Twenty Five Years of Cooperation and Development
1975 - 2000

March 2000
CDCC

Caribbean Development & Cooperation Committee

In 1975 the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) established the Caribbean Development and the Cooperation Committee (CDCC) as a permanent subsidiary body. The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, located in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, provides the secretariat for the CDCC.

The CDCC functions as an intergovernmental organization and meets annually at the technical and every other year at the ministerial level. Its operational activities are carried out under the regular ECLAC work programme for the Caribbean which includes economic and social development planning, demography, economic surveys, the environment, international trade and trade-in-service, information for development, statistics, small island developing States, science and technology, women in development, tourism, training and assistance with the management of national economies.

MEMBER COUNTRIES

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

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Anguilla            |  Netherlands Antillies
Aruba               |  Puerto Rico
British Virgin Islands |  United States Virgin Islands
Montserrat          |  

FOCUS ECLAC in the Caribbean

is a publication of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDDC).

EDITORIAL TEAM

Director       Len Ishmael, ECLAC
Editor         Jessie-May Ventour, ECLAC
Produced by    ECLAC
Printed by     Bertec Graphix

For information in this publication contact:

ECLAC/CDCC secretariat
P.O. Box 1113, Port of Spain
Trinidad & Tobago, W.I.
Tel: (868)623-5595  Fax: (868) 623-8485
e-mail: registry@eclacpos.org
website: http://www.eclacpos.org
A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR...

The year 2000 marks the Silver Anniversary of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), one of the first regional integration forums to include member states from not only the English-speaking Caribbean, but also those from the Dutch, Spanish- and French-speaking islands. The Resolution to establish the CDCC was promoted by the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba and was adopted in May 1975 during the Sixteenth Session of ECLAC at Chaguaramas, Trinidad and Tobago. The First Session of the Committee was subsequently held in Havana in November of that same year. Indeed the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba, with strong support from the Government of the Netherlands Antilles, were among the early pioneers in the move to establish the CDCC, which success over time was due to the unstinting support and dedication of the other member States.

For the past 25 years, the CDCC has sought to foster and strengthen technical and economic cooperation among its membership, and between them and other developing countries. As the Secretariat to the CDCC, we at ECLAC have been working assiduously to ensure that we remain relevant to the needs of our member states. This we achieve through the undertaking of projects; provision of regional forums for discussions on issues topical to their future development and provision of necessary technical assistance to further their goal of sustainable development.

The prime objective of the Work Programme for the Biennium 2000-2001 is to continue to devote all of resources to assisting the member states to understand, plan for and adjust to the processes of change so inexorably upon us, and to provide data and information which is relevant and useful to the process of formulating policy, as we go forward and chart new paths in pursuit of development which is socially and culturally acceptable, economically feasible, politically viable and environmentally responsible.

This is an enormous responsibility and not one without its own challenges and constraints. A pressing reality for us is the fact that the office is responsible for a total of twenty-three countries. Although, as a regional commission and with limited resources, our activities operate mainly at the regional level, we face the challenge of delivering on the many requests for technical assistance from our member states at the national level. Therein lies an inherent challenge in the use and deployment of our resources between regional and national activities.

In this biennium, the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat will deploy its resources in support of issues of significant concern to this region. We will also continue to support the work of regional organisations such as CARICOM and the ACS. Specifically with regard to the special relationship we share with CARICOM, it must be noted that we share the mandate to serve as the Joint Interim Secretariat for the implementation of the SIDS-Plan of Action and to undertake the number of related activities. ECLAC/CDCC also supports the work of other regional institutions such as the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the University of the West Indies, University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and Organization of American States (OAS) through joint research projects, studies and activities. In addition we will continue to strengthen our working relationships with our sister organizations of the United Nations System to ensure delivery of the necessary support to our member States.

A review of our Work Programme for the 2000-2001 biennium will be undertaken by the member States at the upcoming session of the CDCC at the end of March and we will communicate a detailed description of our proposed activities in the forthcoming issue of the CDCC.
Historical Background

Three years after the creation of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean again took another bold step towards integration, co-operation and self-determination. In May 1975, at the Sixteenth Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America & the Caribbean (ECLAC), Cuba and Trinidad & Tobago spearheaded an initiative to create the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) as an intergovernmental body that would co-ordinate activities relating to development and co-operation among its member states.

The CDCC was established during a period of considerable international turbulence on the political, as well as economic fronts. It was the period in the immediate aftermath of the first major “oil shock”; amidst a “Cold War” that seemed intractably entrenched. It was also a period of profound, even radical, questioning of the allocation of benefits within the international system and of the structures that were available for international discourse, particularly between the developing countries of the south and their developed counterparts of the North. This was the era of the call for a New International Economic Order by countries of the “Third World”, a concept that had acquired general currency by that time.

In the context of the Cold War, the incorporation of Cuba into the membership of the CDCC represented a significant development at the regional level, especially bearing in mind that Cuba was also in the vanguard of the movement for the creation of the forum.

The establishment of the CDCC ushered in a period of intense activity and dynamism as member states sought to bring to fruition the ideals set out in the Committee’s newly articulated mission, which was specifically directed to economic and social development through co-operation.

The creation of the Committee also marked a watershed in the management of Caribbean issues within the United Nations system. From that time onward, policies and programmes for the implementation in the Caribbean subregion would be developed and operationalised on the basis of ideas, principles and strategies defined by the subregion itself. Indeed, this drive for recognition of the unique identity of the CDCC countries culminated in 1984 when the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) became the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The basic impetus behind the establishment of CDCC was the reality that “the Caribbean countries shared a geographic, cultural and historic proximity” and “have also inherited similar economic structures and have similarities in the majority of the social and economic problems they face”. As such, the raison
d'être was “to strengthen the unity and co-operation... in order to carry out joint activities that will benefit the sub-region's economic and social development and increase its bargaining power as regards third countries and groupings of countries”.

Those areas identified for achieving joint policies include economic complementarity, trade, obtaining financial resources, agriculture, tourism, transportation, industry, energy, the transfer of technology and technical know-how, health and education.

Since its inception, the CDCC has sought to foster and strengthen technical and economic co-operation among its membership, and between these members and other developing countries. Its activities are carried out under the regular work programme of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, which also is the secretariat of the Committee.

As secretariat to the CDCC, ECLAC co-operates with other intergovernmental bodies in the Caribbean area, including the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS).

While ECLAC and the CDCC are distinct and separate entities, they enjoy a unique relationship. The CDCC serves as a platform for the exchange of experiences and perspectives. As an intergovernmental body, the CDCC provides an essentially political forum for dialogue towards enhanced co-operation in support of the further development of the Caribbean subregion. It is also intended to advance regional integration.

The work programme of the ECLAC, for its part, is the vehicle by means of which the benefits of socio-economic development for CDCC member states are explicitly pursued. Whereas the CDCC has had to grapple with certain constraints over the years, the work programme of ECLAC remained in place. Indeed, ECLAC is regarded as a very important source of technical assistance to member states, in matters related to such areas as trade, the review of economic performance, sustainable development and social issues, among others.

**CDCC and selected regional intergovernmental organisations in the Caribbean**

**Interactions among the CDCC membership**

At the governmental level, a number of Agreements have been concluded among CDCC members, covering such areas as trade, diplomatic relations, and technical assistance, among others. Many of these agreements have been concluded at the bilateral or subregional level. These include the Free Trade Agreement signed in March 2000 between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic, the result of roughly four years of negotiation.

In addition, CARICOM states, Haiti and the Dominican Republic participate in CARIFORUM; the mechanism generated by the European Union for the conduct of its technical assistance programmes in the Caribbean.

The wider Caribbean region provides the locus of a number of integration movements. Among these are:

- The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which incorporates the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS);
- The Latin American Economic System (SELA); and
- The Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

**The CDCC and CARICOM**

The CDCC has always worked closely with CARICOM, as a direct result, *inter alia*, of the considerable overlap of the membership of both entities. The fact that the impetus for the creation of the CDCC arose from within the CARICOM membership might also be relevant in this regard.

This close working relationship was formalised in 1995, with the signing of a Memorandum of
Understanding for Co-operation between both institutions. The Memorandum provides for, *inter alia*, co-operation, consultation, exchange of information, reciprocal representation at meetings and joint implementation of projects. Invitations to participate in selected meetings of each entity are extended on a reciprocal basis.

**CDCC and SELA**

The Constituent Declaration of the CDCC, as well as the Panama Convention by virtue of which SELA was established, were adopted in 1975. CDCC member states have expressed the view that the Latin American Economic System (SELA) offered a broad framework for implementing concrete projects and initiatives, as well as for co-ordinating common actions and positions in all fields, thus facilitating greater identity of interests between the Caribbean and the rest of Latin America.

Over the years, since the forum’s inauguration, Ministers of the CDCC member countries have restated their resolve to promote the development of activities and projects beyond the scope of the CDCC, within SELA, which was recognised as an appropriate regional-level framework for co-operation, consultation and co-ordination among the member countries.

Collaboration between these two bodies has continued over the years. One of the more tangible examples of this is the Roundtable on “External Relations in the Caribbean in the next Millennium”, which was organised in October 1998. The Roundtable, organised by SELA, was hosted at the Subregional Headquarters of ECLAC/CDCC.

**The CDCC and the ACS**

The establishment of the ACS in 1995 has served only to provide new opportunities for collaboration among Caribbean countries and the various regional forums, as they embark upon programmes geared towards sustainable development in an effort to enhance the well being of their peoples. The close involvement of the ECLAC/CDCC in the development of the ACS, is yet another example of its willingness to collaborate and co-operate with the major inter-governmental agencies of the wider Caribbean. The significant overlap of the membership of these bodies and also of their work programmes provides a sound basis for co-operation, which is already in progress in a number of significant areas of mutual interest.

**CDCC into the new millennium**

The increasing number of processes and initiatives towards further integration in the Caribbean region, offer new and exciting opportunities for regional collaboration and co-operation. For example, the fact that the CDCC and ACS often have overlapping mandates provides the perfect environment for the exploitation and realisation of synergies between both forums.

Additional reasons why the Committee remains relevant to the regional integration process include the following:

1. The full integration of Cuba into the region, as evidenced by the establishment of diplomatic relations with that country by all independent members of the CDCC.
2. The general intensification of “Caribbean-Latin American relations”, in the context of a wider ECLAC membership.
3. The recognition, on the part of the CDCC membership of the continuing relevance of an
organisation of its type in the regional context, as well as in the context of the United Nations which can, among other things, bring to bear an objective perspective on development issues in the region.

4. The critical role entrusted to the ECLAC/CDCC in the implementation of the SIDS Plan of Action (SIDS/POA) and similar outcomes of other "World Conferences". This implies an enhanced role for the CDCC, both in the aggregation of national interests and priorities into regional positions for articulation at the global level, and in the translation of decisions taken at the global level into concrete action at the regional and, even, national level.

5. The strategic role that can be played by the organisation as a forum which is smaller than the ACS, that is, specific to the needs of the insular Caribbean, but more inclusive than CARICOM.

6. The forum provided by the CDCC for the exchange of experiences among its membership, recognising that while not all small States are "small" in the same way, they nevertheless, share a unique range of problems.

7. The access provided to a number of non-independent countries and territories to a regional inter-governmental organisation in which full recognition is given to their concerns and their general participation. Such access also facilitates direct participation in a number of global forums.

In response to an unprecedented level of requests within the recent past, the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat has provided invaluable technical assistance in a number of strategic areas to member States, within the limits of its resources. Such assistance has included the execution of projects in areas spanning the strengthening of statistical offices; preparation of regional officials for FTAA negotiations; the execution of studies on specific economic and social sectors; and the evaluation of the impact of natural disasters.

These interventions serve to underscore the continuing relevance of the CDCC, in areas that impact directly and favourably, on the sustainable development prospects of its membership, and the welfare of the people of the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDCC Member States and Associate Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The CDCC comprises 16 countries with full-member status...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
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<td>Barbados</td>
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<td>Belize</td>
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<td>Cuba</td>
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<td>Dominica</td>
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<td>Dominican Republic</td>
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<td>Guyana</td>
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<td>Haiti</td>
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<td>Jamaica</td>
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<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
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<td>Saint Lucia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
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<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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...and seven associate members of ECLAC...

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<tr>
<th>Countries and Dates of Past CDCC Sessions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anguilla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aruba</td>
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<tr>
<td>British Virgin Islands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montserrat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands Antilles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States Virgin Islands</td>
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In the March 2000, the Eighteenth Session of the CDCC will be held at the very venue at which the Committee was inaugurated in 1975, the Chaguaramas Hotel & Convention Centre, Trinidad & Tobago. Following is a listing of past sessions of the CDCC.
**Countries and Dates of Past CDCC Sessions Cont'd**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>VENUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDCC I</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Havana, Cuba</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC II</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC III</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Belize City, Belize</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC IV</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Paramaribo, Suriname</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC V</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Kingston, Jamaica</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC V</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Technical Session - St. George's, Grenada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCC VII</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Port-of-Spain, Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC VIII</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince, Haiti</td>
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<td>CDCC IX</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Port-of-Spain, Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC X</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Port-of-Spain, Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC XI</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC XII</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC XIII</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Kingston, Jamaica</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDCC XIV</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>St. George's, Grenada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCC XV</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Port-of-Spain, Trinidad &amp; Tobago (Technical Session only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Technical Session - Port-of-Spain, Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ministerial Session - Aruba, Netherlands Antilles</td>
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THE IMPACT OF HURRICANE LENNY ON ANGUILLA

The Anguillian tourism sector, while on the steady road to recovery, may still be suffering from the impact of Hurricane Lenny by the end of the year 2000.

This is the prognosis from a recent ECLAC study, carried out on behalf of the Government of Anguilla.

Between December 12 and 17 1999, officers from ECLAC's Subregional Headquarters in Mexico and Port-of-Spain conducted a fact finding mission, as a co-operative effort, in response to a request from the Government of Anguilla to evaluate the economic, social and environmental impact of Hurricane Lenny on this country.

According to the findings of the mission, substantial infrastructure works are still required, and restoration of beaches will require some time. Much work has already taken place, but full economic recovery is still far off.

Lenny, the Hurricane

Hurricane Lenny was an atypical hurricane, which developed in the Caribbean Sea late in the season. Its late season strength was not its only unusual feature; it also followed an unprecedented path. The tropical system advanced from the southwest, making its track toward the islands a once-in-a-century event. Typically, when a tropical system forms at that time of year in the Caribbean, it heads straight north and rarely makes it to hurricane status. However, Lenny made its way across the Caribbean Sea by moving in an atypical west-to-east pattern, which saw it start on the northern coast of Venezuela and move east-northeast toward Puerto Rico and the northern Lesser Antilles.

Furthermore, when Lenny reached the Northern Leeward Islands, movement was stalled and the hurricane remained practically stationary within the Anguilla – St. Maarten – St. Barts area.

Lenny has been classed as a 'wet' hurricane. From 8 a.m. on 17 November till 10 a.m. on 20 November 1999, rainfall amounted to 489 mm (19.28 inches). Hurricane José, which preceded Hurricane Lenny, was also a 'wet' hurricane. Because of the passing of Hurricane José, the soils in the islands were already loosened and saturated and facilitated the widespread flooding which followed the rainfall from Lenny.

Since 1995, hurricane activity in the Caribbean has intensified. This most recent disaster – Hurricane Lenny – is part of a series of similar calamities which affected the region in 1999 especially. Prior to Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn in 1995, Anguilla had not suffered a direct hit from a major hurricane (category 3 or above) since Donna in 1960.

The damage

According to the report, storm surges and swells, together with rainfall, resulted in severe flooding, and caused most of the damage to the island's infrastructure and environment. Dead and decaying animals, solid waste, sewage, as well as fertilisers and pesticides, among others, contaminated flooded areas. The foundations of several properties were exposed and made more vulnerable by the erosion of beach and dune systems. Even in those cases where there was no direct infrastructural damage, because the coastline has retreated inland, many properties have been rendered much more vulnerable to future hurricane damage, or even the ordinary winter swells.

While all sectors of the Anguillan economy have experienced damage, it is mainly the hotel and restaurant sector which has seen its productive capacity being impaired for much of this year.

Tourism is particularly important to Anguilla. The contribution of hotels and restaurants, which forms only part of the tourism industry, to GDP is about 32 per cent, and travel comprises about 73 per cent of the export of goods.
and services. Given the island’s dependence on tourism, this impairment of capacity is expected to have repercussions throughout the economy.

**The Impact on Anguilla’s Tourism Sector**

Tourism development began only since the early 1980s, growing from a low 6,498 tourist arrivals in 1981, to 43,705 in 1994. Much of the infrastructure and superstructure development on the island took place during a period in which hurricane activity was below normal. The figure below shows the number of visitors to the island between 1992 and 1999, prior to Hurricane Lenny.

![Number of Tourists Visiting Anguilla 1992-1999](chart)

**SOURCE:** 1992-1998 Government and ECCB data. 1999 Mission estimates, except for contribution to GDP, which is a Government / ECCB estimate.

Before Hurricane José and particularly Lenny, the outlook for 1999 was favourable, with tourist arrivals running at 12.4 per cent higher for the January-September period as compared with the same period in 1998. With the December 1999 opening of a major hotel development, and the subsequent expansion of the island’s room capacity, the prognosis was for 13 to 14 per cent higher tourist arrivals in 1999 as compared with 1998. Despite the two hurricanes, total tourist arrivals grew by 6.63 per cent to 46,782. At 1998 prices, the anticipated 1999 total visitor expenditures would have been about 12 per cent above the 1998 level, or roughly US$65 million (EC$175.5 million).

The occurrence of Hurricane Lenny late in the year had two immediate impacts, which made the circumstances different from the impact of Luis in 1995. Firstly, the reconstruction period carried further into the high season. Secondly, beaches that had been eroded had less opportunity to recover, and costly immediate beach restoration works (dredging) became necessary.

At the time of the mission, estimates of damages to the tourism sector were not yet available as insurance adjusters were still in the process of finalising their work. Furthermore, it was difficult to obtain damage estimates on a property-by-property basis.

Insurance sources estimated that the total insured value of hotel property damages (including landscaping) plus loss of business insurance amounted to US$70 million (EC$189 million). Of this figure, US$50 million is property damage, and US$20 million is loss of business.

However, loss of business due to capacity constraints is only one aspect of a reduction in tourist arrivals. Immediately after a hurricane, tourist arrivals will drop initially because of limited access but later on, primarily because of bad publicity. According to the mission report, the robustness of the Anguillan tourism product is main reason why the “bad publicity” drop in tourist arrivals did not occur, as was initially projected.

While accommodation capacity may be fully restored by the middle of 2000, experience has shown that the restoration of tourist arrivals may take considerably longer. Indeed, the experience of Anguilla following hurricanes Luis and Marilyn shows that the after effects of a hurricane may linger for a period of two to three years. Projections are that by the end of this year, the Anguilla tourism industry will not have fully recovered from the impact of Hurricane Lenny.

In terms of lost tourism earnings, the mission’s projections are that total losses might be in the vicinity of US$26.9 million (EC$72.6 million). The following Table, based on Mission estimates, illustrates this.

**Estimated Loss in Tourism Earnings (US$ million)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Season</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Season</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LOSSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.9</strong></td>
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**SOURCE:** Mission estimates.

In examining the impact on employment in the tourism industry, the immediate effect is that employed hotel staff will face a cut in their earnings, because of the loss in service charges. Many hotels on the island have made efforts to retain their full
time staff. For the year 2000, it is estimated that the loss of earnings as a result of reduced service charges may exceed EC$2 million.

The Anguilla Government may also find its earnings substantially reduced for various reasons, until the economy picks back up. A reduced tourism plant means less accommodation for visitors, which also translates into reduced revenues from both accommodation and departure taxes. In addition, the government’s move to extend duty free privileges on imports for reconstruction of the tourism sector means that its collection of import duties – an important component of its recurrent revenue – will be quite reduced.

Restoration of beaches, as well as repairing the damage to of marine habitats with the subsequent loss of commercially important fish species, will require some time. The major hotels on Anguilla have already undertaken beach repairs, but substantial infrastructure works are still required.

The main concern is the cost associated with an effective programme for vulnerability reduction. Past patterns of development have reinforced damages by hurricanes Lenny and Jose, and given the prospect for increased hurricane frequency in the region, the problem becomes even more urgent.

The way forward

Apart from Anguilla, other tourism-dependent economies in the region have become more and more vulnerable with each passing hurricane and tropical storm. The incidence of Hurricane Lenny has served to highlight the defencelessness of the smaller islands in the face of such natural disasters. With the region possibly entering a period of high hurricane intensities, Caribbean governments need to focus on reducing their countries’ vulnerability to this type of disaster, especially.

The main effects of this type of natural disaster are flooding in low-lying areas, land slippage, as well as beach and coastal erosion. A combination of effectively adhered to land use policies, economic instruments and island-wide coastal zone management programmes could be amongst the options to reduce these types of exposure.

In addition to disaster mitigation initiatives, these economies also need to explore economic diversification and new sources of government revenue, to reduce their dependence on one economic activity. Among the options that could be explored are offshore-related activities, e-commerce, and other opportunities offered by the overall process of globalisation.

CARIBBEAN PLANNERS TO ACCESS REGIONAL INFO... ONLINE!

ECLAC/CDCC to initially host a planning website...www.carib-plan.net

Caribbean planners will soon be able to access regional information specific to their profession, on the web.

ECLAC is currently working with regional planners to explore the possibility of creating a website designed specifically for this purpose, which will be hosted at the ECLAC website - www.eclacpos.org – and is expected to be operational by no later than the third quarter of this year.

The idea comes out of special brainstorming sessions and ad hoc meetings held with planning professionals in December 1999 and earlier this year. The meetings were hosted by the Subregional headquarters for ECLAC/CDCC.

Once created, Caribbean planning professionals will be able to access a range of planning information with a difference... tailored to fit their needs as planners operating within a Caribbean context and paradigm.

ECLAC Director, Dr. Len Ishmael, herself a planner by profession, explains:

“At a meeting of Caribbean planners in December 1999, regional professionals stressed the need to create a mechanism which would encourage the cross-fertilisation of ideas among each other, as well as educate the public about the importance of planning. They wanted to create a forum where both professionals and the public could access planning information.”

Dr. Ishmael notes that originally, the idea was to create a planning journal or newsletter for the Caribbean region. The intention was to distribute this publication
electronically, ensuring the widest possible access to the information and articles it would produce, while cutting down significantly on production cost.

“In January, at a special ad hoc meeting of Caribbean planners, the creation of an overall website providing information on a variety of planning issues was discussed extensively,” Dr. Ishmael says. “Planners felt that this website should host a regional planning journal or newsletter, but even more importantly, that it should be well designed, and a home to planning information.”

**A home for planning information…**

When created, the website - dubbed unofficially the “Caribbean Planners Network” - will be dynamic and interactive, offering news features on the Caribbean planning profession, as well as links to other planning resources around the world. In addition, there are plans to include special bulletin boards and chat rooms, which would allow for the fermenting of ideas among regional professionals in the planning business.

It will also host contact information for regional planning ministries, offices and agencies; professionals operating within the planning business; as well as regional professional societies and associations of planners.

An important element of the proposed website is that it would provide digests of judgments and cases heard in regional courts, dealing specifically with planning law enforcement, particularly as it concerns land law and land issues. At the meetings of regional planners which gave birth to the idea of the website, it was observed that many cases have been brought before regional courts which call for an intricate knowledge of both planning law and land law. Few regional lawyers are conversant with planning law, and unlike planners, receive no training in this area.

**… available to all professionals in the planning business**

The ECLAC Director stresses that this website will cater not only to planning professionals, per se. All professionals operating within the planning business would find the site resources useful - whether they are academicians, lawyers, engineers, environmentalists, town and country planning technicians, or planning professionals in private practice or operating in the public service.

At the brainstorming meetings of planners in December 1999 and January of this year, some planners present felt strongly that the region’s planning professionals are now at the juncture where they can speak with authority on the theory and practice of planning in the Caribbean. They believe that the time has come for regional planners to attempt to evolve a Caribbean Planning Theory / Approach, especially given that fact that all the professional planners of the region were trained abroad. The proposed website could be a tool for honing such a theory, with the facility it provides for encouraging serious dialogue among planners.

However, before attempting to create the website, the first step must be to ascertain what planning material is available.

“We need to get a sense of the type of material that currently exists,” the ECLAC Director explains, “and this will inform the way the material is prepared for the site. Regional planners have been called upon, on a number of occasions, to make speeches and presentations, or to write academic papers, on issues directly relating to their profession. We want to acquire that information and keep it in one place where everyone can access it.”

“All of this goes a long way towards evolving a comprehensive theory and best practices methodology for Caribbean planning,” she says.
A LOOK AT A FEW OF THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN THE CARIBBEAN IN THE NINETIES

A recent ECLAC/CDCC study - *A Review of Social Development in the Caribbean in the Nineties: World Summit for Social Development (WSSD)+5* - shows that the region, despite advances in the economic sphere, is still grappling with many challenges of social development.

The study observes that at the beginning of the new millennium, the Caribbean appears to have made significant gains in both the social and economic spheres of activity.

Social and Economic Gains in the 1990s

One of the positive social indicators the study points to is that of life expectancy. For the average Caribbean citizen, life expectancy at birth has increased to over 70 years in almost all the countries, which compares favourably to levels reached in the developed countries. The infant mortality rate has also been falling, and the adult literacy rate is reported to be over 90 per cent, in most cases.

In 1997, three Caribbean countries (Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, and Barbados) were ranked by the UNDP as countries with high human development (that is with an index of over 0.8). Twelve other countries ranked in the medium human development category. In terms of per capita income, if Guyana and Haiti are excluded, per capita GDP in current dollars ranged between US$900 for Suriname to almost US$12,000 for the Bahamas in 1995. Despite the difficulties in the 1980s, real per capita income has grown in a number of countries since 1970.

Attempts at economic diversification were, to a large extent, fairly successful in several countries. Technology, trade and services (especially tourism), offshore banking and informatics, are some of the sectors which have been effectively exploited.

The Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) reports that the subregion as a whole, has done quite well in the tourism sector. At the end of the nineties, Cuba and the Dominican Republic, “new” countries on the tourism scene, increased their revenues from tourism. However, countries such as Bermuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines showed lower tourism revenues, compared with more lucrative times earlier in the decade.

Notwithstanding these developments, solutions to income inequality, high unemployment levels, and high poverty head counts, continue to elude regional governments.

Wealth fails to trickle down...

However, the study contends that many challenges still face the region, chief among which are the issues of poverty and unemployment. Despite recent declines in some countries, Caribbean unemployment rates are still much too high. While many countries experienced small but positive rates of economic growth, this has not translated into significantly better standards of living for the ordinary citizen. Indeed, an analysis of real GDP per capita versus income distribution reveals the painful reality that regional governments have had great difficulty in converting their relative wealth into improved standards of human well-being in their countries. While economic growth is increasing in some countries, disparities in income distribution seem to be widening.

During the 1990s, the wealthiest 10 per cent of families in the Caribbean improved their position in relative and absolute terms and received 15-20 times the income of the poorest 10 per cent.
In many countries, where employment has increased, the quality of employment generated has come under scrutiny. The group of working poor engaged in low productivity or marginal activities has grown, in some countries in the subregion.

**The importance of Copenhagen 1995**

At the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in Copenhagen in 1995, countries around the world came together to discuss the significance of social development and human well being for all, and to give these goals the highest priority. This Summit and its follow-up processes have contributed substantially to an increased level of awareness regarding social issues.

**Poverty is still with us**

In 1996, the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication, held in Port-of-Spain, not only highlighted the impoverishment of new population groups in Caribbean countries, but also new forms of poverty and the further intensification of poverty among those already poor.

Specific action for poverty eradication has taken place through the creation of special funds to address poverty-related issues, including physical infrastructure, micro-credit, training, small business initiatives, and for community and intersectoral workshops, pilot studies, improvement of data and data collection, etc.

The question of gender-based poverty has surfaced at many forums. It has been suggested that studies of gender disparities provide a good yardstick for measuring the extent of the differences in how women and men benefit from services. Gender analysis reveals that men and women have been unequally affected by problems of poverty, to the detriment of women in most cases. In addition, some of the negative differences for women are peculiar to the nature of gender relations and the status of women in Caribbean society. For example, in terms of access to housing, a female head and a male head of household may both secure housing, but invariably, the woman supports a larger household than her male counterpart.

**Unemployment rates still too high**

Unemployment continues to be a problem in the subregion. Thirty per cent or more of young people are unemployed, and the participation of women in the work force remains lower than that of their male counterparts. At the same time, however, and directly as a result of these realities, the informal economy continues to expand.
Social Issues in the Caribbean Cont’d

Unemployment rate of selected Caribbean countries: 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (1997)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antigua &amp; Barbuda</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ECLAC Document WSSD 99/4, August 1999

Rising crime statistics

Among the more troubling developments in the previous decade are the increasing incidences of crime and violence, whether directly related to the illegal drug trade, or in terms of abuse and/or murders of women and children.

The ECLAC/CDCC study states that homicides, drug-related offences and rape are among the crimes reported most often. Apart from drug and other crime-related violence, violence against women and domestic violence have been on the increase, as well, in several member countries.

“The AIDS Pandemic”

Another frightening development during the 1990s has been the escalation of HIV/AIDS infection leading to a significant increase in the number of HIV/AIDS deaths. The “AIDS pandemic”, as it is sometimes referred to, has serious implications for the overall economic and social development of the region as the majority of persons infected with HIV/AIDS are males in the 25-35 age group, who become unproductive long before they die, because of the debilitating effects of the disease.

Most countries in the region have put systems in place to address the issue of HIV/AIDS. Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been pivotal in starting up special services of reproductive health for men, with efforts focussed especially on HIV/AIDS.

Challenges facing the Caribbean in the new millennium

Many of the social challenges the Caribbean faces today are not exclusive to the region. Contemporary social ills are global in nature and are shared by many countries. Indeed, as with other parts of the world,
Caribbean countries are not immune.

Crime and violence, HIV/AIDS, drugs, poverty, unemployment, and social inequity are realities that must be addressed. But the region cannot address these problems alone.

As the ECLAC/CIDC report states: the only way these social ills may be successfully treated, is through the combined efforts of regional governments, and the international community at large.

10 Key Commitments made by World Leaders in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action

1. Create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development.

2. Eradicate poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind.

3. Promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority of economic and social policies, and to enable all men and women to attain secure and sustainable livelihoods through freely chosen productive employment and work.

4. Promote social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security, and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.

5. Promote full respect for human dignity and to achieve equality and equity between women and men, and to recognise and enhance the participation and leadership roles of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life and in development.

6. Promote and attain the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education, the highest available standard of physical and mental health, and the access of all to primary health care, making particular efforts to rectify inequalities relating to gender, age or disability; respect and promote common and particular cultures; strive to strengthen the role of culture in development; preserve the essential bases of people-centred sustainable development; and contribute to the full development of human resources and to social development.

7. Accelerate the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries.

8. Ensure that when structural adjustment programmes are agreed to, they include social development goals, in particular, to eradicate poverty, promote full and productive employment, and enhance social integration.

9. Increase significantly and/or utilise more efficiently, the resources allocated to social development in order to achieve the goals of the Summit through national action and regional and international co-operation.

10 Obtain improved and strengthened framework for international, regional and subregional co-operation for social development, in a spirit of partnership, through the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.

The main poverty-related issues in the Caribbean subregion

- Problem youth
- Destitute families
- Children at risk
- Poor small farmers
- The unemployed

The new poor (people who became poor through drastic decrease in real income)

The instant poor (people who suddenly became poor through natural disasters)

- Deficient infrastructure
- Inadequate housing
- Limited access to quality social services
ECLAC/CDCC CONDUCTS FTAA WORKSHOPS IN THE OECS

OECS countries get an opportunity to air their concerns about the future of the region in light of global trade developments

In the final quarter of 1999, the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat organized and executed a series of workshops in the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), to provide information and increase awareness of some of the issues involved in trade liberalization and competition in increasingly open economies.

These workshops, facilitated by officers from the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, focused on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) process, the competitiveness of firms, and the issues of standards. Participants in the workshops included representatives from the public and private sectors, as well as trade unions. The workshops were conducted in Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua & Barbuda, and St. Kitts & Nevis.

The workshop sessions provided the perfect opportunity for the OECS countries to raise their concerns about the various global trade developments and how these would impact upon their respective jurisdictions, and the Caribbean subregion as a whole.

The FTAA... bringing the hemispheric together

In 1994, concrete moves were made to unite the economies of the Western Hemisphere into a single free trade arrangement. The event was the Summit of the Americas, which was held in December of 1994 in Miami. At that historic Summit, the Heads of State of the 34 democracies in the region agreed to construct a “Free Trade Area of the Americas” or FTAA, and to complete negotiations for the agreement by the year 2005.

In another historic Summit in Chile in April of 1998, Trade Ministers of the Western Hemisphere created several Negotiating Groups as part of their effort to advance the FTAA process. There are currently nine negotiating groups: Market Access; Investment; Services; Government Procurement; Dispute Settlement; Agriculture; Intellectual Property Rights; Subsidies; Antidumping and Countervailing Duties; and Competition Policy.

Caribbean countries have been participating actively in the negotiating process for the establishment of the FTAA. This has been possible mainly through the activities of the Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM), and the system of lead negotiators designated for each negotiating group to put forward the Caribbean position. The RNM has also undertaken studies to inform some of the negotiating positions of the subregion. It has also organised training workshops on various aspects of the negotiations.

The FTAA negotiations, as well as those for LOMÉ and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), impact on every aspect of economic life of Caribbean countries, and many in the region continue to express the view that while these processes are vital to the development of global trade, they do not always redound to the region’s benefit.

Concerns about the impact of the FTAA

In each country facilitated in the ECLAC outreach exercise, participants aired their concerns about the impact the FTAA is expected to have on the region, as well as the region’s preparedness for full insertion into the world economy. Their chief concern was that the FTAA would provide little, if any, benefit to smaller economies.

The ECLAC facilitators stressed that there was a clear recognition in the ongoing FTAA process of the need...
for assistance in capacity-building activities to bring the smaller countries' economies in a position, which will allow them to benefit from the liberalization process. While it appears that FTAA negotiations do not seem to favour special and differential treatment for smaller economies based on their vulnerability, the possibility exists that the issue of special and differential treatment could be taken up in the negotiations. In addition, countries were advised to take full advantage of the technical assistance being discussed in the FTAA Consultative Group on the Smaller Economies, which is likely to become part of the final FTAA agreement.

The manner in which the Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM) conducted its negotiations was another issue raised by the participants in each country visited. It was argued that, to a large extent, small states had little direct representation in the ongoing FTAA negotiations. In addition, it was felt that it might be difficult for the RNM to adequately reflect the different views of all the countries of the region, given its heterogeneity.

The facilitators pointed out that it was the responsibility of individual countries in the region, to ensure that their concerns and positions were brought to the attention of the Regional Negotiating Machinery, the body which has been charged with providing a coordinated response to the negotiations. They emphasised that it is in the best interest of member States to put in place properly structured machinery for articulating their concerns to the RNM.

Participants were also concerned that Caribbean countries appeared to be signing on to the FTAA process without any careful analysis of the implications of the FTAA. However, the reality is that whether the region actively participates in the FTAA process, it would be influenced by its outcome. Therefore, the Caribbean must actively engage in the process in an effort to influence the tenor of the negotiations and to benefit from the formation of the FTAA.

Enhancing Caribbean competitiveness

The competitiveness of Caribbean producers is largely determined by their ability to produce high-quality commodities that are competitively priced, and to deliver them in a timely and efficient manner to consumers.

In a study measuring the competitiveness of selected Caribbean countries, it was found that with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, all the other countries tended to have relatively high negative indicators, suggesting weak manufacturing competitiveness.

The picture was quite different for the services sector, however. The dominant sector in the more prosperous economies, services has tended to be more competitive, based on the comparative advantage in tourism which these countries possess. Indeed, travel inflows have had a positive effect on the balance of payments of these countries.

The challenge of developing competitive manufacturing activity in the region is a serious one. It is necessary to provide a more balanced use of domestic resources and to diversify the economies away from dependence on primary agriculture and tourism, both of whose prospects appear to be on the decline. Moreover, the returns from a competitive manufacturing sector, in terms of foreign exchange generation, growth, employment and improved living standards, more than outweigh the challenge.

One of the key recommendations for the promoting the competitiveness of regional producers, particularly in the manufacturing sector, is the utilisation of technology. Firms need to adopt appropriate technology that is in line with international best practice in their line of production. It is important for firms to assess the potential cost-benefit of the technology to be used to ensure value for money. Where it is not relevant, (due to scale of production and market size, etc...) cutting edge plant and machinery should not be adopted. For agro-processors, mechanised juice extractors, instead of hand operated ones, and uniform weights and measures might be sufficient to raise productivity.

Another important element for enhancing the competitiveness of the regional manufacturers concerns finance. Development finance institutions (development banks, National Development Funds (NDFs), etc.) should be streamlined and better funded to provide soft financing for the sectors. Governments should attempt to tap into soft enterprise development resources available from the World Bank and other agencies, and support these with counterpart funding. More affordable finance should be sought for Small and Medium Enterprises.
(SMEs) that are at a disadvantage due to weak collateral security and lack of reputation in the market. Venture capital institutions, such as the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank's (ECCB’s) planned OECS-wide stock exchange and Venture Capital Fund, should be encouraged.

A number of policy incentives are needed to promote entrepreneurship. These include competition policy to encourage entry into and exit from different activities, protection of property rights and regulation of contracts, competitive prices to facilitate investment in new technology and adequate public investment in infrastructure. Entrepreneurship, though, is driven by more than good macroeconomic policies and cultural and institutional factors, such as the promotion of excellence, and a positive attitude towards risk taking are important.

Human resources development is critical if regional firms are to become truly competitive. Governments must lead the way by providing systems of primary, secondary and tertiary, liberal and technical education. Manufacturers, on the other hand, need to develop a structured system for on-the-job training and research and development with science, engineering, technology and management training institutions. The private sector could provide training loans to workers and defer repayment until the worker is back in employment.

Can the Caribbean truly compete...?

While acknowledging the importance of an open trading regime and the disciplining effect of foreign competition for the development of competitive industries, one of the chief concerns of participants was the ability of smaller economies to gain market access. The ECLAC facilitators pointed out that although the FTAA should provide an expanded market, producers needed to ensure that they produced high quality products that were competitively priced to gain market share.

The vital role of marketing and market intelligence to the competitiveness of regional producers was also noted. Participants felt that regional negotiators should move away from negotiating broad market access, and focus on particular products, which could be produced competitively. Market research with respect to given products would then be guided by surveys of consumers' wants and preferences, for example, sensory analysis in the gourmet foods market.

In the discussions on Caribbean competitiveness, participants felt that issues relating to work ethics and worker productivity were crucial to the region's competitiveness. Human resource development was reinforced as an important factor in the promotion of competitive activities, and participants called for greater investment in training of the workforce, which, together with fundamental changes in the present education system, would strengthen worker productivity and efficiency on the job.

In looking at the need for the diversification and structural transformation of the economies, especially the Windward Islands in the aftermath of the WTO Banana Ruling, participants concurred with the proposal for developing niche industries. Such industries in agro-processing, furniture manufacturing and textiles, for instance, should seek to produce high value added products that reflected the culture of the country in which they were made.

Members of the business community present at the workshop sessions expressed the view that given their lack of economies of scale in production and marketing, they might be forced out of business. While the facilitators conceded that increased competition in an FTAA would mean that less efficient firms would be forced out of business, they pointed out that not all Caribbean business will be crushed, and that the more resilient firms would survive. They also stressed the potential for success in niche services that can be provided by the small economies of the OECS, particularly in the tourism and agro-processing sectors.

Standards... barriers, or tools to trade?

There is general agreement in the region, that the role of standards and quality management in production and trade is critical. The importance of science and technology in the promotion of standards as instruments of development is well acknowledged.
During the presentation on Standards, the ECLAC facilitators stated that the diffusion of scientific and technological know-how, through education and training, is of paramount importance. Indeed, an important first step for each country is the establishment of a credible and independent Bureau of Standards, which can assist in the interpretation and dissemination of information on standards and in independent testing, as necessary. As much as possible, the Bureau should not itself engage in product development work which might compromise its neutrality.

In the discussions, participants noted that governments and producers were not fully aware of the vital role that a Standards Bureau must play in product development and marketing. It was proposed that for the Bureau to be fully functional, it needed to be outfitted with the necessary equipment and personnel, and that producers needed to make full use of its services. Also, participants suggested the individual Standards Bureaux in the region, seek to create a network among each other, for exchanging information and verifying testing procedures with the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) in Trinidad and Tobago.

More than one participant at the workshops voiced the concern that standards could be used by developed countries as protectionist devices to limit market access for smaller economies in the FTAA. In response to this concern, it was pointed out that the FTAA would have clear guidelines as to where breaches of standards were ‘actionable’. Smaller economies would, therefore, be able to bring before the Dispute Settlement Body cases where standards were used as trade barriers.

Another issue raised in the discussions following the presentation on standards, was the fact that Latin American banana producers were able to gain a foothold in the European market because they adhered to stipulated standards. Windward Islands’ producers had to meet similar benchmarks if they were to maintain a niche in this market. It was suggested that Caribbean producers should take pride in what they produced and endeavour to develop distinctive Caribbean brands of products.

**The negotiating groups in the FTAA Process**

To start the negotiations process, the following nine negotiating groups were established:

1. The negotiating group on market access to work towards the elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers;
2. The negotiating group on agriculture to liberalize trade in this sector;
3. The negotiating group on investment to establish a fair and transparent investment environment;
4. The negotiating group on subsidies, antidumping and countervailing duties, to devise a system of disciplines to prevent the abuse of trade remedies;
5. The negotiating group on government procurement to provide access to government purchases in the FTAA;
6. The negotiating group on intellectual property rights to ensure the protection of patents, copyrights, geographical locations, etc.;
7. The negotiating group on services, with the mandate to progressively liberalize services;
8. The negotiating group on competition policy to eliminate all forms of anti-competitive practices in the participating countries; and,
9. The negotiating group on dispute settlement, with a mandate to establish a fair and transparent dispute settlement mechanism for the FTAA.

In addition to the negotiating groups, a *Consultative Group on Smaller Economies* was created with two main objectives:

1. To follow the FTAA process, keeping under review the concerns and interests of the smaller economies; and
2. To bring to the attention of the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) the issues of concern to the smaller economies and make recommendations to address these issues.

A *Committee of Government Representatives on Civil Society and a joint government/private sector Committee of Experts on E-Commerce* were also established.
CREATING AN EFFICIENT NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

In today's highly competitive environment, the effective use of information makes it possible for businesses to gain substantial market share over each other. Often, this is achieved by focusing on one particular characteristic and refining it to establish a clear lead over competitors. In fact, the marketing of the company or product will be built around this particular characteristic. In addition, the effective use of information within the organisation itself enables it to deliver significant cost and quality advantages over its rivals.

The same holds true for governments, nations or countries. Governments are often in the business of marketing their countries, to invite foreign investment, or encourage the in-migration of highly skilled labour. Even more importantly, governments need to keep track of developments within their respective jurisdictions, on all levels, whether these are economic or social phenomena. The more information a government has at its disposal, the better informed its decision-making process.

As a result of the various assignments the Secretariat has carried out in the area of information management for several regional governments, it has been able to identify a few of the key elements which are necessary for the creation of an efficient national information system.

**Human resources**

While the necessary investment in computer technology, both hardware and software, is crucial to the creation of a proper National Information System (NIS), investment in human resources is just as critical. In addition, the right technology and the best technicians or statisticians also need the right organizational structure in which to operate effectively.

The success of any system is ultimately dependent on people. The people driving the system must be prepared for the job, and they must also operate in a strong network of organisations responsible for collecting statistical data, which share their information among each other.

It is crucial that all statistical staff receive continual skills upgrade and in-house training, particularly inter-agency training, which helps encourage the development of multi-disciplinary teams.

In an ideal NIS, agencies responsible for collecting and processing statistics would operate under a specific agreement, which details the manner in which data collection is to be carried out. This would ensure that each agency, while collecting its own specific data, would do so in a way which allows for integration with other data sets through a multi-disciplinary team approach. Statistical personnel and agencies, therefore, must be encouraged to network among each other, in order to bring any major projects to fruition. Most importantly, the system must be organised to allow these professionals to be brought together to work on any given data problem and be disbanded as a group at the end of the exercise, without any major organisational upheaval.

**Systems**

A system is a confluence of people, ideals and mechanisms all geared towards the achievement of a common goal with internal consistency and able to monitor, and if necessary, change direction in pursuance of that objective.

In this regard, governments need to set up a central body - a "Statistics Priorities Committee" - which would
examine or identify the planned statistical activities they intend to embark upon, to avoid duplication of effort among Ministries.

This body, comprising the most senior official responsible for statistics, in conjunction with the other producers of statistics, should prepare a list of topics that need to be monitored, and ensure uniformity in approach and treatment of the series. This will ensure that common coding and classification schemes are used, and that data are stored in such a manner as to facilitate database joins to produce new analytical data.

In addition, the “Statistics Priorities Committee”, working with the producers of statistics, must determine which organisation would be responsible for collecting which type of data, which is to be shared with other statistics producers, in the interest of keeping duplication of effort down to a minimum.

Each statistical unit should make use of capable computers and approved software to get the job done. Computer networking must be utilised so as to make the official software available to all staff. A network security committee should ensure that only officially purchased software is placed on Government’s computers.

Use of current technology is also very important, in ensuring that data remains dynamic, as well as accessible. The databases need not be stored at one physical location, but can be linked via the worldwide web. The advantage of this distributed approach is that the databases will be maintained at source and will always reflect the most up-to-date position.

Internal to each ministerial statistical unit, the same database software should be used and training should be provided for each unit. The rationale would be for data stored across ministries to have the same look and feel and to be accessible in a standard manner.

Concluding notes

In order for a project of this nature to be truly effective and successful, it must have sponsor, preferably a high-ranking government official, such as the Minister with responsibility for information. Every effort should be made to explain the need for this course of action, and the reassurance given that while there will be some rearrangement of the manner in which work will be done, the final result will be worth it.

A project manager must be appointed to plan the change activities. The manager must enjoy the confidence of the sponsor and should report on progress with a pre-determined periodicity. In addition, the manager will map out the project activities and ensure that deliverables are achieved on time, within budget, and according to specifications.

Depending on the extent to which the NIS is to be revamped, a comprehensive public awareness programme may be necessary to launch the project. Executors of this awareness programme should use this opportunity to ascertain the information expectations of the users of statistics and information, and apply the necessary adjustments in the design of the project to accommodate new suggestions.

Organisation

"Information" is “Data” that has a value to the person or organisation because of the purpose to which it is applied. Its“value” is dependent upon the extent to which its characteristics are “fit for the purpose”.

However, the manner in which this data is organised, as well as its accessibility, is critical. The statistical and information system should be built around a family of relational databases that contain elemental data as opposed to derived data.
THE AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON ICPD+5 PROCESS FOR THE CARIBBEAN SUBREGION

The first meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Population and Development for the Caribbean subregion, was held 24-25 January 2000 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, at the office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC).

The objectives of the meeting were:

1. To propose a subregional approach toward fulfillment of the ICPD Programme of Action; and

2. To advise and assist governments in their participation in the Third Sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development which will meet during the 28th Session of ECLAC in April, 2000 in Santiago, Chile.

Expert participants from Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were present and Ms. Asha Kambon, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC/CDCC acted as secretary to the expert group.

In reviewing the outcomes of the mid-term review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+5), participants sought to formulate project proposals that would address gaps and unmet needs in the region. It was recognized that within the region, three areas of the ICPD programme were being addressed. These were: Population and Development Strategies; Adolescent and Reproductive Health Programmes; and Advocacy and Information, Education and Communication (IEC).

The meeting took its mandate from the Item 22 of the CELADE Report which instructed CELADE and the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean to give priority to censuses, youth, ageing, international migration, training, geographical distribution of the population, and follow-up to the Programme of Action through the design of appropriate systems.

Participants agreed that many of the items listed under Item 22 continued to be priority areas and it was suggested that certain agencies in the subregion be involved in specific actions to address some of the issues. Action regarding the 2000/2001 census, for example, was being addressed by CARICOM and ECLAC, while youth issues in the Caribbean were being addressed by the UNFPA Caribbean area office.

Based on the review conducted, subject areas for the development and formulation of policy and project proposals at the subregional level were agreed on for consideration in the short and medium term. These were:

- **Adolescent/Youth**: Ensuring that youth: (1) developed in a healthy manner; (2) were prepared to be contributors to society; and (3) did not descend into poverty.

- **Social Security Systems and the Aged**: Addressing the need in the Caribbean for review and reform of welfare, social security systems and better human resources to manage the schemes properly. This was especially needed in light of anomalies whereby even though the general retirement age was 60 years, National Insurance Scheme (NIS) payments and some pensions in the Caribbean did not commence until 65 years and in some cases at different ages for men and women.
Migration: Suggesting further studies on the effects of migration on the Caribbean Family structure and patterns of socio-economic behaviour. It was also felt that in general, additional work was needed in this area. ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean was commended for its completed studies on:

1. The Impact of Immigration on Caribbean Micro-states: the Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Saint Maarten, United States Virgin Islands (LC/CAR/G.540), 31 March 1998, and

Training: Proposing that technical assistance be made available to ECLAC/CDCC member Governments to strengthen their capacity in the use of demographic and social statistics. The target groups for such training were envisaged to be policy-makers, technocrats, line managers in the public service and private sector i.e. Family Planning and other NGOs.

ECLAC/CDCC PARTICIPATES IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING CONFERENCE

The Thirtieth Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Eighth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean were held in Lima, Peru on February 6th -11th 2000. Social Affairs Officer responsible for Women in Development and Gender Affairs, Roberta Clarke attended these meetings on behalf of the ECLAC/CDCC Subregional Headquarters.

At the meeting of Presiding Officers, an agreement was made to increase the Caribbean representation on this body from three to four member states. The countries now represented are Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Netherlands Antilles and Suriname. The main concern of the Caribbean delegations present was the need to increase the flows of information between Caribbean representatives on the Board of Presiding Officers and the CDCC membership. The role of ECLAC in facilitating this need was discussed and a request was made for documentation of the roles of both ECLAC and CARICOM in this regard.

The Eighth Regional Conference was attended by delegations from CDCC member countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. CDCC Associate members, Anguilla and the Netherlands Antilles also attended, while The Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos sent delegations to observe the proceedings.

Among the concerns expressed at the meeting was the recognition and acknowledgement that in spite of the advances made by women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean, the fundamental structure of gender relations was disadvantageous to the majority of girls and women. The Caribbean delegations were also concerned with the inequities resulting from the global trading arrangements, pointing to the dislocation of families and communities caused by the negative impacts of factors such as economic globalization and trade liberalization.
The mostly small island States of the Caribbean display a number of characteristics which, although common, to some of the larger developing countries tend to put them at a greater disadvantage in their economic and social development efforts. Resource limitations and problems related to smallness and remoteness are among the main factors impacting on the economic performance, sectoral specialisation and vulnerabilities of the small island States. These countries are highly dependent on trade with the ratio of trade to GDP above 100 per cent, in many instances. Their markets are small and their exports are highly concentrated on a narrow range of products and services and markets. Their geographical location makes them particularly vulnerable to hurricanes and pressures of population and economic activity within a limited land space seriously threaten their fragile ecosystems. The development of these countries has been taking place in an increasingly integrated world economy, marked by progressively higher trade and financial flows and increasing competition.

Caribbean countries have undertaken major economic and social reforms in the 1980s and 1990s. These included macroeconomic reforms to correct the balance of payments and fiscal deficits, which had developed in the latter part of the 1970s and early 1980s, and to stabilize the economy. They also included trade and financial reforms to open the economies further and take advantage of the opportunities available in the increasingly liberalized world economy. In addition, increased focus continued to be put on issues related to social equity. Foremost among these were the efforts made to increase employment, improve access to health and education and alleviate poverty, especially in those Caribbean countries which had experienced slow growth or political instability in the decade under review.

Efforts were also made to improve gender equity in the subregion through the implementation of policies and programmes to improve the social and economic status of women, especially in the improvement of women’s access to education. However, other issues of social equity, such as poverty alleviation, better access to education and health, are still among the challenges facing the Caribbean. Migration and population growth continued to modify the characteristics of Caribbean population. Other demographic dynamics, including the ageing of the population and their socio-economic implications will continue to require the
adoption and implementation of appropriate population policies as well as a major restructuring of the social services, including education, health and social security systems.

The adoption of the Small Island Developing States Programme of Action (SIDAP) in 1994 focused the attention of governments in the subregion and the world community on the need to preserve the fragile environment of these mostly island States, and adopt sustainable development policies where economic, environmental and social issues are addressed simultaneously. Although there has been progress in some countries, the Caribbean subregion still needs, with the assistance of the international community, to put into place a range of concrete programmes and projects, for the further and more effective implementation of the SIDS POA.

In the 1990s, economic growth generally resumed in those countries, that is, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and the Dominican Republic, after contraction in the 1980s. Growth also continued, although at lower rates in those countries, such as the OECS, whose economies grew at high rates in the 1980s. These economic gains remain fragile, however, given the structure of the economies and their lack of diversification and can disappear very quickly as a result of a hurricane or a decline in the foreign exchange earnings from the main export commodities, i.e. bananas in the OECS. The long-standing objective of diversifying the Caribbean economy remains to be achieved despite progress made in some countries, like Trinidad and Tobago. The moderate rates of growth have not been able to generate enough employment to absorb the labour force seeking employment.

The challenges facing the countries in the next decade include the maintenance of macroeconomic stability, the transformation of production structures with improved productivity, the move towards environmental sustainability, improved income distribution and the improvement in the performance and accountability of governments.

### Trade Performance

At the end of the 1990s, Caribbean exports continued to be highly concentrated and vulnerable to price fluctuations and the trade policy changes in their main destination countries. Oil and petrochemicals continued to dominate the exports of Trinidad and Tobago while sugar, bananas and tourism remained the major exports of the OECS countries and Belize. Guyana continued to export mainly rice, sugar and bauxite, while Barbados remained heavily dependent on the exports of tourism services. In addition to bauxite, Jamaican exports are still dominated by tourism, clothing and assembly manufacturing.

### Macroeconomic Performance

In the 1990s the economic performance of Caribbean countries varied a great deal. Countries such as Haiti, Cuba, Montserrat and the Netherlands Antilles, experienced negative average growth rates. Also, growth in the OECS countries and Belize slowed somewhat compared with the performance in the 1980s. On the other hand, there was a resumption of growth in the economies of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana from contraction in the 1980s. Fiscal deficits, inflation rates and external debt burden were generally moderate in the subregion, except for Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname.

### Unemployment

The fluctuating and moderate growth rates achieved by the countries in the 1990s were not sufficient to absorb the labour force. Unemployment remained relatively high in the Caribbean throughout the decade. In 1996, unemployment rates for all the Caribbean
countries were in double digits except for Antigua and Barbuda. The incidence of unemployment varies among the various subgroups of the population, but it tends to be highest among the young females and males. Despite these high levels of unemployment, Caribbean countries continued to experience shortages of workers with high technical and managerial skills and good work ethics. Education and training systems continued to fall short of creating skills required by the market. The reform of the education system to improve the flexibility of the labour market has been recognised and is being pursued, along with other policies to improve employment in the subregion.

**Changing Social Structures**

Significant changes in the social structures of Caribbean countries have been driven by the rate of population growth, the ageing of the population, migration, urbanization and the increasing negative effects of HIV/AIDS. The low or negative growth rates of the economies have also had a generally negative impact on the social structures. Population growth has been slow over the 1980s and 1990s, because of a number of factors, which have been more evident over recent years. These factors include the continued fall in fertility rates and the relatively high levels of emigration. The Caribbean has experienced a general decrease in fertility rates, mainly due to the increasing levels of education of women and the sustained implementation of family planning programmes in many countries.

**Poverty**

The marked slowdown in a number of Caribbean economies and the subsequent restructuring and adjustment may have resulted in increasing levels of poverty in some countries. In Haiti, 65 per cent of the population is estimated to be living under the poverty line, while the proportion of that category in Barbados and Bahamas was only 8 and 5 per cent, respectively. Poverty tends to impact disproportionately on women since female-headed households are more likely than male-headed households to fall under the poverty line.

Female-headed households typically have more members, but lower labour force participation and lower wages. Most countries have put in place action plans to eradicate poverty, including the implementation of employment creation and training programmes.

**The Environment**

The 1990s saw acceleration in the awareness of the importance of coastal zone management, mostly because impacts of past negligence were affecting the profitability of the tourism industry. There remains, however, a wide range of management approaches. In some countries the problem is recognised, but not studied; in others, assessments have begun while countries, such as Barbados, have been leading the region in implementing coastal rehabilitation programmes by attacking the two major problems of land-based sources of pollution (mostly sewerage) and beach stabilisation. Land-based sources of pollution remain areas of major concern. This decade has seen the institution of many investment projects, mostly in sewage but also in solid waste, throughout the Caribbean region. At the beginning of 1999, the Caribbean region had over 60 waste-related infrastructure projects valued at between 750 million and 1 billion dollars either ongoing or planned.

**Information Technology**

Despite these significant strides, the Caribbean region has not yet arrived at a point where the full potential of the Internet and other information technologies are being fully exploited. Whether or not one subscribes to the paradigm which suggests that size and distance are increasingly irrelevant, the Caribbean does enjoy some tremendous advantages in this information race, namely, language for many of the islands and an excellent telecommunications infrastructure. The challenge for the region will continue to be how to use these and other advantages to guarantee economic success.
ABSTRACTS OF SELECTED ECLAC/CDCC PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED IN 1999

Programme for science and technology management in the Caribbean
LC/CAR/G.571; CCST/1999/4

Defines the nature and scope of science and technology and examines the status of both in the Caribbean context. The role of science and technology in realising the vision of a Caribbean where people had their basic needs satisfied is outlined and several issues identified among them: climate change and sea level rise; natural and environmental disasters; waste management; coastal and marine resources. Proposals are identified to cover programmes not currently being undertaken. Proposed programme areas include: fisheries biology and management; mariculture and aquaculture; pollution control, ocean energy; freshwater resources; land resources; tourism resources; biodiversity resources; transport and communications; human resources development and information and computer technology.

Fiscal covenant: strengths, weaknesses, challenges - Caribbean perspectives
LC/CAR/G.564

Papers in this publication deal with the experiences of selected Caribbean countries in the area of fiscal management and fiscal reform. Focus is also placed on the subregional perspective with regards to fiscal management and reforms.

Promotion and adoption of new technologies within the context of sustainable development
- 14 p. Port of Spain: ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 1999
LC/CAR/G.570; CCST/1999/3

This paper deals with the transfer and promotion of new technologies as a means of achieving sustainable development. Endogenous technological capability in the agriculture, tourism and industrial sectors are examined as well. The relationship between culture and technology is also explored.

Report of the second Caribbean subregional teleconference of the Board of Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean
- 6 p. Port of Spain: ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 1999
LC/CAR/G.559

Caribbean Subregional Teleconference of the Board of Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2, 19 February 1999. Substantive issues on the agenda of this meeting were:

1. A report on the 27th meeting of presiding officers;
2. The upcoming 28th meeting of presiding officers;

Economic profiles of Caribbean countries
LC/CAR/G.572

This document presents economic profiles of the following Caribbean countries: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, United States Virgin Islands. The information is arranged in the following sections: Basic facts; background; selected economic indicators; economic activity; fiscal operations; external debt; and balance of payments.
3. The 8th session of the Regional Conference; and
4. A mid-term review of the Beijing Conference, in particular, the Caribbean subregional preparatory process.

Report on the state of implementation in the Caribbean of the programme of action for Small Island developing states

Meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development, 7, New York, 19-30 April 1999. Notes that the greatest concerns with respect to the implementation of the SIDS programme of action have articulated by reference to such priority areas as "coastal and marine resources", "natural and environmental disasters" and "tourism". Notes two success stories, namely, climate change and sea-level rise and national institution and administrative capacity. Notes the financial, institutional, human resource and training constraints encountered during the implementation process. Identifies the priorities of SIDS for the next five years. Priority areas include land resources; waste management; climate change; freshwater resources; tourism resources; biodiversity; science and technology.

Report of the ninth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC)

Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC, 9, Port of Spain, 10-11 May 1999. Provides a list of participants. Notes some concerns arising from flagging attendance at CDCC meetings; the relevance of the work programme and the lack of sufficient coverage of Caribbean countries in ECLAC documents. Highlights plans to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the CDCC, including events planned. Discusses the implementation of the ECLAC/CDCC work programme for the biennium 1995 - 1999, as well as issues related to the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology and the status of regional implementation of Global Action Plans.

Report of the inter-agency collaborative group meeting preparatory to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development. Programme of action (WSSD/POA) and the meeting on the examination of ageing and the older person in the Caribbean
- 14 p. Port of Spain: ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 1999

The report focuses on discussions undertaken with regard to a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and the concept of ageing and older persons in the Caribbean sub-region. The objectives of the meeting were to ascertain, confirm and obligate resources and support for the two-day subregional meeting "Towards future action for social development in the Caribbean sub-region."

Globalization of financial markets: implications for the Caribbean

The countries studied in this report are Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The evolution and extent of financial globalization is examined and the macroeconomic policies of the countries in the study pertaining to trade, fiscal and monetary policy, and exchange rates are reviewed. The report also discusses the current financial crisis and its potential for disrupting or enhancing the positioning and economic welfare of the countries. It is recommended that countries pursue policies which guarantee macroeconomic stability and complement liberalization with prudent supervision of their financial sectors.
### A LISTING OF ECLAC/CDCC PUBLICATIONS FOR THE YEAR 1999

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