



## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

ECLAC'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST STREET  
HARASSMENT

## PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW

ECLAC LAUNCHES THE  
PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW OF THE  
CARIBBEAN

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CARIBBEAN EXPERTS ADVANCE  
KNOWLEDGE ON SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT POLICIES



ECLAC

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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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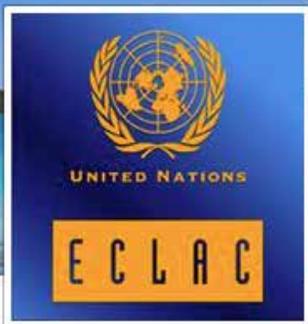
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# ECLAC CARIBBEAN



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## December Events

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World AIDS Day  
1 December 2019

2

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery  
2 December 2019

3

International Day of Persons with Disabilities  
3 December 2019

10

Human Rights Day  
10 December 2019

18

International Migrants Day  
18 December 2019



**ECLAC Caribbean**

Posted Dec 17

Learn more about the first environmental treaty of #LatinAmerica and the #Caribbean in this 30-minute Introductory course: <http://bit.ly/2YVEjVU>



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**ECLAC Caribbean**

Posted Nov 26

Gender-Based Violence, including street harassment, is a pervasive problem in Trinidad and Tobago. It's all about respect! #StopStreetHarassment



#StopStreetHarassment

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**ECLAC Caribbean**

Posted Nov 23

The regional portal on the development of the #SDGs is of great importance to us and it will provide a platform to develop our own systems. - Keith Francis, SVG



I think it demonstrates what's going on in the region

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## CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT

**A**t least 21 member states and three associate members of ECLAC Caribbean recently agreed on the need to seek a collaborative regional response to the demand for official statistics. This agreement was reached during the tenth meeting of the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas, which was held from 19 to 21 November 2019 in Santiago, Chile.

The countries, which included Antigua and Barbuda, Curacao, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, also approved a generic legislative proposal on official statistics. This in the form of a regional model for those countries interested in developing or reformulating the legal foundation for the functioning of their respective national statistical systems and the production of official statistics. In addition, the countries also reaffirmed their commitment to statistical development through cooperation with the regional and international statistics community, and explored forms of strengthening the participation of Caribbean countries in the Conference.

The main mandates of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, a subsidiary body of ECLAC, are to promote the development and improvement of national statistics and



their international comparability, as well as international, regional and bilateral cooperation among national offices and international and regional agencies.

Meeting highlights included a presentation by the Coordinator of ECLAC Caribbean's Social Development and Statistics Unit, Dr. Abdullahi Abdulkadri, who discussed a comparative study on statistical legislation in the Caribbean, and a presentation by the statistics authorities on a proposal for a regional website on the Sustainable Development Goals – the SDG Gateway. Developed under ECLAC's leadership in an interinstitutional fashion, in conjunction with the United Nations system's agencies, funds and programs in the region, the website will serve as a key tool for supporting countries in

the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This tool will be presented during the Fourth Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, which will be held in 2020 in Havana, Cuba, as a regional contribution to the 2030 Agenda's implementation.

In their final resolution, the participating countries supported the creation of 11 working groups, which will address the issues on statistical development that have the highest priority for the region. They also approved a joint statement about the integration of statistical and geospatial information presented at the tenth meeting. ■



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

## JAMAICA WINS MISS WORLD

**T**oni-Ann Singh claimed the Miss World 2019 crown to become the fourth Jamaican winner of the title. “To...all the girls around the world – please believe in yourself. Please know that you are worthy and capable of achieving your dreams,” the 23-year-old student tweeted after being crowned at the 69th edition of the pageant in London.

She beat 111 other contestants after impressing the judges with her answers to a variety of questions and singing Whitney Houston’s ‘I Have Nothing’.

Singh, a women’s studies and psychology student at Florida State University, aspires to be a medical doctor. Among her accomplishments, she served as president of the Caribbean students’ association on campus.

Jamaica’s Culture Minister Olivia Grange, reacting to Singh’s victory, said the beauty queen was “a most deserving winner” and she had made the entire country proud.

“She is an outstanding young woman with a wonderful personality, a beautiful soul, and extraordinary talent. She represented Jamaica so well during this competition and now we all have an amazing new Miss World. Toni-Ann is clearly the best choice,” Grange said.

“We are all walking on air, especially the girls at the Women’s Centre of Jamaica Foundation location in St Thomas — Toni-Ann is so passionate about her parish and women’s issues — and she has been working with us at the Ministry to make a difference in the lives of the young girls who attend the Centre.”

The other Jamaicans who won the title before Singh were Carole Joan Crawford in 1963, Cindy Breakspere in 1976 and Lisa Hanna in 1993. ■



**DILLON ALLEYNE**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
FOR THE CARIBBEAN

**SHELDON MC LEAN**  
COORDINATOR  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT  
ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
FOR THE CARIBBEAN



ECLAC Launches the

# PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW

of the Caribbean

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**O**ne of ECLAC's main annual flagship reports, the 'Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean', was launched on 12 December 2019 in Santiago, Chile, by Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena.

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# ECLAC launches the Preliminary Overview of the Caribbean

In her presentation, Bárcena stated that the economic overview for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2019 is occurring in a particularly complex context. She said that the region is exhibiting an economic deceleration that is widespread and synchronized among countries and sectors, topping off six consecutive years of low growth.

“Given this scenario, the region cannot withstand adjustment policies and needs policies to stimulate growth and reduce inequality. The current conditions require that fiscal policy be

centered on the reactivation of growth and on responding to growing social demands,” stated Bárcena.

In terms of growth projections, according to the report, 23 of 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries (and 18 out of 20 in Latin America) will see their growth decelerate during 2019, while 14 nations will record an expansion of 1% or less by year’s end.

For the Caribbean, Sheldon McLean, Coordinator of the Economic Development Unit of

ECLAC Caribbean, reviewed the macroeconomic performance of the economies in 2019 and outlined projections for 2020.

Overall, McLean highlighted that economic growth was subdued in 2019 across most Caribbean economies due to the impact of fiscal austerity measures in some countries and lack of investor confidence. In this regard, he noted that the weighted average real growth in the region remained unchanged at 1.4% in 2019 relative to 2018. “Among the goods-producing economies, GDP growth



Dr. Erica Wheeler, an attendee of the launch of the Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean asks about ECLAC's findings.



*Given this scenario, the region cannot withstand adjustment policies and needs policies to stimulate growth and reduce inequality. The current conditions require that fiscal policy be centered on the reactivation of growth and on responding to growing social demands.*

Alicia Bárcena - Executive Secretary, ECLAC



is expected to be 1.2% in 2019 (up from 0.8% in 2018), while the service-producing economies declined marginally to 1.7% (down from 1.8% in 2018)", McLean stated.

More in detail, on the one hand Growth among service-producing economies will decline to 1.4% in 2020 relative to 1.7% in 2019 as Bahamas bears the economic impact of the passage of hurricane Dorian.

Conversely, the economies of the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) will continue to post strong growth of 4.1% led by Antigua and Barbuda (6.5%), Grenada (4.0%) and Saint Kitts and Nevis (3.5%), which is above the global growth rate of 3.4%. More specifically, strong investments, especially foreign direct investment, supported by public sector investment projects, are expected to continue to drive growth, increase employment and consumption in Antigua and Barbuda.

Growth in the Trinidad and Tobago economy is also expected to improve to 1.5% (up from 0.4% in 2019) supported by new natural gas projects and an increased implementation of public sector investment programmes ahead of the 2020 general election.

With regard to fiscal deficit, despite efforts to restore healthy public finances, there was slippage in 2019 with the deficit worsening from 1.2% of GDP in 2018 to 2.2% of GDP

in 2019 owing to relatively large increases in the deficit in a small number of countries that offset fiscal consolidation. Generally, the deficit was higher in the goods-based economies (4.0% of GDP) than in their service-based counterparts (1.5% of GDP). With an average debt-to-GDP ratio of 67.9% in 2019, at its lowest point since 2010, Caribbean economies moved closer toward the debt sustainability benchmark of 60%, a 2.6 percentage points decline relative to 2018.

As regards the impact of hurricanes on local economies, on the one hand McLean signaled the existence of economic growth in the hurricane ravaged economies of Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica as reconstruction efforts intensified, foreign direct investments strengthened and the tourism industry recovered with public sector investment support. The three fastest growing economies for 2019 were Dominica (9.0%), Anguilla (6.3%) and Antigua and Barbuda (6.2%).

On the other hand, however, in 2019 the Bahamian islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama were devastated by the passage of hurricane Dorian with an estimated total cost (damage, losses and additional costs) of US\$2.5 billion. The social sector bore the brunt of the damage at an estimated US\$1.6 billion with Abaco bearing over 85% of the impact. The mainstay tourism sector in the two islands

was severely impacted to the tune of US\$855 million. The Bahamas will need to concentrate investment in risk reduction and resilience to reduce the impact of future disasters.

ECLAC continues to engage member States that are threatened by these environmental threats, as well as economic threats such as unsustainable debt burdens and lack of concessional finance. Technical assistance has also been provided to encourage economic restructuring and industrialization. ■



## CARIBBEAN EXPERTS ADVANCE THEIR KNOWLEDGE ON POLICIES TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**E**CLAC Caribbean, together with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) and Division for Public Institutions and Digital Governance (DPIDG), recently organized a workshop under the theme, 'Integrated Policies and Policy Coherence for the SDGs'.

Held from 13 to 15 November 2019 at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre, Port of Spain, Trinidad, the workshop benefitted senior policy makers and planning officers from various Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS), who gained valuable insights into opportunities for integrated planning and policy coherence in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Speaking at the opening ceremony, ECLAC Caribbean Director, Diane Quarless, pointed to the need to mainstream resilience in sustainable development. "Given the range of vulnerabilities experienced in the Caribbean, it is timely that resilience - be it to climate change effects, extreme weather events, economic

shocks, and high levels of emigration of skilled labour, - be integrated in policies and strategies for sustainable development, and developing national capacities to do this is a necessary precondition."

Quarless also recognized that the pursuit of a successful long-term sustainable development strategy requires a strong institutional framework and the requisite skill sets to plan, implement, monitor and review policies and strategies in an integrative and cohesive manner with a vision that transcends short-term expedient objectives.

With the SDGs, a new emphasis is placed on how policy coherence and better integrated planning mechanisms can help countries strengthen their planning processes, develop holistic development frameworks reflecting global, regional and special commitments, such as the SAMOA Pathway for SIDS, and achieve their national development objectives in a more effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable way.

Also welcoming the joint initiative, Elena Proden of UNITAR mentioned that the partnership with ECLAC was instrumental in carrying out the

workshop for Caribbean countries, with the training methodology on integrated decision-making for SDGs tailored for the best possible delivery. "It is important to mention that the workshop was designed to provide space not only to share knowledge but also to bring minds together around difficult topics to eventually start seeing possible solutions to some of these issues."

Moreover, the national development planning landscape in Caribbean SIDS is eclectic, ranging from countries that have no autonomous planning agencies and no long-term development plans, to those that have a long history of development planning. Except for a few, a common challenge for these countries is the use of evidence-based processes to inform national development planning.

Veronique Verbruggen, UNDESA DPIDG, reflected on the importance of multi-stakeholder involvement to trigger the changes that are required to bring about transformation. In doing so, she referred to the work being carried out with ECLAC, aimed at contextualizing the approach to the Caribbean subregion. "The workshop has touched upon the need for incremental institutional changes to



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## ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA LAUNCHES FIRST CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE IN EASTERN CARIBBEAN

enhance and support policy coherence through a whole of government approach and meaningful stakeholder engagement.”

In this regard, it is important to note that the workshop leveraged the three organizing partners’ respective technical expertise, and included a training of trainers component which enabled participants to further transfer their acquired knowledge and skills. ■



**T**he Confucius Institute was launched recently in Antigua and Barbuda. It was officially the first such institution to be opened in the Eastern Caribbean.

The landmark event took place at the Antigua and Barbuda Institute for Continuing Education (ABICE) where the Confucius Institute will actively spearhead the teaching of the Chinese language, while striving to provide vocational education training for youth based on actual local needs.

“The institute will play a positive role in expanding educational and cultural exchanges and cooperation between the two countries and enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples,” Deputy Director of Education Lynn Weste-Payne said during the launch.

During his remarks, Minister of Education Michael Browne pointed out that “it is not enough that Math and English be compulsory subjects; Math and English being compulsory subjects was 20 years ago.

“I think that in order for our students to be adequately prepared, a foreign language must be included and regarded ... not only as an add-on, but as a must in order to survive in this global economy.”

The opening marked the completion of a journey, which began in October, 2018 when Minister Browne headed a delegation which visited the Confucius Institute Headquarters in China. ■



#StopStreetHarassment  
#LetsTalkTT

# Let women and girls walk the streets in peace

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM  
AGAINST GENDER-BASED  
VIOLENCE

Comments on their bodies  
can make them feel unsafe  
**IT'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT!**



**T**he international community, government authorities, renowned artists and civil society have come together to put an end to street harassment in Trinidad and Tobago by joining the latest campaign launched by ECLAC Caribbean.

Street harassment is a commonplace experience for women and girls in Trinidad and Tobago, and indeed across much of the Caribbean. While there are no statistics on its prevalence, women and girls report that it is a daily experience that is tolerated as a social norm.

Street harassment comes in many forms, ranging from unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favours to other verbal

or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as comments on women's appearance. Some women are more vulnerable to street harassment based on their characteristics, such as sexual orientation and ethnicity. In Trinidad and Tobago, women migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are particularly vulnerable to street harassment, exploitation and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV).

This year, ECLAC Caribbean together with the British High Commission, High Commission for Canada, Spanish Embassy, the Ministry of Education, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, as well as members of the United Nations Country Team, commemorated the 16 Days of Activism against

GBV (from 25 November to 10 December) with an initiative to raise awareness of the need to eliminate street harassment in Trinidad and Tobago.

The anti-street harassment campaign included digital billboard advertisement across the country, as well as the distribution of posters to secondary schools and police stations. The billboards and posters shared the common message: "Let women and girls walk the streets in peace. Comments on their bodies can make them feel unsafe. It's all about respect!"

While street harassment sits on the lower end of the spectrum of GBV, it is a "gateway offence" to more serious violence against women.



Let women and girls walk the streets in peace

IT'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT!

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

#StopStreetHarassment #LetsTalkTT



Let women and girls walk the streets in peace

IT'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT!

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

#StopStreetHarassment #LetsTalkTT

When street harassment is tolerated, it fuels harmful attitudes towards women which create a fertile environment for other forms of GBV.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign that calls for the elimination of all forms of GBV against women. Since 1991, the campaign has run each year from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, on 25 November, to Human Rights Day, on 10 December. Since its launch, over 6000 organizations in approximately 187 countries have participated. ■



## JIMMY CLIFF TO HEADLINE SAINT KITTS MUSIC FESTIVAL

One of the Caribbean's hottest music festivals is back again for its 24th edition next year. The Saint Kitts Music Festival will run 24 to 28 June 2020, with a slate of music stars led by Jamaican music legend Jimmy Cliff.

St. Kitts Music Festival has announced the first wave of artists who have signed on to perform at the 24th annual festival, which will take place June 24-28, 2020.

Cliff will be leading a slate of artists which include Koffee and Wizkid, among others.

"In 2019, we had a record-breaking St. Kitts Music Festival and we aim to surpass expectations again in 2020," said St Kitts Tourism Minister Lindsay Grant. "We look forward to yet another three nights of outstanding performances and we're pleased to have already confirmed these talented and acclaimed artists to perform in our 24th year."

Last year, 27,139 people attended the festival, which brought sold-out flights and the island's highest June air arrivals ever, officials said. "A 6.8 percent increase in total air passenger arrivals into St. Kitts in June 2019 as compared to June 2018 demonstrates how instrumental the event is in driving inbound tourism at the beginning of the summer season," said Racquel Brown, CEO of the St Kitts Tourism Authority. "The record-breaking June air arrivals for the past two years in a row highlights the effectiveness of our marketing initiatives. This year, we are striving to achieve even greater results."

"The St. Kitts Music Festival is known for its diverse range of international and local artists representing a variety of genres that appeal to a wide base of musical tastes," said Damion Hobson, chairman of the festival. "Therefore, we are continuing to select artists based on this successful model to continue to grow the event moving forward as this announcement of our first wave of artists attests." ■



## ECLAC MEETING DISCUSSES TRADE FINANCING FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

**S**everal policy options are available for decision makers to mitigate financing constraints for small and medium economies (SMEs), which in turn can help them participate in trade. Some of these were explored by economic and trade experts at an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) convened by ECLAC Caribbean.

Held at ECLAC Caribbean headquarters, in Port of Spain, on 22 November 2019, the EGM was based on an upcoming study that investigates the financing constraints that limit the export capacity of SMEs in the Caribbean.

SMEs face several obstacles which prevent them from obtaining finance that could help them engage in international trade. In fact, approximately 87% of the region's SMEs are unable to export their goods and services due to a number of reasons, including lack of access to finance. While big businesses can easily borrow from banks and

other financial institutions, SMEs are often unable to access these institutions. Some of the factors that restrict lending include unavailability of physical capital, restrictive lending regulations, macroeconomic weakness and inadequate lending terms.

As these conditions persist, SMEs are more likely to exit the market, to shed employment, to spend less on technology, to invest less in new capital and in marketing, and less likely to enter export or import markets. For these reasons, policy makers are justified intervening in the market to alleviate SME credit constraints.

The policy options discussed during the EGM included the implementation of government guarantee programmes, mutual guarantee schemes, the provision of government loans, endorsing the use of the securities market, and encouraging the use of lease financing, microfinancing, and reverse factoring.

Another policy identified during the EGM was the reform of the collateral lending system. Rather than continue the current system where only fixed assets can be pledged as collateral, it was suggested that governments in the region can introduce legislation which allows moveable assets to be used as collateral. This can be complemented by the formation of a registry of moveable assets and a secured transactions framework.

Participants in the EGM raised the need to increase awareness among the SMEs about available financing options along with a number of other issues, including: the overlap between SMEs and the informal sector, the role of gender in access to finance, and the potential for financing from the Caribbean diaspora.

More on this will be available when ECLAC's study on Trade Financing is published in the next few months. ■



## EVEN WITHOUT A SHIP, CAYMAN PIRATES TAKE ISLAND

**H**ow do you mount a pirate invasion when you don't have a pirate ship? That was the challenge facing Cayman's band of cutthroats this year as they planned their attack on George Town as part of the annual Pirates Week festivities.

The tall-masted Jolly Roger that has been a Pirates Week fixture for years was still undergoing repairs after running aground and partially sinking earlier this year. The Grosse Ile, a Canadian schooner that was recruited into service in the past, is no longer plying Cayman waters. Darwin Ebanks, leader of the Bloody Bay Buccaneers, said Pirates Week General Manager Melanie McField came up with a scenario that solved the problem.

"Our pirate ship was sunk by the British Navy, after successfully taking over George Town and putting Governor Martyn Roper in chains. We were rescued by the catboats," Ebanks said. In fact, to the surprise of many in the crowd lining the waterfront to enjoy the typically hilarious

cardboard boat race that day, two catboats came ashore just as the adult division participants were lined up to launch their soon-to-be-soggy craft. Interrupting the contest, Ebanks and several other pirates leapt from the catboats as they hit the sand, declaring their ship had gone down at sea.

Moments later, they spotted a conveniently moored modern sailboat on the dock of Hog Sty Bay, commandeered it and sailed away. Two hours later they would return, the sailboat, with several pirate flags flapping from its rigging, and a trailing tender fully loaded with the scurvy, scowling band of ruffians the Cayman crowd has come to expect.

While it may have lacked some of the flair of past years, the energy level of the sneering, snarling, raiders – spouting threats threaded with far more Rs than any other letters in the alphabet – seemed just as potent as ever.

The landing had the added feature of a simultaneous performance by

the 14-member Caymanite Synchro synchronised swimming team, decked out in gold caps, glitter and mermaid scale leggings.

At the same time, from beneath the surface of the water, a barnacled and seaweed-covered John Ferguson – aided by scuba divers – suddenly rose from the sea, stepping onto the beach as Davy Jones to applause from the crowd. ■



## ECLAC HOSTS TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GOVERNMENT ANALYSTS

**E**CLAC Caribbean recently organized a three-day workshop, in partnership with the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Trinidad and Tobago, to provide an overview of its trade analytical tools, which are TradeCAN, MAGIC Plus, and WITS.

The Trade Competitiveness Analysis of Nations (TradeCAN) is a global trade database system with added value in the form of a toolbox for analysis, while MAGIC Plus (Module to Analyse the Growth of International Commerce) is an improvement to a tool designed by ECLAC for the analysis of international commerce and the competitiveness of countries, products and sectors in the world's largest market, the United States of America.

WITS, or World Integrated Trade Solution, is a software that accesses and retrieves information on trade and tariffs. The software was developed through the close collaboration of

the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Trade Center (ITC), United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Taking place from 3 to 5 December 2019 at the Ministry's head office in Port of Spain, the workshop targeted trade and government representatives in Customs, the Central Statistical Office, Export Promotion Agencies, the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA).

Delivering remarks at the opening of the three-day workshop was ECLAC Caribbean's Research Assistant, Nyasha Skerrette, who mentioned that while ECLAC continues to work with member States on capacity building, assiduous work also takes place "to ensure that trade research remains a core component of our programme of work. In the past, we have conducted

studies on topics such as regional integration and diversification. Our most recent body of work has centered on trade financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and trade policy development. It is our intention in the future to extend similar technical assistance support in the area of trade policy development to other Member States."

For ECLAC Caribbean, this was the second successful collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, as earlier in 2019 the two organizations partnered on the development of a new trade policy for Trinidad and Tobago. These initiatives have contributed to building national capacity to use ECLAC's analytical tools. It is hoped that this will in turn enhance country capacity to formulate, negotiate and implement better trade policies across the region. ■

# STATE *of* AFFAIRS



Belize

## LOAN AGREEMENT WITH IDB

- Nov 4 -

The Prime Minister of Belize, Dean Barrow, and Country Representative of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Dr. Cassandra Rogers, signed a loan agreement in the amount of US\$ 14 million to strengthen tax administration in Belize. The project aims to strengthen tax administration through improved governance and operational processes.

## NATIONAL INVESTMENT POLICY

- Nov 29 -

The Government of Belize, through the Ministry responsible for Investment, Trade and Commerce, BELTRAIDE and the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF) plans to launch the Belize National Investment Policy and Strategy (NIPS) on Monday 2 December 2019. The NIPS seeks to establish a national framework that will guide both domestic and foreign investments. The primary objective of the NIPS is to determine the national direction toward economic development with greater certainty and predictability.



The Bahamas

## DORIAN LOSSES COULD SURPASS \$2.5 BILLION

- Nov 29 -

According to a report by the Governor of the Central Bank of The Bahamas (CBOB), John Rolle, the losses of assets destroyed by Hurricane Dorian could surpass \$2.5 billion, or 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Hurricane Dorian devastated parts of Abaco and Grand Bahama in early September 2019. Rolle also said that economic activity on both islands came to a halt and neither island has recorded any tourism activity given the complete shutdown of infrastructure on the islands.

## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

- Nov 28 -

The Bahamas has officially launched a digital transformation programme that will make it possible for all major Government services to be accessed online. The Government's Digital Transformation to Strengthen Competitiveness programme is being funded by a US\$30 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and will be implemented in phases over a six-year period.



Barbados

## IMF VISIT

- Nov 28 -

On September 3–6, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) team led by Bert van Selm visited Bridgetown to discuss implementation of Barbados' Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) plan which has been supported by the IMF under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF). Results of the report showed that Barbados continues to make good progress in implementing its ambitious and comprehensive economic reform program.

## NEW IMMIGRATION BILL

- Nov 24 -

The Barbados Government has approved the framework of a comprehensive review of the existing immigration policy and legislation. According to Home Affairs Minister, Edmund Hinkson, the review efforts are expected to result in a new Immigration Bill which will be presented to the Parliament in January 2020. Hinkson said that one of the proposed amendments to acquiring citizenship will be by way of grandfathering.



## EQUALITY AT THE HEART OF SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

**E**quality and sustainability have been the backbone of ECLAC's work especially over the past decade and form the basis for addressing the challenges of the 2030 Agenda. This according to Omar Bello, Coordinator of the Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit, and Luciana Fontes de Meira, Associate Environmental Officer, who co-authored a chapter in the recently published document entitled 'Planning for sustainable territorial development in Latin America and the Caribbean'.

Issued by the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), the document addresses the territorial challenges of national space, attempts to establish a horizon towards the reduction of territorial inequalities, and identifies the strategies to be adopted for the sustainable development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The chapter co-authored by Bello and Fontes de Meira emphasizes that territorial development at the national level should be understood as a commitment to reducing inequalities and to guaranteeing the right to citizenship and development of the individual. This assertion is in line with the work carried out by ECLAC during the last decade on inequality, which focuses on disparities between countries and within them, which affect differently the population residing in urban and rural territories.

Within this framework, the document published by ILPES aims to promote technical dialogue. In particular, the publication emphasizes the need for regional intergovernmental policy on the challenges of planning and public management for development, as well as for the development of methodological tools to support countries in strengthening their

national planning systems.

The document also states that the provision of collective goods makes it possible for territories to be understood as a community of individuals, that have similar conditions of access to connectivity, a healthy environment, knowledge, public integrity and public safety. This also means recognizing the right to diversity, to the preservation of cultures, identities, languages and customs that enrich societies, their economies and their democracies. ■



Photo credit: <https://www.ambergristoday.com/>

## PRIYANKA CHOPRA DONATES 50,000 PAIRS OF CROCS TO CHILDREN IN BELIZE

**U**NICEF Goodwill Ambassador Priyanka Chopra has teamed up with international footwear brand, Crocs, to collaborate on a donation campaign. She will give 50,000 pairs of classic clogs to school children in Belize.

The actress recently took to Twitter to announce the good news. She also posted a video with the caption that read: "This initiative is very special to me. What started as a conversation with @Crocs of shared interests and concerns for the children of the world, has blossomed into this amazing association with @UNICEF, an organization that is so close to my heart."

In subsequent tweets, Priyanka went on to add that they have "partnered" with the footwear brand to donate "50,000 pairs of Crocs

Classic Clogs to deserving school children in Belize" and give them a basic necessity like shoes, "which will play a role in getting these kids to school."

The actress also shared Crocs' mission in subsequent tweets revealing that it is their mission to assist everyone to be comfortable in their own shoes and that "Belize is just the start...We hope to take this wonderful initiative to children in countries across the world."

In the video, Heidi Cooley, Vice President of Global Marketing, Crocs announced, "At Crocs, we believe being comfortable in your own shoes is a first step to accessing quality education."

Priyanka recently joined hands with the footwear major and

was announced as the brand's ambassador for its 2020 'Come As You Are' marketing campaign.

Belize has a low ranking on many socio-economic metrics including education. The first shipment of Crocs – 25,000 pairs – were distributed to students in November by members of UNICEF USA and Crocs. A total of 50,000 pairs will ultimately be donated over the next year. ■

## UN4U VISIT TO ST URSULA'S PRIMARY

**A**s part of the UN Day 74th anniversary commemorations, the organization reached out to a few schools on a UN4U session with primary school children.

Participating this year was the Saint Ursula's Girls' Anglican Primary School, located on St Vincent Street, Port of Spain, where a team from the UN family in Trinidad and Tobago recently shared information with 40 standard five students. UN4U has been an ongoing initiative over the past few years, adopted by the UN in Trinidad and Tobago as part of the SG's outreach to young people. 'UN4U' outreach campaign is an educational programme which underlines the role and objectives of the UN.

This initiative was developed for UN staff members to interact with the students at a personal and child-friendly manner using appropriate tools.

Here are some memories from the visit to St Ursula's. ■





# Hummingbird Cake

## What you will need:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups canola oil
- 3 eggs
- 1 (8 ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 cups mashed bananas
- 1 cup chopped black walnuts
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 pound butter, softened
- 1 pound confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

## Method:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour two 9-inch cake pans.
2. Sift together the flour, sugar, baking soda and salt. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, combine the oil, eggs, pineapple, bananas and nuts. Add flour mixture, and mix together by hand.
4. Pour batter into prepared pans. Bake in preheated oven until a toothpick inserted in center of each pan comes out clean, about 1 hour. Remove from oven and allow to cool on racks.
5. Prepare the frosting by blending together the cream cheese, butter, sugar and vanilla until smooth. Evenly spread frosting on middle, sides and top of cake.



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