who represented ECLAC at the meeting organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), had the opportunity to share ECLAC's Debt for Climate Change Adaptation Swap Proposal. This is a regional response to the Caribbean's debt challenge, which envisages channeling pledged climate funds to write down Caribbean debt, and also the creation of a Caribbean Resilience Fund (CRF) with the support of multilateral institutions and donor countries.

Dr. Alleyne outlined that the underlying causes of the high debt includes inherent structural weaknesses such as falling import productivity and loss of tourism competitiveness, low technological intensity of exports and high debt service costs

despite the prevailing low interest rate regime. He also noted that the subregion was also highly vulnerable to extreme weather events.

"Some of the challenges to reducing the debt includes reduced access to concessional financing, due to the middle-income status of Caribbean SIDS. With projected low growth, the possibility of US rates rising and existing borrowing requirements, debt service will remain high," Dr. Alleyne said.

He explained that ECLAC's Debt Swap proposal works in the following way. Countries with high debt from official creditors would use the Global Climate Fund (GCF) to write-off multilateral and bilateral debt at a discount, while countries with high debt from private creditors might use a debt buyback scheme to address the debt to private creditors.

Dr. Alleyne informed that a number of ECLAC's Member States have endorsed the proposal, therefore governments, creditors and climate donors would now need to come together to negotiate the details of the arrangement. In the meantime, he said that ECLAC stands ready to engage key stakeholders and partners in order to advance this initiative. ■



WORLD'S LARGEST PASSENGER SHIP SAILS MAIDEN VOYAGE AROUND THE CARIBBEAN

The world's largest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean's new Symphony of the Seas, sailed into Nassau, Bahamas, in November 2018 to a chorus of applause, bringing with her a highly anticipated economic boost for the historic city.

On board for the inaugural cruise of the sleek white-hulled ship, which boasts new technology designed to make the super ship environmentally friendly, were a handful of invited guests including 200 members of international media. They joined dignitaries, in addition to Bahamian Minister of Tourism, Dionisio D'Aguilar and Miami-Dade Mayor, Carlos Gimenez, other local VIPs along with passengers for a lively ceremony in the ship's iconic amphitheatre at the stern.

"This is the newest ship in our fleet and of course the largest cruise ship in the world. Today marks Symphony's inaugural visit to Nassau, Bahamas, a destination that we visit also with the three sister ships of Symphony, that's Oasis of the Seas, Allure and Harmony," said Royal Caribbean International president and CEO Michael Bayley. As of 9 July 2017, Symphony is the largest passenger ship in the world by gross tonnage, at 228,021 GT, surpassing her sister ship Harmony of the Seas.

Symphony was built in the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard in Saint Nazaire,

France. She is the fourth ship in Royal Caribbean's Oasis-class series. The massive vessel measures 361.011 metres (1,184.42 ft) in length and has a gross tonnage of 228,081 across 18 decks. She is able to accommodate 5,518 passengers at double occupancy up to a maximum capacity of 6,680 passengers, as well as a 2,200-person crew.

Facilities include a children's water park, a full-size basketball court, ice-skating rink, and two 43-foot rock-climbing walls. There is also a 'central park', which contains over 20,000 tropical plants.

Back in March 2018, Royal Caribbean announced that significant improvements at its private island in The Bahamas – Coco Cay – will be completed in phases between late 2018 and late 2019.

The enhancements will include the construction of a pier that can accommodate Oasis-class ships, more guest amenities and new venues for local vendors and craftsmen to promote Bahamian culture.

Royal Caribbean ships take 1.7 million visitors annually to The Bahamas and that number is expected to grow as more ships are deployed to the Caribbean. ■



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA FEATURED IN POPULAR TELEVISION SERIES 'MARRIED TO MEDICINE'

Antigua and Barbuda was the choice for the producers from the popular US reality television series, 'Married to Medicine'. The choice was made by the BRAVO network after it sought a romantic and picturesque destination to hold a vow renewal ceremony. Originally planned as a single episode, there was so much on the island that the destination was featured in three separate episodes.

'Married to Medicine', which boasts a weekly viewership of over 1.5 million, chronicles the lives of seven women in the Atlanta medical community; with three of the women being doctors themselves while the others are doctors' wives. It shows the group as they balance their social circles, careers, and families.

"This television shoot provided us with the opportunity to showcase the best of Antigua

and Barbuda to a huge audience in our primary source market," said Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Tourism and Investment, Charles 'Max' Fernandez.

"Our resorts, beaches and attractions will stream in to living rooms across the country, and around the world through syndication and digital viewing."

Colin C. James, CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority said that partnering with the popular series for a vow renewal was a perfect fit for Antigua and Barbuda in the sixth season of the show.

"We were just named as the Most Romantic Destination in the Caribbean by the industry leading WTA [World Travel Awards] for the fourth year in a row, and we are blessed with diverse scenery and activities that allowed for various filming opportunities. We are excited

to raise awareness of exactly why viewers should be planning their next trip to our island," James said.

Tamarind Hills Villas, located on a sunset-facing bluff on Antigua's west coast, showcasing two of the island's most beautiful beaches, hosted the cast.

The popular show spent ten days in Antigua from May 28 through June 6 2018, filming at a variety of locations and properties. Among the highlights of their stay were a visit to Stingray City; culinary classes for the ladies and a cricket match for the gents; and for the finale, a spectacular torch lit dinner on the beach with live entertainment under the stars. ■



DEBT SUSTAINABILITY STUDY AND ITS IMPACT ON ECONOMIC GROWTH

'Married to Medicine', which boasts a weekly viewership of over 1.5 million, chronicles the lives of seven women in the Atlanta medical community

Over the past two decades, the debt of Caribbean countries has remained a worrisome issue to policy makers. In 2017, the total public debt of the region was approximately US \$56 billion, which represents 71.7% of the regional GDP. Despite the fiscal reforms undertaken in recent years, some countries are still struggling to manage their debt. This has been aggravated by low growth since the 2007-2008 financial crisis.

It is within this context that an ongoing study by ECLAC Caribbean examines whether the public debt has the potential to derail the achievements of some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with respect to poverty, health and education in the Caribbean.

The ECLAC paper, entitled 'Study on debt sustainability, its impact on economic growth and ability of the Caribbean to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)', uses Belize, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago as case studies. ■



ECLAC'S NEW DISASTER ASSESSMENT EXERCISE GUIDE

In 2017 ECLAC published its new Disaster Assessment Methodology Exercise Guide, which is a follow-up tool to its well-known 2014 Handbook for Disaster Assessment. Since it was first published, the Handbook has been widely used as the basis for disaster training courses in the Caribbean and Latin America.

With the new exercise guide, the exercises described in the Handbook will be reinforced by way of estimates the effects of disasters, namely damage, losses and additional costs. The newly designed practical exercises, of which there are 12, also accompany solutions for the targeted sectors, which include electricity, education housing, transport and health.

With the global focus on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is important to note that nine of the 17 goals relate directly to disaster risk management. Therefore, this publication is timely in acknowledging the vital need to develop strategies which can assist in the reduction of disasters. ■

UN CARES TRAINING PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE UN WORKPLACE

The UN Cares group in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) recently wrapped up the last of a series of training sessions, which were held throughout the past year for staff of the various UN agencies in the country. Over 45 staff members from UNHCR, ECLAC and PAHO/WHO attended this last Core Module session of the UN Cares training on 16 November 2018 at Chaguaramas.

The global UN Cares concept was originally designed in 2008 to reduce the impact



of HIV on the UN workplace by supporting universal access to a comprehensive range of benefits for all UN personnel and their families. These benefits – known as the UN Cares 10 Minimum Standards – include information, learning and training, voluntary counseling and testing, access to male and female condoms, and emergency prevention measures in case of accidental exposure, among others. The Standards also call for increased measures to stop stigma and discrimination.

To broaden its scope, a global awareness-raising campaign called 'UN for ALL' was developed under the UN Cares. It offers a half-day face-to-face workshop to UN staff around the world, to discuss topics that impact them, such as unconscious bias, discrimination and stigma against colleagues with disabilities, LGBTI persons, those with mental health

conditions and those with substance dependence, among others.

In T&T, the campaign was implemented by all UN Cares focal points from different UN organizations, being mandated to conduct the workshops in order to discuss these global thematic areas, with a particular focus on the specificities faced by colleagues in the subregion.

The workshops were successful in providing a safe space and an informative opportunity for staff to dialogue and share their experiences. This peer to peer exchange allowed participants to acknowledge some of their unconscious biases, while encouraging them to think differently about diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace. Participants remarked that they valued all sessions of the module, in particular the one on "inclusive language", and many

committed to make personal actions to be more inclusive and use the appropriate UN terminology.

The facilitators for the training sessions were Lydia Rosa Gény, Jeniffer Sankar-Sooknarine (all from ECLAC), and Ella Gaspard (UNFPA), with the support of Hidenobu Tokuda (ECLAC), Wayde Ramnarine (UNIC), Aria Geiser (UNDP) and Narissa Seegulam (Office of the Resident Coordinator). ■

The workshops were successful in providing a safe space and an informative opportunity for staff to dialogue and share their experiences.



STATE *of* AFFAIRS



The Bahamas

STREET LIGHT PROJECT

- Dec -

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) approved funding for a project to reduce the cost of street lighting to the government of The Bahamas by about 20 per cent. Expected savings from this project is likely to save the country approximately US \$3 million per year. The project will see 30,500 existing street lights replaced with energy-efficient light-emitting diode (LED) lighting. The Bahamas Power and Light Company (BPL) will implement the project.

GENERAL DATA DISSEMINATION

- Dec -

The Bahamas has implemented the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Enhanced General Data Dissemination System (e-GDDS) by publishing critical data through the National Summary Data Page (NSDP). The page aims to serve as a one-stop publication vehicle for essential macroeconomic data on national accounts, government operations and debt, monetary and financial sector, and the balance of payments.



Barbados

NEW LEGISLATION

- Jan -

The government of Barbados has introduced new legislation that will place a cap on contingencies, prevent the Central Bank of Barbados (CBB) from overprinting money, and allow for an independent audit of government's finances. Prime Minister, Mia Mottley, has described the Public Finance Management Bill 2019 as one "of the most important pieces of legislation that will be passed in a post-Independence Barbados" and that the bill, "will be able to significantly increase the level of accountability of a government."

ROSS UNIVERSITY

- Jan -

On 5 January, the Ross University School of Medicine's main campus was opened in Barbados with a ceremony involving Prime Minister, Mia Mottley, Adtalem Global Education president and CEO, Lisa Wardell, as well as other dignitaries. At the ceremony, Prime Minister Mottley explained that "Barbados' partnership with Adtalem Global Education is indeed a valuable element in this country's thrust to expand its reach in the area of educational tourism." The Prime Minister also expressed the hope that visitors would "grasp the opportunities to become immersed in our culture."



Suriname

UAE-CARIBBEAN RENEWABLE ENERGY FUND

- Jan -

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFAIC) of the United Arab Emirates announced the launch of the third cycle of the US\$50 million UAE-Caribbean Renewable Energy Fund (CREF). Fully financed by Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), the national entity for international development aid, the UAE-CREF, the largest renewable energy initiative of its kind in the Caribbean region, allocates funding to projects delivered in Jamaica, Cuba, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago.

AIRPORT EXPANSION FUNDING

- Dec -

Suriname President, Desi Bouterse, is seeking permission from Parliament to borrow US \$205 million from the Exim Bank of China to expand and modernize the Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport (JAP). The president must seek an amendment to allow his government permission to deviate from the obligatory national debt ceiling. China Harbour Engineering Corporation (CHEC) has been in talks with the government of Suriname to finance the upgrading of JAP.



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS ROLLS OUT VIDEO VIGNETTES ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA

Americans across a wintry continent have been viewing a major national television advertising campaign promoting the warm welcome awaiting them in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

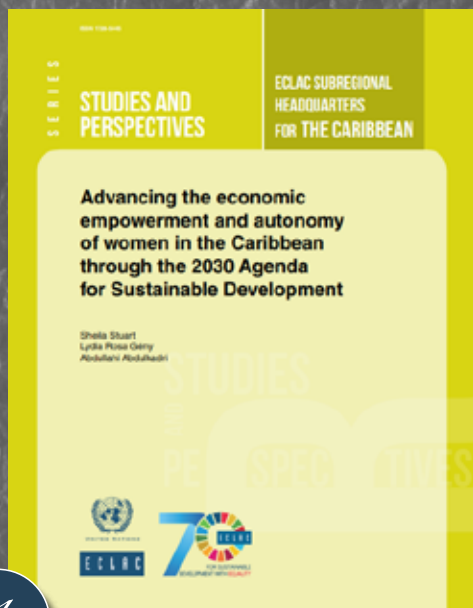
The six-week campaign, which showcases elements of the “Real Nice” campaign, highlights mid-range hotels on St. Thomas, including Bolongo Bay Beach Resort, Emerald Beach Resort, Lindbergh Bay Hotel and Villas, Mafolie Hotel & Restaurant, Point Pleasant Resort, Secret Harbour Beach Resort and Windward Passage. Gallows Point Resort on St. John is also featured.

The campaign will next shift its focus towards accommodations on St. Croix, which has received strong social media exposure in recent weeks through the “Off The Beaten Path” destination series.

The video posts will be complemented by photographs depicting the beauty of the destination. For added authenticity, local photographers, and visitors are being invited to submit their images.

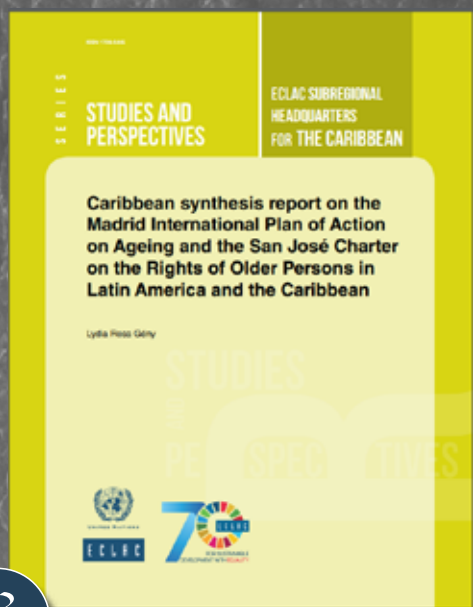
Recently, BVI’s Tourism Department, announced its support of the Territory’s private sector partners with the relaunch of a US \$3 million marketing campaign to stimulate travel to St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas in the coming months.

The highly anticipated ‘Real Nice’ campaign was on hold during Fiscal Year 2017-2018 due the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. ■



1.

Advancing the economic empowerment and autonomy of women in the Caribbean through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



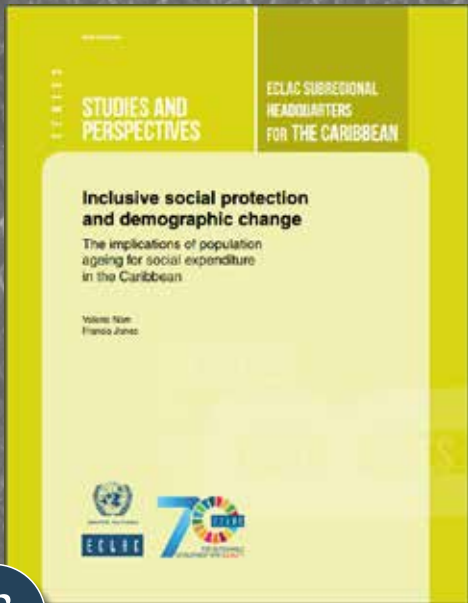
3.

Caribbean synthesis report on the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the San José Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Inclusive social protection and demographic change: The implications of population ageing for social expenditure in the Caribbean

2.

DIANE'S CORNER

The Director's views and thoughts on the occasion of:



DIANE QUARLESS
Director of ECLAC Caribbean

16/10



Second Conference of the Caribbean Association of Women in the Maritime Sector

While women have scaled the walls of the sanctuary of so many traditionally male professions, the maritime sector has remained one of the last, resolute hold-outs. The time has come to change this metric.

#DirectorsTake

<http://vrb.al/directors-take>



ECLAC CARIBBEAN *Family*

CHRISTMAS LUNCH WITH UNIC

This is the season to be merry – and folks at ECLAC Caribbean’s annual Christmas lunch had a good share of merriment a few weeks ago. In addition, we welcomed our colleagues from the UN Information Centre office in Trinidad and Tobago, to share a meal with us. Here are some wonderful memories in photos from that day. ■





Ultimate Potato Soup

What you will need:

1 pound bacon, chopped
2 stalks celery, diced
1 onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
8 potatoes, peeled and cubed
4 cups chicken stock, or enough to cover potatoes
3 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon dried tarragon
3 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro
Salt and pepper to taste

What you need to do:

1. In a Dutch oven, cook the bacon over medium heat until done. Remove bacon from pan, and set aside. Drain off all but 1/4 cup of the bacon grease.
2. Cook celery and onion in reserved bacon drippings until onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic, and continue cooking for 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Add cubed potatoes, and toss to coat. Saute for 3 to 4 minutes. Return bacon to the pan, and add enough chicken stock to just cover the potatoes.
4. Cover, and simmer until potatoes are tender.
5. In a separate pan, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk in flour. Cook, stirring constantly, for 1 to 2 minutes.
6. Whisk in the heavy cream, tarragon, and cilantro. Bring the cream mixture to a boil, and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened. Stir the cream mixture into the potato mixture.
7. Puree about 1/2 the soup, and return to the pan.
8. Adjust seasonings to taste.



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