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CDCC
INTO THE
NEW MILLENNIUM

MEETING THE
CHALLENGES OF
THE FUTURE



ED NATIONS
OMIC COMMISSION
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
gional Headquarters for the Caribbean
BBEAN DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION COMMITTEE

2 January 2000
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

THE CDCC INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM:
Meeting the Challenges of the Future

A Discussion Paper



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN

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Preface

The present version of this paper seeks to reflect the comments and observations made on an earlier draft which was presented to the Ninth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), when it convened in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, over the period 10-11 May 1999. The presentation of the original version to that forum was motivated by the urgency felt by the secretariat to have the membership of the CDCC sensitized, even at the technical level, to its perception of a need to “reinvent” the CDCC, so as to enable it to meet the challenges presented by the new and still evolving regional and wider international environment. That initiative was also taken with a view to facilitating the promotion and eventual endorsement of the proposal in all member countries of the organization.

The endorsement of the overall thrust of the secretariat’s initiative by the Monitoring Committee, following what was regarded as its preliminary discussion of the matter, was recognized to be in no way a substitute for similar action at the political level. There, nevertheless, exists a widespread expectation that the major outcome of the ministerial meeting of the CDCC, that will convene in early 2000 to commemorate the twenty-fifth year of the establishment of the organization, will be a unanimous expression of a strong political commitment to the organization. The analysis conducted in this paper has as its sole objective, the provision of a sound basis, even a rationale, for the articulation of such a commitment by the ministers.

In order to facilitate the consideration of this paper, three principal observations and recommendations formulated at the Ninth Meeting are highlighted in summary terms in the following paragraphs.

First of all, the Monitoring Committee accepted that the subregion needed a mechanism by means of which the numerous and complex challenges of the contemporary regional and wider international environment could be confronted, while at the same time retaining the richness of the Caribbean identity within the United Nations system. This was recognized to be the continuing role envisaged for a revitalized CDCC in the paper presented by the secretariat.

Secondly, it was recommended that, notwithstanding the need to review the performance of the CDCC since its inception, the paper presented to the ministerial meeting should not be “too historical”, emphasizing, rather, the forward-looking thrust of the organization. The Monitoring Committee, nevertheless, welcomed the frank admission of the difficulties experienced by the CDCC over the years.

Thirdly, in order to promote the new thrust of the CDCC as envisaged in the initiative to equip the organization to meet the challenges of the future, it was recommended by the Monitoring Committee that the Constituent Declaration of the organization be “reshaped”. In this regard, it was recognized that several elements contained in that document no longer found resonance with the prevailing ethos of the contemporary international environment, characterized by “globalization” and the entrenchment of “market-forces” within a rules-based system as its more salient features. References in the Constituent Declaration to such aspects as “solidarity with the measures taken by producers’ associations of developing countries”; the activities of transnational corporations “in those countries that accept their operations”; or “...the inalienable right to exercise permanent sovereignty.....including nationalization...” were thus recognized to be patently out of step with the contemporary reality and were to be excised. The “reshaping” of the Constituent Declaration was also envisaged to explicitly incorporate the new and specific issues facing the region into the new millennium, as well as the actions contemplated to make the CDCC more effective, visible and relevant to the needs and interests of its entire membership.

With respect to this last recommendation by the Monitoring Committee, the secretariat, while fully endorsing its intent, wishes to urge that it might be appropriate to bear in mind the complex process involved in the “reshaping”, in effect, the renegotiation of the text of the Constituent Declaration of the CDCC and, indeed, of any other organization, in particular, the considerable outlay in time, as well as in the human, financial and other resources involved. Such a process, it can be argued, might operate to the detriment of the enhanced activism and effectiveness being pursued for the organization. A less costly, if necessarily pragmatic, alternative approach might pursue the “reshaping” of the organization even as it pursues its updated mission, through practice, specifically, through the incorporation of new topics, themes, directions and approaches, into successive work programmes of the organization. Such an approach would also have the important merit of endowing the work programmes and the organization, as a whole, with a degree of flexibility that would allow them to respond to, or to refocus, the changing needs of the membership, in the context of its interaction with the regional and wider international environment.

The secretariat commends this paper to the consideration of all the member countries of the CDCC.

THE CDCC INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM:

Meeting the Challenges of the Future

INTRODUCTION

The next ministerial meeting of the CDCC, the eighteenth session, will convene in the year 2000. In that year, the organization will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of its establishment. Against the intense activism that characterized the early years of the organization, the succeeding phases of its existence have manifested a significant decline in that activism, leading to what some observers, including representatives of a number of member States, have come to perceive as a static organization. Having conducted a wide-ranging review of the needs of the CDCC membership in the contemporary regional and wider international environment, the secretariat, seeking to exploit the historic as well as psychological moment of the dawn of a new millennium, has taken the opportunity to formulate for the consideration of the member States a proposal for the reorientation of this mechanism for cooperation, which remains at the region's disposal.

Fundamentally, ever mindful of the fact that the CDCC is an organization of its member States, the secretariat confines itself to the recommendation that member States take ownership of this proposal or, at least, of its central thrust, as the only means of assuring the organization of the degree of support and commitment that guarantees the CDCC an effective projection into the new millennium.

In order to set the bases for the detailed proposal and for the corresponding recommendations, perhaps it would be useful to recapitulate the nature, objectives and purpose of the CDCC, including its relationship with other organizations as enshrined in its Constituent Declaration, and to evaluate its performance, identifying, with the assistance of the perspectives of a number of former officials and technicians, who have had a close relationship with the CDCC at different periods of its existence, the factors that account for the trajectory of the organization's history. Such an evaluation would throw into relief, the insights that inform the several elements of the strategy envisaged towards the restoration of the dynamism of the organization, as well as its relevance to its membership.

PART 1

THE CDCC: ITS ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSTITUENT DECLARATION

The inauguration of the CDCC in November 1975 took place at a time of considerable ferment and radicalism on the international scene, ushered in, for the most part, by the intense activism of the developing countries. The main feature of the international scene of that period was the Cold War, many battles of which remained to be fought. In the event, many of these battles were fought in the wider Caribbean region. At the United Nations, the change in the composition of the General Assembly, brought about by the sentiments, perspectives and perceptions unleashed by that same body, in such instruments as the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples (1960), soon led to complaints by the developed countries, founding members of the organization, about "the tyranny of the majority".

This was the era of the call by developing countries for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) of the sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which convened in 1974 and which, despite the strong reservations of the major developed countries, was demanded by the group of developing countries, as they articulated the changes they sought to bring about in the global economy to promote their developmental objectives. It was also the era of the Integrated Programme for Commodities (IPC) in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and, in that same forum, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States and a host of other initiatives, by means of which the countries of the developing world sought to assert their identity, interests and needs.

The inauguration of the CDCC "as a subsidiary body of ECLA" reflected, among other things, an assertion of the identity as well as the peculiar interests and needs of the countries within the sphere of action of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain, and those of Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, within this Regional Economic Commission of the United Nations. In the context of the Cold War, the incorporation of Cuba into the membership of the CDCC represented a bold step and a significant move at the regional level, especially bearing in mind that Cuba was also in the vanguard of the movement for the creation of the organization.

The Constituent Declaration of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee

(i) *The Preamble*

In the sixteen preambular paragraphs of the Constituent Declaration, the document defines the Committee's status within the United Nations system and sets out the basic rationale for its creation by reference to, *inter alia*, the fact that "the Caribbean countries share 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". Reference is then made to the necessity "to strengthen the unity and cooperation ... in order to carry out joint activities that will benefit the subregion's economic and social development and increase its bargaining power as regards third countries and groupings of countries." Areas identified for "achieving joint policies" are economic complementarity, trade, the obtaining of financial resources, agriculture, tourism, transportation, industry, energy, the transfer of technology and technical know-how, health and education. A residual "and others" completes the narrative on areas deemed appropriate and relevant for joint policy formulation.

----- Reflecting contemporary international developments, including the prevailing ideological orientation, the Preamble also makes reference to:

(a) The importance and relevance of the sea and all its resources for the development, cooperation and self-determination of the Caribbean peoples (the Second United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS II) was formally launched in 1973 as a Third World resource-oriented initiative as evidenced, for example, by the introduction of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) concept, which eventually found reflection in Part V of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea);

(b) The indispensability of paying special attention to the relatively less developed and, in most cases, very small countries of the subregion;

(c) The affirmation that the countries of the Caribbean are essentially raw material producers and should, therefore, maintain solidarity with the adoption of measures for obtaining equitable and remunerative prices, including solidarity with the measures taken by producers' associations of developing countries in that regard;

(d) The need for cooperation mechanisms to be guided by the principles of equality, sovereignty and independence of States, solidarity and mutual benefit, without any discrimination that might arise as a result of differences in political, economic and social systems;

(e) The reaffirmation "in the spirit of various United Nations resolutions" that the countries of the subregion have the inalienable right to exercise permanent sovereignty over their natural resources and economic activities, including nationalization, etc.;

(f) Emphasis on the fact that the activities of transnational corporations "in those countries that accept their operations" must be subject to the aims of development and the national interests of the countries of the subregion, etc.

Also in the Preamble are scattered references to the activities of existing regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations which, by virtue of their example in organizing

cooperation, are suggested as potential partners for inter-institutional networking. Reference is here being made to those provisions which refer to:

(a) The pioneering role played by the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) and continued by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in promoting economic integration within the subregion;

(b) The fact that the Latin American Economic System (SELA) offers a broad framework for implementing concrete projects and initiatives and for coordinating common actions and positions in all fields, thereby facilitating greater identity of interests between the countries of the Caribbean and the rest of Latin America;

(c) The recognition that ECLAC has vast experience in the field of economic and social cooperation that can be of effective assistance to the Caribbean countries in their integration efforts and in the promotion of mutual cooperation beneficial to their economic and social development.

(ii) *The operative paragraphs*

As foreshadowed in the preambular paragraphs, "the Ministers of the countries within the sphere of action of the ECLAC Office in Port of Spain and those of Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic", in adopting the Constituent Declaration of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, *"declare their political will and their resolution"* in the operative paragraphs of the document, to:

(a) Carry out a policy for the optimum utilization of the available resources of the subregion, thus promoting its economic and social development and advancing progressively towards better coordination of their countries' economies. Based on the recognition of the advantages of economic complementation, this policy will give impetus to cooperation, particularly in the implementation of joint projects, the exchange of experience and mutual aid and through mechanisms, including trade;

(b) Carry out trade analyses with emphasis on tariffs, customs procedures and other related aspects, with a view to harmonizing and simplifying the mechanisms to promote trade among the countries of the subregion;

(c) Analyze the possibility of establishing multinational enterprises within the subregion, owned and controlled by the Caribbean States and nationals of such States;

(d) Implement joint complementation projects in order to facilitate the development and optimum use of the Caribbean countries' human, natural, industrial, technological and financial resources;

(e) Cooperate in agriculture; in increasing and improving national transportation facilities within the subregion and with other countries; in fishing; education; health; human resource development; tourism; cultural exchanges, including sports; telephone, postal and other means of communication; obtaining financial resources from external sources; transfer of technology; and collaboration in the identification and utilization of a complex base of raw materials within the subregion, especially energy sources;

(f) Carry out joint programmes aimed at better use and protection of the environment, including the preservation of the flora and fauna of the countries of the Caribbean, as well as their historical monuments and documents;

(g) Offer effective economic assistance in cases of emergencies and situations resulting from natural disasters and cooperate in the field of meteorology with a view to reducing the harmful effects of hurricanes and tropical storms to a minimum.

Again, reflecting the international political climate of the 1970s, the Ministers also agreed to "Exercise solidarity in the face of any type of economic action, pressure or coercion directed against any of the countries of the subregion that exercise their legitimate right to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources and economic activity..."

Finally, reverting to the recognition of the need for networking among the regional and subregional institutions, the Ministers also agreed to:

(a) Utilize the experience accumulated by CARICOM and other bodies which is of value for the achievement of the aim of cooperation among the Caribbean countries;

(b) Promote the development of activities and projects beyond the scope of this Committee within SELA, in order to facilitate more complete identification of the positions and interests of the countries of the Caribbean with the rest of Latin America, recognizing SELA as the proper regional-level framework for cooperation, consultation and coordination among the member countries.

The CDCC and other regional intergovernmental organizations

The geographical area of the wider Caribbean in which members of the CDCC are located, is the site of a number of integration processes of varying scope. Among these are, in chronological order of their establishment: the CARICOM, incorporating the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS); SELA; and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). Also at the institutional level, a number of agreements spanning such areas as trade, diplomatic relations and a host of others,

have been concluded among CDCC members, whether at the strictly bilateral level or at the subregional level. Examples of the latter include the Framework Trade Agreement concluded between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic in 1998. In addition to CARICOM States, Cuba and the Dominican Republic participate in CARIFORUM, the mechanism generated by the European Union (EU) for the conduct of its technical assistance programme in the region.

(i) *The CDCC and CARICOM*

From its inception, reflecting the provisions of its Constituent Declaration, the CDCC has developed cooperation with CARICOM. This was perhaps an inevitable development, reflecting the significant degree of overlap of the membership of both entities, as well as the fact that the impetus for the creation of the CDCC arose from within the CARICOM membership, specifically, Trinidad and Tobago, though with Cuba also in the vanguard.

In the Constituent Declaration of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, the Ministers declare themselves to be, *inter alia*,

"Conscious of the pioneering role played by the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) and continued by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in promoting economic integration within the subregion;"

and

"Confident that economic, political and cultural cooperation among the countries of the Caribbean will contribute to the necessary unity of Latin America."

The achievements of the Caribbean integration process, to date, clearly provided a kind of model or, at least, an example, of the basis on which the identity, interests and needs of the CDCC membership could be effectively articulated and aggregated within the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), whose near hemispheric scope of membership presented a structure that did not readily permit recognition of the uniqueness of Caribbean issues and concerns. In this regard, it is to be noted that, eventually, in 1984, the acronym, ECLA, was adjusted to ECLAC to highlight the participation of Caribbean countries within the Regional Commission.

It was evidently on this basis that, as stated in the Constituent Declaration, the Ministers declared their resolve to "utilize the experience accumulated by the CARICOM and other bodies which is of value for the achievement of the aim of cooperation among the Caribbean countries".

The habits of cooperation and consultation, developed over the years between ECLAC/CDCC and CARICOM, culminated, or perhaps more accurately, were formalized, in the conclusion on 24 January 1995 of a "Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation Between the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) acting

for the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) and the Caribbean Community Acting through the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)". This Memorandum of Understanding provides for, *inter alia*, cooperation, consultation, exchange of information, reciprocal representation at meetings and joint implementation of projects. Currently, as evidence of the close working relationship that has been developed between the two organizations, visits have been exchanged by the Director of the ECLAC/CDCC Office and the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community. In addition, ECLAC accepts invitations to participate in a range of CARICOM meetings at which matters of mutual interest are discussed and vice versa.

CARICOM has also concluded a Cooperation Agreement with the United Nations, which anchors its relationship even more firmly within the overall United Nations system. Apart from consultations at the bilateral, inter-secretariat level, even higher levels of cooperation have been achieved as evidenced, for example, by the agreement of both secretariats to jointly serve as the Interim Secretariat of the Bureau of the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Programme of Action, which convened in Barbados over the period, 10-14 November 1997, to advance the implementation of that Programme of Action. Cooperation also continues in a number of other areas.

(ii) The CDCC and SELA

The Constituent Declaration of the CDCC, as well as the Panama Convention, by virtue of which SELA was established, were both adopted in 1975. On this basis, very much in keeping with the type of rationale that prompted the establishment of CDCC within the near-hemispheric community represented by the then ECLA, SELA represents the creation of a forum for consultation and coordination on areas reflecting the "identity, interests and needs" of Latin American States. The definition of "Latin American States" was extended to embrace the countries of the Caribbean. The basic goal was the creation of a "uniquely Latin American/Caribbean forum". The affinity between the CDCC and SELA whose respective memberships, in addition, overlap to a significant degree, is therefore perhaps quite natural. This affinity, born of shared perceptions and concerns, and buttressed by overlapping memberships, provides a most propitious environment for cooperation between the two organizations. As has been indicated earlier, this situation finds reflection in the Constituent Declaration of the CDCC in which the members declare themselves to be, *inter alia*,

"Convinced that the Latin American Economic System (SELA) offers a broad framework for implementing concrete projects and initiatives and for coordinating common actions and positions in all fields, thereby facilitating greater identity of interests between the Caribbean and the rest of Latin America."

In other references, as has already been indicated, the Ministers declared their resolve to promote the development of activities and projects beyond the scope of the CDCC within SELA, which was recognized as the proper regional-level framework for cooperation, consultation and coordination among the member countries.

Collaboration between these two organizations has continued over the years. One of the more tangible and also more recent examples of this is the Roundtable on "External Relations in the Caribbean in the next Millennium", which was organized for representatives of the Caribbean region on 20 October 1998. The Roundtable, which was organized by SELA, was hosted at the Subregional Headquarters of ECLAC/CDCC.

PART II

THE CDCC EXPERIENCE

Since the creation of the CDCC two and a half decades ago, changing regional and international environments have prompted the proposal for the organization to embark on a process of reflection with a view to "reinventing itself" in order to be able to exploit the opportunities presented by the new regional and wider international environment that has evolved.

The early years of the establishment of the CDCC have been chronicled as a period of intense activity and dynamism, as its membership set about the implementation of its newly articulated mission, which was specifically directed to economic and social development through cooperation. The inauguration of the Committee also marked a watershed in the management of Caribbean issues within the United Nations system. Henceforth, policies and programmes for implementation in the Caribbean subregion would be developed and operationalized on the basis of ideas, principles and strategies defined by the subregion itself. Providing the rationale for the establishment of the CDCC was the recognition, as articulated in its Constituent Declaration, of the shared geographical, cultural, historic and economic profiles, as well as a similarity in the socio-economic problems presented by the membership. At the formal level, this drive for recognition of the unique identity of the CDCC countries culminated in 1984 when the Caribbean presence was explicitly incorporated into the nomenclature of the Regional Commission.

Since that early period, there has been a significant decline in the activism of the CDCC, reflected in, *inter alia*, a corresponding decline in the degree of attention directed to it by critical elements of its membership. Against the perspective of the advantages claimed for the organization at the time of its establishment by its entire membership and the expectations thus generated, much of the explanation of this diminished activism on the part of the CDCC is to be traced to the fundamental changes in the organization's operational environment, at both international and regional levels. In addition, changes in governments over the years, including the rise of a new generation of political elites, have also contributed to the diminished attention directed to the organization.

With respect to the changes in the organization's operational environment, the distinction between the operation of the CDCC as an intergovernmental forum, on the one hand, and the work

programme of ECLAC, on the other, is to be emphasized. As an intergovernmental body, the CDCC provides an essentially political forum for dialogue towards enhanced cooperation in support of the further development of the Caribbean subregion. It is also intended to advance regional integration. The work programme of ECLAC, for its part, is the vehicle by means of which the benefits of socio-economic development are explicitly pursued. The significance of this distinction is highlighted by reference to the fact that, whereas the CDCC has had to grapple with certain constraints over the years, the work programme of ECLAC remained in place and given, *inter alia*, the objectivity that conditions its activities, it is in fact regarded as a very important source of assistance in matters related to such areas as trade, the review of economic performance, sustainable development and social issues, among several others.

This attempt to review the evolution of the CDCC and, more specifically, to account for its decline, following its early period of intense activism as mentioned above, is based in large measure on the perceptions conveyed by a number of observers, all of whom have had the most intimate contact with the organization over different periods of its existence. What is significant about this survey of opinions and perceptions is that in a number of instances, such opinions and perceptions differ considerably, quite apart from differences in emphases, with respect to developments during a given reference period. Overall, the factors or reasons advanced by the personalities consulted to explain the organization's trajectory fall into three main categories, namely, political, institutional and environmental. These factors and reasons also inform, to varying degrees, the rationale that has been developed by the secretariat as well as the feasibility of specific approaches identified in this paper. For convenience, these are set out in the following sections.

1. Selected political factors advanced to account for the decline in the perceived relevance of the CDCC:

(a) The CDCC had outlived its usefulness, having served its major purpose of integrating Cuba, institutionally, into the Caribbean system;

(b) The decline in interest of one of the foremost proponents of the CDCC, once it had failed to obtain a focus on its policy with respect to the International Law of the Sea, shortly after the establishment of the organization;

(c) Ideological polarization among the membership in the nature of fallout from such events as the coup d'état in Grenada.

2. Selected institutional factors advanced to account for the decline in perceived relevance of the CDCC:

(a) The perception of Caribbean countries of inadequate attention being given to the Caribbean in ECLAC documents, derived, in part, from the difficulty in obtaining current Caribbean data;

(b) The provision in the *Functions and Rules of Procedure of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee* that: "The Secretariat of the Committee shall be the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, acting principally through the Subregional Office in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago". This situation has been perceived by some to have reduced the ability of the CDCC to function as an autonomous body. At the Meeting of the Monitoring Committee in May 1999, the view was expressed by one delegation to the effect that the matter of the acquisition by the CDCC of its own secretariat remained "a live issue". According to this view, it was to be recognized that the CDCC was an intergovernmental body and, as such, needed to have its own "infrastructure". In this connection, reference has already been made to the complementarity of functions between the CDCC and ECLAC, implying a positive aspect to the existence of "a shared secretariat" in the execution of the activities of the CDCC.

(c) The effective withdrawal of support by other United Nations organizations operating in the region arising from the approach espoused by the CDCC in its early years to the coordination of developmental activities in the subregion in a context in which these other organizations sought to protect the integrity of their respective mandates;

(d) The failure of Caribbean governments to formulate a common Latin American policy and a system of international relations in which CARICOM and CDCC would have distinct roles. Emphasis on CARICOM by its member States, which comprise a significant portion of the membership of the CDCC, served to divert attention from the Committee;

(e) The retreat from "South-South self-reliance, following the muting of Third World radicalism born of, *inter alia*, the fall in petroleum prices and of the power of OPEC and the need for IMF programmes". This produced a shift to short-term adjustment policies to replace the wide-ranging planning exercises envisaged for CDCC. In any event, as observed by one commentator, the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development (CGCED) provided a more comfortable planning mechanism and its activities were integrated with the IMF programmes, for example, providing supplementary balance of payments support to complement IMF programmes;

(f) Related to the last mentioned factor is the observation that "The quest for more resources was heightened and this seemed to become the indicator of Secretariat success. Inevitably the capacity of the Secretariat to deliver, judged in relation to the expectations, was found wanting".

3. **Selected environmental factors advanced to account for the decline in the perceived relevance of the CDCC**

The "environmental factors" advanced to account for the decline in the relevance of the CDCC, in essence, relate to the new and still evolving international and regional contexts in which the organization must function.

In the more significant centres of strategic decision-making in the western world, the perception of the dynamic of history has been that of a struggle between two competing political, economic and social systems: "capitalism", on the one hand, and "communism", on the other. In accordance with that perception, the vaunted triumph of the former, as construed from the fall of the Berlin Wall, has been interpreted by some, to have marked "the end of history" and the introduction of a new dispensation in which the former communist, centrally directed and relatively isolated economic systems of the then Eastern bloc are now open to capitalist penetration. In the wake of that development has come the enthronement of "market forces" as the mainspring of the international economy, buttressed by the establishment of internationally binding trade rules administered by the "The World Trade Organization (WTO)".

Within the WTO, these binding trade rules basically reflect the "new" international liberalized environment that simultaneously permitted the rise of the WTO itself as well as the initiative for the creation of the Free Trade Area of The Americas (FTAA). Both the regime that finds the WTO at its pinnacle and that contemplated by the FTAA present severe challenges to the human and financial resources of the small countries of the Caribbean, even as the new dispensation sets about the elimination of trade preferences, hitherto enjoyed by them and which constitute the mainstay of several economies of the region. At the same time, the new trading environment established or pursued by the WTO and the FTAA process presents ever-increasing challenges to the competitiveness, which is to say the survival, of these economies.

Problems of access to these critical institutions and processes which manage the international economic system present major challenges to the effective participation of these countries, which were already marginalized in the earlier and admittedly less complex international world political and economic system. Further, the modest efforts possible by these countries within these organizations and processes already imposes serious strains on their very limited human and financial resources, much of which have been preempted by these organizations and processes as a result of the very high priority attached to their respective activities. This necessarily implies the diversion of such critical resources from other organizations and initiatives that are also highly relevant in their overall developmental endeavours. Now, there is a call for a new round of multilateral trade negotiations at a time when the results of the Uruguay Round are yet to be digested by the developing countries of the Caribbean, among others.

In consonance with these fundamental developments, an organization such as the UNCTAD, which constituted a champion par excellence of the interests of the developing countries at the international level and, already with a particular focus on small island countries in the 1970s, has

been eclipsed from its former pre-eminent position. In the contemporary situation, UNCTAD with its vibrant built-in "Third World Lobby" that was the Group of 77 and China, in the preceding dispensation, has now been relegated to a forum essentially dedicated to analysis and research and to the provision of certain forms of technical assistance to developing countries. It is thus apparent that, as the new international ethos consolidates and entrenches itself, marginalization of the developing economies at the country level has been accompanied by a corresponding marginalization of the institutions that were established in an earlier era, for the protection and promotion of their interests at the international level. The UNCTAD represents one such institution.

These major developments are unfolding against the backdrop and indeed as an integral element of the intensified degree of linkages including, in particular, economic decision-making that transcends national economies. This is the phenomenon of "globalization" reflected in, *inter alia*, "the liberalization of trade, the deregulation of financial markets, the spread of transnational production of goods and services and the development of new technologies". It is these fundamental changes that have presented the countries and institutions of the Caribbean with an operational environment that is drastically different from that which obtained during the early years of the CDCC. In this regard, it will be recalled that the Constituent Declaration of the CDCC contains such references as "the inalienable right to exercise permanent sovereignty...including nationalization" and to the activities of transnational corporations "in those countries that accept their operations". Overall, the profound changes that have occurred in the international environment are having the effect of further complicating the already complex development problematique of Caribbean countries, through the generation of a number of new or intensified constraints whether viewed from the political, economic or legal perspectives.

Together with this multifaceted phenomenon of "globalization", another significant feature of the operational environment of the CDCC membership and certain other countries is constituted by the policies of the Multilateral Financial Institutions (MFIs). A number of concerns have arisen with regard to the economic model advocated by these institutions, including the undesirable aspects arising from their pursuit, such as increased poverty levels. More generally, this model ignores the fundamental economic and ecological vulnerability of these countries. It is for reasons such as these, that calls are being made for the review of this model. The imposition of varying conditionalities, whether in the sphere of human rights, democracy, governance or the environment, helps to complete the "policy framework" of these institutions. Fundamentally, these policy developments present major challenges to the development and delivery of policies that are critical to the developmental aspirations of the region, even as the types of policies to be delivered themselves undergo significant transformation, in response to the transformed "policy environment".

The importance of regional action

That coordinated regional action through effective mechanisms provides the only feasible avenues for garnering both the range, as well as the quantity of resources required to advance the socio-economic development of CDCC member States, is a tenet firmly entrenched in the Caribbean,

the cradle of so many integrationist endeavours. Indeed, in the contemporary context, the basic ideas which informed the establishment of the CDCC retain, *a fortiori*, their unquestionable validity. In all areas of the world where efforts are being made to secure a more effective participation in the "new" and still evolving international system, the regional approach is regarded as a *sine qua non*. Nor has the Caribbean, as indeed other regions, been exempt from significant modifications in its political, economic and other structures, with equally significant implications for the relevance and general functioning of its regional institutions.

Following from the above, it became evident that, as the relevance of the concept of the nation State as the critical reference unit in international economic interaction continued to be diminished, there emerged a colossal new wave of integrationist sentiments that has swept all corners of the world. These sentiments find concrete expression in such developments as the "deepening and widening" of the European integration process; the United States-Canada Free Trade Agreement which, as a direct response to developments in Europe, expanded into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); developments in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN); the formation of the Group of Three, comprising Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela; and the creation of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

By far the most ambitious "regional economic integration project" in progress is the initiative for the creation of the FTAA by 2005. Nor has activity in this sphere been confined to the creation of new integration processes. Many pre-existing integration processes have been revitalized, among them the Andean Pact, now transformed into the Andean Community; the Central American Integration System (SICA); and CARICOM. More specifically, the "modernization" of CARICOM structures, as exemplified by the efforts to transform the Caribbean Common Market into a Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), coupled with the establishment of the ACS in 1995, may reasonably be regarded as having given rise to certain concerns, if not challenges, as regards the effective functioning of the CDCC. Basically, such challenges arise as a result of the diversion of attention from the CDCC.

CDCC, CARICOM and the ACS

Perhaps the major observation to be made with respect to these organizations relates to the significant degree of overlap of their respective constituencies, their "purposes and objectives" and, consequently, their work programmes. The major challenges stem less from the basic need to coordinate these work programmes than from the competition for attention, political commitment and other resources, arising precisely from the overlapping memberships. To this must be added, what might be described as "the drive to self-sufficiency" in the context of the more recent institutions and processes. Though in some cases justifiable on political or technical grounds, this development nevertheless diminishes the need for earlier processes of structured collaboration, with serious implications for the duplication of activity and expenditure.

In the context of its evolution to a CSME, for example, the Caribbean Common Market, with some assistance from external donors, has tended to become more introspective and "self-reliant" as it sets about the design and establishment of its new instruments of cooperation. This and related developments have contributed to the marginalization of ECLAC/CDCC which has always envisaged a wider range of technical cooperation with CARICOM.

The situation as obtains with respect to the ACS is somewhat more complicated. While the need to safeguard the scope of their mandates, sometimes referred to as "territory", is characteristic of all organized entities in an effort to "justify their existence", the ideas that informed the establishment of the ACS envisaged the creation of a comprehensive, modern and uniquely Caribbean entity, that would secure the effective insertion of its membership and of the subregion, as a whole, into the overall contemporary integration process at the level of the hemisphere and beyond. Also envisaged, was an organization that would constitute "a Secretariat of Secretariats", that is to say, a coordinating mechanism that would secure the implementation of the activities as determined by its membership, through collaboration with the secretariats of existing organizations with overlapping memberships or terms of reference. Organizations falling within the scope of that process include CARICOM, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), SELA, SICA and, of course, ECLAC/CDCC. The close involvement of ECLAC/CDCC in the development of the ACS provides another notable example of its collaboration and cooperation with the major inter-governmental agencies of the wider Caribbean, namely, CARICOM, SELA and SICA.

Even as the ACS was being established and since its establishment, the assistance rendered to the "ACS process" by ECLAC/CDCC was quite substantial in a number of critical areas. Yet, whereas a more dynamic CDCC could greatly enrich the output of the whole corpus of regional institutions through synergy, the status of the organization at the time of the formation of the ACS, for example, might have given rise to the perception that it promised not to be a particularly useful institutional partner, even in the spheres of action set out in its Constituent Declaration and which also figure prominently in the Convention establishing the Association of Caribbean States. This, too, might have translated into the perception, on the part of the ACS membership, of a marginal role for the CDCC. On the other hand, since the establishment of the ACS, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat has been receiving a number of requests for collaboration from the Association in a number of areas, particularly, trade analyses and statistics. One conclusion that might be drawn from this development is that a strengthened CDCC would redound towards enhanced cooperation with other organizations, such as the ACS, in areas of mutual interest.

Summary implications of the changed operational environment

Taken together, the transformation of the operational environment of the CDCC at the global, hemispheric, as well as regional levels, has presented certain challenges to the organization as a result of, *inter alia*,

- (a) The diversion of the political attention of national decision makers to other global, hemispheric and even regional organizations and processes arising from the array of issues presented by "globalization", the entrenchment of "market liberalization" and related phenomena;
- (b) The accompanying diversion of human, financial and other resources;
- (c) The orientation towards consolidation and self-sufficiency on the part of other regional organizations, whether justifiable or not;
- (d) The perception, in some quarters, that the diminished performance of the CDCC following the intense activism that characterized its early years justifies its marginalization.

On the other hand, there are a number of elements which enhance the organization's operational environment and these, too, deserve to be mentioned. They include:

- (a) The full integration of Cuba into the region, as evidenced by, *inter alia*, its establishment of diplomatic relations with all independent members of the CDCC;
- (b) The general intensification of "Caribbean-Latin American Relations";
- (c) The recognition, on the part of the CDCC membership of the continuing relevance of an organization 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. This recognition of a neutral role on the part of the United Nations can underpin a re-commitment to the organization, its basic purposes and objectives, as well as its relevance as an organization capable of making a critical contribution in the region's quest for sustainable development;
- (d) The critical role entrusted to the ECLAC/CDCC in the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action 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;
- (e) The strategic role that can be played by the organization as a forum which is smaller than the ACS, i.e. specific to the needs of the insular Caribbean but more inclusive than CARICOM. In this regard, the convening of a CDCC caucus within the ACS has been mooted;

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

(g) The access provided to a number of non-independent countries and territories to a regional intergovernmental organization 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.

Against the foregoing analysis of the CDCC's operational environment, an exploration will be undertaken of a number of issues which appear to be of critical relevance to the future of the subregion with a view to informing the organization's work programme into the new millennium. As indicated above, due regard is to be had to the distinction between the activities of the CDCC as a platform for the exchange of experiences and perspectives and the work programme of ECLAC, through which specific objectives are pursued.

PART III

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

The initiative to equip the CDCC to meet the challenges of the future was effectively launched by the Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean at the seventeenth session of the Committee when it convened at the ministerial level in Aruba, on 15 May 1998. This was the central theme of the Director's opening address at that session. In the introductory sections of that address, the problem of the CDCC's loss of "dynamism, optimism and enthusiasm" was firmly posited, as was the commitment of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat to redouble its efforts to restore those vital characteristics. These elements are captured in the following extracts:

"Honourable delegates, I wish to express my sincere appreciation for signaling your support to CDCC as indicated by your attendance here today. Over the last several years, for a variety of reasons, we have not had the good fortune to convene these meetings as regularly as stipulated under the Constituent Declaration of the CDCC. However, I am fully resolved, with your support and goodwill, to put that period of inconsistency firmly behind us. We also pledge to redouble our efforts to bring our other members to the table on a continuing basis and, in so doing, recapture the dynamism, optimism and enthusiasm which characterized the early years of the CDCC."

"In keeping with the spirit of revival of CDCC, one of the recommendations made by the CDCC meeting at the technical level is to convene ministerial meetings every other year, and meetings at the technical level on an annual basis. This we will place before you later on during these deliberations for your consideration."

Following a review of the implementation of the work programme of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat during the 1996-1997 biennium, and outlining the main tasks which lay ahead during the current biennium, the Director focused on "relevance" as the critical factor that held out the promise of a more robust CDCC at the service of its membership. For ease of reference and taking into account the informal nature of this paper, an extended excerpt from the Director's address is set out hereunder. The Director spoke as follows:

"The work programme itself went through a process of intense review to ensure that it was both focused and relevant to the needs of this region. On the issue of relevance we face a number of critical constraints:

- (a) The first is the fact that a significant part of the work which we undertake is in support of the work of a few other regional organizations with which we have a long tradition of support and collaboration, as a result of our well-known expertise in the area of economics and trade. This body of work contributes in a significant way to critical regional processes but takes place, in a sense "behind the scenes" and may not always be readily associated with ECLAC. Our continuing work on trade, research, analysis and policy formulation in support of CARICOM, and on producing studies on obstacles to trade for every CARICOM State on behalf of the ACS, illustrates this point.*
- (b) The second constraint is the fact that as a regional commission our first point of entry is at the regional level. We, therefore, perform an important function in bridging the gap between global processes and the implementation of activities at the regional level. While we make contributions at the national level, there is a sense sometimes that to be relevant we should be doing more to assist our members at that level. The need, therefore, to balance the imperatives of our responsibilities at the regional level, with the need to also be viewed as relevant at the national level, is a challenge which we take seriously and are committed to redressing through the allocation of our resources in the months and years to come.*

*In putting in place the systems necessary to move positively forward, it has been necessary to take cognizance of some of your concerns articulated in past forums of this type. One relates to a long-standing need to take action on CDCC resolution 38(XIV) with respect to the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST) which required that the secretariat provide a brief on administrative support arrangements provided to CCST in ECLAC's capacity as secretariat to the Council. We initiated discussion on this issue via our presentation of a working document entitled **Interim report on the administrative***

support arrangements for the CCST (LC/CAR/G.517), presented at the fifteenth plenary session of the CCST in December 1997, which was held in Port-of-Spain. The documentation forms part of an agenda item, which will be discussed more substantively later on during these proceedings.

Another concern raised by CDCC members has been the need to devote additional resources to operational activities within the region. Given the reality of the reform process currently underway within the United Nations system, the only realistic way of dealing with this is the degree to which we can successfully raise extrabudgetary finances through the formulation and successful implementation of project proposals, or execution of projects on behalf of other agencies. Using a proactive approach to this issue, on 29 January 1998 we convened a meeting of international and regional agencies which was attended by 18 agencies. An impressive number of agency heads were in attendance.

The objective of the meeting was singular and straightforward: to present the work plan for the 1998-1999 biennium to our colleagues - at the start of the biennium, with a view to identifying possible areas of functional collaboration - which would allow us to stretch our resources further - and to identify areas of possible financial support. By all accounts the meeting was a success. Agencies welcomed the opportunity to receive information about our planned activities, and several requests for collaboration were made; indeed a number of agencies used this as an opportunity to express the possibility of financial support to some of our programme areas. We are currently engaged in bilateral discussions with these groups with a view to following up quickly on these initiatives so as not to lose momentum. One initiative coming out of that forum was a meeting hosted on 23 April at our office for regional institutions to discuss modalities for the rationalization of the technical aspects of information, databases and data needs within the region. We have also started the process of project proposal formulation based on some of these initiatives for submission to the ECLAC Headquarters.

Another concern, which has been raised, is the relevance of ECLAC's activities to the needs of the region. We have undertaken an exhaustive process of internal review to ensure the relevance of activities within the work plan. However, given the fact that there is at least a three-year time lag between the formulation of the work plan and its actual articulation, it means, by definition, that there will be issues and concerns which will emerge as pressing regional challenges, which we may not have planned for. As a result, some degree of flexibility must be part of the underlying philosophy with which we approach our work so as to contribute to the resolution of such issues and crises as they emerge.

As the new Director, I have recently initiated my first round of official calls in the region, both to present my credentials as well as to identify specific areas in which we can lend assistance in an effort to target some of our activities at the national level. Five such visits have been undertaken - to Trinidad, Barbados, Belize, the Dominican Republic and Guyana. The visit to Belize is already bearing fruit in that we have recently embarked on a

programme of technical assistance to that country to assist them to undertake national consultations and to formulate a national action plan for the eradication of poverty. National consultations will take place at the end of June. The recent visit to Guyana has resulted in the formulation of a series of technical assistance projects. One such project will assess the macroeconomic impact of the recent ravages of 'El Niño' on that country, and another the trade and labour implications of the proposed trade "union", of some type, of the Guianas - Suriname, Cayenne, Guyana and Northern Brazil.

Visits are being scheduled to volcano-ravaged Montserrat and Antigua and Barbuda with a view to identifying the form of assistance which can be offered by our office as a result of this disaster. In keeping with this initiative to continue the provision of technical assistance at the national level, we will deploy the services of one of our economists to work with two or three countries per year on issues relating to the competitiveness of their agro-industrial and manufacturing sectors on a rotational basis, starting with three countries which are most in need of assistance. Both the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Officer and the Regional Economic Adviser will respond to direct requests for assistance on an ongoing basis. Other staff are currently involved in providing training, and upgrading the capability of the census and statistical offices in several countries.

The ministerial meeting on the SIDS Programme of Action (POA) convened by the ECLAC Port-of-Spain office and hosted by the Government of Barbados has further cemented our ties with the Government of that country. A meeting of the Bureau of that meeting chaired by the Government of Barbados is slated to be held at ECLAC on 9 June to discuss the establishment of a Regional Coordinating Mechanism to coordinate activities associated with the implementation of the SIDS POA. . The secretariat was represented at the recent meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York, at which the constraints facing the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action were discussed, with a view to ensuring continuity between the discussion of issues relevant to the SIDS process at the global level and those at the level of this region. The office will also assist regional SIDS in their preparation for the Donor Council Meeting slated for February 1999, and the UN General Assembly Review in September/October 1999.

Our Science and Technology Unit, through the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology, continues to assist the region in the areas of science and technology, training, popularization and technology transfer. The convening of training workshops, conferences, demonstration projects in CCST member countries allows ECLAC to make a direct contribution to the development of science and technology in the region.

Through these and other initiatives involving consultation at the level of other organizations and member countries, it is my intention to ensure that the ECLAC Port-of-Spain office increases its visibility and relevance in the region.

It is also the intention of my colleagues and myself to maintain a close working relationship with the CDCC Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York, many of whom are here with us this morning, to keep them briefed and fully informed about the work of this office. To this end, I met with CDCC Ambassadors in New York in November 1997 a few weeks after the SIDS Ministerial Meeting in Barbados to brief them on the meeting's decisions and to highlight what, to my mind, were the critical issues. I also undertook a second briefing on 24 April 1998, in New York, to brief the Ambassadors on the outcome of the seventeenth session of the CDCC at the technical level held in Port-of-Spain on 23-24 March 1998, and to sensitize them to the issues to be raised at the twenty-seventh session of ECLAC here in Aruba. An update on regional activities relating to the SIDS POA was also presented.

The ECLAC Port-of-Spain office is firmly committed to supporting the work of other regional organizations. As the incoming director, I recently paid an official visit to the Secretary-General of CARICOM, and pledged the continuing support of this office for the work of that organization. Indeed both ECLAC and CARICOM will undertake a joint meeting in June at the technical level to discuss areas of common interest and functional collaboration, in an effort to increase efficiency at both ends. The organizations have been jointly mandated to act as the Interim Secretariat for the implementation of the SIDS POA and undertake a number of activities. ECLAC also supports the work of the Association of Caribbean States through the provision of research and other studies which we produce. We have also indicated our willingness to support the work of the Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM) by accommodating some of the critical issues to be addressed by the RNM within our research programme. We continue to work closely with the University of the West Indies, Guyana and the United States Virgin Islands, as well as the Caribbean Development Bank and other regional organizations on a continuing basis.

In this biennium, we intend to deploy our resources in support of issues of significant concern to this region. Among the issues which we will study, with a view to making recommendations for policy, include the socioeconomic impacts of migration, both intraregional and return migration, and the implications for public policy; the planning, land use and land ownership issues associated with the tourism industry; the impact of globalization and the trend of liberalization on regional economies; the issue of competitiveness and the need to diversify regional economies; analysis of financial markets; studies relating to hemispheric economic cooperation and their significance to Caribbean economies; issues pertaining to technology transfer, masculinity, poverty, and sustainable development - are all included in our programme of work for this biennium. As a member of the Tripartite Committee (together with the OAS and IDB), we will continue to provide technical assistance to the Working Group on Smaller Economies as part of the FTAA process, continue our support for other hemispheric and regional processes currently underway, and assist countries in the implementation of activities following from major world platforms and plans of action such as the Barbados Programme of Action and the International Conference on Population and Development, among others.

The forces of globalization, information and technological transformation are inexorable. We consider it to be our mission to assist our members to both anticipate and adjust to these changes as effectively and efficiently as possible in pursuit of the sustainable use of our natural resources and the well-being of Caribbean people."

Summary of the Director's approach

- (a) Balancing responsibilities at the subregional level with the need to be relevant at the national level. This involves the identification and allocation of resources to appropriate operational activities in the form of technical assistance within the subregion. Raising extrabudgetary resources, through the formulation and implementation of projects or through execution of projects on behalf of other agencies are but two approaches that may be pursued in this regard;
- (b) Meeting specific concerns expressed by the subregion;
- (c) Strategic support of the work of other regional organizations such as the ACS, CARICOM, SELA and regional universities;
- (d) Provision of technical assistance at the national level, including the continued provision of training and upgrading of the capacity of census and statistical offices in CDCC countries;
- (e) Representation of the CDCC secretariat at relevant international meetings with a view to ensuring continuity between discussions at the global level and those at the regional level, e.g. SIDS-related meetings. Also, the secretariat will assist CDCC members in their preparation for relevant international meetings;
- (f) Continuing activities by the Science and Technology Unit in the provision of assistance in science and technology, training, popularization and technology transfer through workshops, conferences and demonstration projects;
- (g) Maintenance of close liaison with Permanent Representatives of CDCC countries to the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) in furtherance of regional concerns and with government officials in the capitals;
- (h) Undertaking studies on issues of priority concern to the region with a view to making recommendations of policy. Such issues include the socio-economic impacts of migration, the planning, land-use and land ownership issues associated with the tourism industry, the impact of globalization and the trend of liberalization on regional economies, the issue of competitiveness and the need to diversify regional economies and other issues included in the work programme for this biennium;

- (i) Organizing workshops on topics related to the FTAA, the WTO and Standards, among others;
- (j) Providing technical assistance to the Working Group on Smaller Economies in the context of the FTAA process, continuing support for other regional and hemispheric processes underway and assisting in the implementation of activities following major world conferences;
- (k) Providing assistance to members to adjust to the forces of globalization, information and technological transformation in pursuit of the sustainable use of our natural resources and the well-being of the people of the region;
- (l) Ensuring flexibility in the identification of priority areas and objectives to permit the incorporation of new issues as they emerge.

THE WAY FORWARD

The basic rationale

The approach advanced by the Director for the CDCC fairly captures the broad actions to be taken towards the restoration of the "dynamism, optimism and enthusiasm" which constituted the central elements of the organization's ethos during its early years. This bold statement of determination has effectively pre-empted any question as to "whether" or "why" the CDCC should be the object of any effort, whether at the level of the secretariat or of the member States, towards the restoration of the central place envisaged for it at the time of its establishment.

Implicit in the Director's approach are considerations which might be presented as the basic rationale for urging a step-level enhancement of the programme of the CDCC. Some elements of this "rationale" have been mentioned in earlier sections of this paper. A more detailed identification of the relevant considerations which, together, inform all aspects of the exercise, is set out hereunder:

- (a) The vast potential scope of action of the CDCC as set out in its Constituent Declaration, including the provision of technical assistance at the national as well as regional level;
- (b) The access enjoyed by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat to the resources, including expertise for the provision of technical assistance, of the United Nations system. Moreover, the presence of ECLAC/CDCC in the region, in close proximity to member States translates into a mode of operation which allows for a better understanding of the critical issues with which this region is faced;

(c) The recognized capacity of the secretariat to bridge the gap between global and regional processes, including the implementation of activities at the regional and national levels and the provision of a forum for the exchange of information and best practices based on the experience of the entire ECLAC membership. ECLAC/CDCC also plays a major role in promoting participatory approaches at the community level. This is exemplified by the role played by ECLAC/CDCC in the implementation at the regional level of Plans of Action adopted at global conferences including the lead role mandated to the secretariat by the United Nations General Assembly and endorsed by the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the SIDS POA, to coordinate the implementation of that Programme of Action which is to be regarded as the framework for the region's efforts towards sustainable development. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat is also strategically positioned to assist in the proactive articulation of Caribbean concerns for presentation at the wider international level, through contributions to the formulation of ideas as well as strategies and by providing an appropriate forum for the aggregation of national perspectives into regional positions. The collection of data to inform both policy formulation as well as implementation is another useful role in the secretariat's repertoire, as is the provision of assistance in the preparation of Project Proposals and the mobilization of funds for project implementation. More generally, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat is in a position to identify issues which might be of national interest and, also, those that have a potential for development into regional cooperation endeavours;

(d) The unassailable commitment and readiness of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat to the further and more rapid development of the region from the social, economic as well as ecological perspectives;

(e) Assistance to member States in the process of integration and the promotion of Latin American and Caribbean cooperation through the ECLAC Offices in Santiago, Mexico City and other capitals;

(f) ECLAC/CDCC as a United Nations body brings objectivity and a certain degree of neutrality to the analysis of issues facing the region.

OPERATIONALIZING THE RATIONALE: CONCRETE PROPOSALS

Securing political endorsement

Recognizing, fundamentally, that the entity referred to as the "CDCC" constitutes a grouping of member States, to have any real chance of success, the process of equipping to meet the new challenges must repose in that membership. In the absence of ownership of the process by the countries intended to benefit from a refocused Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, no real progress can reasonably be expected. It follows, therefore, that in advancing this initiative,

the first action contemplated by the secretariat is to persuade the membership of the validity and overall relevance of the rationale as summarized above. In this regard, attention is recalled to the vitally important functions that can be played by the CDCC as a forum that allows the discussion of specific concerns of smaller States aimed at the preservation of their identity; the exchange of experiences among its membership, recognizing that each member has a related but, nevertheless, unique range of problems; and the access it provides to a number of non-independent countries and territories to a regional intergovernmental organization in which full recognition is given to their concerns and their general participation. A political commitment is required.

To this end, the commemoration in the year 2000, the year of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the CDCC and on the verge of a new millennium, might be identified as the occasion on which such a commitment might be sought. More precisely, securing such a political commitment might be envisaged as the principal outcome of the CDCC ministerial meeting that will convene early in 2000. The time-frame implied in this proposal allows adequate preparation of the relevant ideas and approaches, building upon the endorsement of the initiative by the ninth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC, which convened in May 1999 and which marked the initial step in the process of sensitization of the CDCC membership to the initiative and soliciting its endorsement.

Operational aspects: Approaches, actions and programmes

The need for an adjustment, and, in effect, the streamlining of the focus of the activities of the organization constituted the leitmotif of the Director's intervention at the seventeenth Session of the CDCC when the need for a renewed organization was adumbrated and the major directions signposted. With respect to "approaches" to be employed and related to the imperative of securing a sustained political commitment to the organization, a critical adjustment required, relates to the format and content of the Committee's meetings. If entrenched as a purely deliberative forum, the initiative within the CDCC, as outlined above, cannot be expected to prosper. Deliberations directed to the consideration of conference papers of a routine nature, it is suggested, should be the purview of technicians. The "ministerial culture" is towards decision-making and, while the deliberative process is inherent in all conference activity, if ministerial attention and commitment are to be attracted, let alone maintained, this must be the thrust and overall ethos of the Committee. At the Seventeenth Session of the CDCC held in Aruba, on 15 May 1999, a decision was taken to convene ministerial meetings in alternate years and to convene meetings at the technical level annually. Such an arrangement gives the fullest recognition to the busy schedules of ministers. It also recognizes that political direction should not be necessary on an annual basis.

Further, in the general context of new approaches warranted by the initiatives for a stronger and more relevant CDCC, is the need to have the **affective** dimension, which relates to political commitment and ownership of the process, firmly underpinned by its **effective** counterpart in the form of the delivery of a range of streamlined and refocused actions of the type foreshadowed in the excerpt of the Director's address, as quoted above. By way of summary, these and other proposals are listed hereunder in a more comprehensive, though still indicative enumeration:

(a) The development and delivery of a work programme that caters to the priority interests of all member States and one flexible enough to incorporate elements not envisaged at the time of its formulation;

(b) To enhance its relevance and visibility, the CDCC should make strenuous efforts to amplify its technical cooperation endeavours, through the identification of specific funds and mechanisms to that end and the securing of extrabudgetary financing, through the formulation and successful implementation of project proposals, or the execution of projects on behalf of other agencies. The CDCC is well placed to identify areas that are amenable to cooperation and to evaluate the feasibility of such cooperation. While, in principle, such cooperation must be accessible to all member States, it might nevertheless, be initiated in cases where only a fraction of the membership indicates an interest in specific activities or where a given issue affects less than the totality of the membership;

(c) Strategic support of the work of other intergovernmental agencies, including forms of collaboration that entrench the CDCC in its operational milieu through increased recognition, while enhancing the organization's overall output. Duplication of the activities of other agencies is to be avoided, as the CDCC carves out its own niche: addressing those areas in which it has a competitive advantage and significant value added;

(d) To intensify its role as a forum for the aggregation of national interests and concerns into regional positions and to play a lead role in the proactive identification and articulation of those interests and concerns, and also their representation at the extraregional or global level, as appropriate. The analysis of major development issues from the perspective of the region underpins the validity and effectiveness of this role. In the context of the aggregation of interests and concerns and the analysis of issues from a regional perspective, it is important to ensure that information about the CDCC, its activities and processes, permeates beyond the national Focal Points. The organization's work programme and the connections among its elements can benefit from discussion at various levels within various sectors in member States. Ownership of the CDCC must be projected at all levels through the inculcation of an awareness of the organization and of how its services may be accessed. The relevant discussions may be inserted as a standing item into the programmes of visits of secretariat staff to member States, or be introduced when representatives of member States are received at the Secretariat. The secretariat is committed to fostering intersectoral communication at the national level, with a view to promoting synergy among the several activities of the organization and, with that, the maximization of benefits by member States;

(e) The restoration of "training" relevant to the needs of the member States as a flagship activity of the CDCC secretariat in the context of a structured outreach programme. Such an activity would address concerns as regards "relevance" and "visibility" through the creation of a wide constituency of persons and institutions familiar with the organization, its philosophy and its activities. This, in turn, would generate a body of goodwill that translates into support whether moral, political, financial or otherwise;

(f) Provision of information directly at the national level to those groups in need of strategic information. For example, ECLAC/CDCC will convene a team to provide orientation on selected issues relating to FTAA, WTO, Competitiveness and Standards, to public and private sector groups in the OECS;

(g) Active participation in the formulation and management of regional projects as well as in the identification of funds for their implementation;

(h) Systematic data collection at the regional level;

(i) The self-conscious and systematic propagation of information by the secretariat on its recent, current and projected activities through press releases, interviews and other modalities.

The successful prosecution of these objectives would involve a reorientation of the work programme of the CDCC, streamlining of its operations and processes to introduce an increased degree of flexibility towards "timely response" and redeployment of the secretariat's resources: human as well as financial.

CONCLUSION

The proposal to equip the CDCC to meet the challenges of the future is intended to address the three major perceived weaknesses of the organization, which refer, respectively, to its lack of "a clearly defined image and purpose"; the fact that "the work programme is diffuse and resources are inadequate to make meaningful impact" and the observation that "political commitment by member governments is weak".

Over the last two years or so, in response to an unprecedented level of requests, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat has shown itself to be at the disposal of member States for the provision of technical assistance, within the limits of its resources, in a number of strategic areas. 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; planning; transportation; and the evaluation of the impact of natural disasters. These interventions have served to draw attention, once more, to the potential of CDCC to be critically relevant in areas that impact directly and favourably on the sustainable development prospects of its membership. Thus, it might be concluded that the resurgence of the CDCC is already underway. Vastly increased attendance at the more recent meetings of the Committee also support that perception.

