

The Changing Role of Planners:
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**THE CHANGING ROLE OF PLANNERS:
SOME GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE ACTION**

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BACKGROUND

Introduction

This report is prepared in accordance with the terms of reference provided by the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Terms of reference

To prepare a report of the findings of the meeting of planners to be held in Port of Spain over the period December 2 – 3, 1999 with the view of assisting ECLAC To deliver a work programme related to future activities in planning over the next two years 2000 – 2001.

The report should focus attention on:

- (a) Technical assistance to Planning offices in member countries of the CDCC;
- (b) The identification of training programme needs;
- (c) providing suggestions for technical cooperation to member countries; and
- (d) Outline possible projects to be prepared for selected countries.

Methodology

The conclusions of the attached report draw heavily on the discussions and conclusions of the meeting of Planners. In addition, it incorporates the findings and recommendations from other regional meetings and discussions.

Structure of the Report

The meeting in Port of Spain reviewed the status of the planning process, the role and performance of planners in that process and the substantive issues in planning practice. This review was conducted within the context of questioning whether planning and the planner had “missed the boat”. Indeed, there was consensus that the evidence points to the fact that planning in some countries in the sub-region is not as effective as it could, and even should, be.

There was the prevailing view that while there were problems with the process, to some extent the professional planner is under threat. The public sector planner who operates largely in a development control environment is being marginalized and would appear to have lost credibility among the political directorate, the general public and in some cases, among his/her own peers. There is a resultant low morale among this group, who is more reactive than proactive.

The report records these discussions under four major headings purely for ease of analysis. These include:

- Planning process
- The planner in the process
- Plan of Action

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process is, by its very nature, dynamic, responding and adapting to various external stimuli. In the United Kingdom some one hundred years ago this planning activity, which ultimately expanded its influence to the Caribbean, grew out of a strongly regulatory culture. Within this environment, government intervention in the market to effect specific policies was unchallenged, as this was part of the culture. In time, however, the increasing pressure for deregulation, associated with the emphasis on market approaches has led to a culture change to which the planning process needs to adjust. An analysis of the process as it evolved over the past 30 years highlights four major developments, which are outlined below.

In the 1960s the growing need for independence in the third world coupled with efforts at reconstruction in Europe and the establishment of development banks, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), led to the need for an economic framework within which development finance would be provided. The first national development plans, which emerged during this period, represented a response to these environmental factors and were, thus, not spatial in their approach.

The 1970s saw the development of master plans, which sought to provide a spatial context to economic plans and programmes. These were generally ambitious documents with a long-term view ranging between 20 and 25 years. In the Caribbean, this process was driven largely by expatriates with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) playing a very significant role. While some technical documents were finalized, the process of political endorsement was not achieved in several cases. Indeed the planning process was too long, cumbersome and inflexible with the result that the plans were outmoded by the time of their publication. The plan document at the same time did not seek and, therefore, did not have local support.

While Barbados had a form of development control from the late 1950s in other parts of the Caribbean, this activity began its growth in the 1970s. Master plans gave way in nomenclature to national land use plans but the necessary link between these and the development control process never developed. The weakness in the planning environment resulted generally from the fact that there was no legal framework against which to intervene for purposes of providing planning direction.

Project planning began to assume prominence as a developmental tool during the 1970s. Ideally, these projects should have been conceived within a comprehensive framework of strategies for developing the particular country, but this macro framework of the National Land Use Plan was not there in several cases. Consequently planning responded generally to short-term initiatives, which may not necessarily have been effectively coordinated. In this period, the use of foreign consultants to prepare projects

for multilateral financing brought new and different sets of externally-generated policies to bear on the national policy formulation process. A noticeable feature of this absence of agreed national frameworks for development was the inability of the countries in the region to make meaningful responses to the policies, which were being imposed on them as they sought to obtain loan financing.

A further development in the late 1980s was the separation of planning from overall land use plans. The creation of coastal zone management units, the establishment of parks and protected areas outside the ambits of planning provides evidence of this phenomenon. More importantly, there was growing concern with the depletion of natural resources and the notion that planning was not taking fully into account the environmental impacts of development, both in the present and particularly in the future. Arising out of this concern was the need to take environmental issues and their impacts into account.

While these issues are integral to the planning process, this concern led in several countries to the establishment of separate environmental units. This separation was not always accompanied by clear definitions of roles and functions between the two agencies and this has led generally to some inefficiency in the overall process.

In relation to the development control process, planning offices were being asked to consider increased numbers of applications along with new types of application e.g. golf courses, as the private sector foreign investors began to play an increasing role in national economic development. The development control process has been unable generally to respond to this new stimulus and the duration for receiving decisions increased. At the same time, the need for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) to assist the decision-making process posed additional challenges on the planning system. On the one hand, there was a shortage of adequately trained staff in the development control offices. In some cases, the conduct of EIAs was vested in agencies other than the Town and Country Planning department or division.

The major challenge of the development-planning process in the 1990s results from the requirements of globalization and trade liberalization. The emergence of tourism as the major growth engine and the decline in the importance of primary production as the economic base has had significant implications for types of spatial policies, which are to be adopted. The project dependent approach to development has intensified at the same time that there is a reduced importance of the large view presented by macro plans, however they are called.

The apparent failure of planning to respond to these challenges has been observed in several countries in the region. The planning process has become a pro forma activity with increasing numbers of decisions being made at the level of Cabinet. In some countries, new legislation is enacted for each large-scale development project, thereby taking it out of the ambit of the planning process.

The century ends, therefore, with a marginalized process of planning in the region. Land use plans are having decreasing relevance and utility, as the information on which they are based is 10 years out of date by the time the plan is published. The continuing inflexibility in the process has resulted in a decreasing level of confidence by the private sector, which has to respond with relative speed to changes in the investment climate. It is to be noted that in their quest to maintain levels of prosperity in the various countries, governments are depending more heavily on investments in the private sector. Finally a more politically aware public is demanding more meaningful participation in the process and requests for more information need to be addressed.

It is certain that change and transformation in the society will continue with its resultant impact on the planning process for the future. At the same time in the face of new wealth creation and a growth in its unequal distribution, there will be an increase in poverty among some groups. The definition of a new paradigm for planning is therefore critical if planning is to regain any measure of effectiveness.

In the face of this increasing wealth creation and the possible increase in its inequitable distribution, the elements of the sustainable development philosophy would appear to be as relevant for future planning as they are for the present. These elements include:

- The satisfaction of basic human needs;
- Environmental sustainability
- Meeting social and political needs of citizens, and
- Equitable distribution of wealth.

At the same time, the challenges of sustainable development shall be even more real for the twenty-first century. These challenges include:

- The need for an interdisciplinary, integrated and multisectoral process.
- The definition of new roles for government, the academic community, non-governmental organizations and the business community;
- The need for increasing amounts of information in a processed form on a timely basis;
- The need for human, institutional and financial capacity.

Largely, the planning process has been marginalised not because of any inherent problems but more because of its practice. Indeed the process has been adapting to the external stimuli of global, regional and national economic and political environments. Planning practice, which focuses on the management of the process, has in many instances not kept abreast of the process and has been generally marginalized. Much of this marginalisation is explained by an analysis of the critical link between practice and process, namely the planner.

THE PLANNER IN THE PROCESS

The role of the planner has changed over time in much the same way that the process has done, in response to various external stimuli. Planning in the Caribbean in the 1960s and 1970s was very much done by expatriate professionals who came to the area under the sponsorship of aid packages. In the case of the Overseas Development Agency, for example, while planners were sent on long term contracts to the Caribbean to provide technical assistance, simultaneously training fellowships were awarded to qualified nationals to pursue courses of training in the United Kingdom. The Organization of American States (OAS) and the UNDP were also instrumental in funding training for nationals from the various countries in the Caribbean. The objective in this approach was

to ensure that there was a cadre of local planners, who could manage the process in due course, following the departure of the expatriates.

During this period, the planner functioned largely in a public sector context, in which case they were assigned either to assist in the formulation of development plans or to function in the area of development control. Private sector planners were in the minority. The profession and the planner enjoyed much the same level of respect that other professionals received at that time. Indeed, in some countries planners perceived themselves as “gods”, or perhaps were seen as such. If they were not exactly “gods”, then they certainly regarded themselves as guardians of society’s values, who were able to translate these into development plans with little reference to the persons for whom the plans were prepared. It is noteworthy that this perception of the planner remained even when the expatriate professionals left and nationals assumed responsibility for the planning function. It has perhaps outlived its relevance and meaning.

In the area of development control, this professional attitude expressed itself as the “power to say no”. The planner of that era appeared to recognise no need to link the development control process with the investment process. While the latter required a measure of speed in response to investment opportunities, and some flexibility, the development control process was somewhat slow and, in several instances, inflexible. The seeds of alienation of the planner and the practice from the clients, in this case the investing public, were sown at this time.

The establishment of planning related units in the public sector in the 1980s led to the depletion of planners from their traditional roles in the town and country planning departments in the region. Coinciding with this was the establishment of planning agencies in some private sector agencies. It is noteworthy that while the planners who transferred to private practice were able to develop a meaningful professional client relationship, in the public sector the generally reactive attitudes of planner prevailed.

In the 1990s, planners, particularly those working in the traditional offices, have come to be regarded as “blocks to development” and in some countries have lost political support. In this environment unnecessary tensions between the political directorate and the planners develop. Planners appear generally to have lost sight of, or have not adjusted to, the reality of the inherently political nature of the planning process. At the same time the pressure for more meaningful participation in the development planning process by a more informed body of individuals has not been met by professionals who are able to adjust their attitudes to be more facilitating. The net effect of this is the ineffectiveness of planners, whose morale appears to have declined.

One of the responses to the decline of professionals in traditional planning offices, is the increase in the number of planning technicians and technologists managing the process. This phenomenon has implications for the training of planners since the technicians have inadequate skills to deal with the professionals who work in the private sector. On the other hand, some planning offices have reverted to recruiting expatriates to complement their staff.

Planning education

The type of professional planner and planning technician who function in the sub-region currently reflect the nature and quality of planning education, which is provided

regionally. Currently there are two institutions, which offer postgraduate courses in planning, and these include:

- The post graduate MSc programme at the University of the West Indies (UWI) St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago; and
- The postgraduate MSc programme in Environmental Resource Management at the UWI Cave Hill Campus in Barbados.

The first programme was born out of the town and country planning profession and has a twin focus on planning legislation and planning for development. The other programme emphasizes the marine resources and environmental management. In addition to these courses, the University of Technology in Jamaica offers a diploma course and, more recently, a degree course in planning.

One of the major issues in teaching planning in the region relates to accreditation. The professional review mechanism for the MSc programme in Planning and Development at the UWI Trinidad and Tobago Campus is dormant largely because of the inactivity of the Caribbean Conference of Town and Country Planning Societies. International accreditation through such bodies as the Royal Town Planning Institute has not been successful so far, partly because of the fact that these bodies are themselves grappling with their own adaptation problems.

There are also implementation issues in providing such courses in the region. The shift from planning as a mainly public sector activity to one in which planners are being attracted to the private sector needs to be incorporated into the programmes. At the same time other issues related to:

- The existence of a local or regional architectural and urban vernacular;
- Gender;
- Public participation; and
- The nature of urbanization

need to be addressed. In addition to the content of existing courses, there is also the need for courses to improve the skill levels of para-professionals.

Regional and international response of planners

Among the many weaknesses of Caribbean Planners is their apparent poor response to regional and international initiatives. The marked similarity of the challenges that face Caribbean planners has been noted in several forums. In attempting to address these, individual countries in the subregion have from time to time approached such international agencies as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank for financial assistance. Similar requests have been made to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) and the UNDP for grant and/or technical assistance. Because of the diversity of peoples who are served by these agencies, the policies that support their grant or loan assistance do not, in some cases, address the peculiarities of the countries in the region.

In the recent past attempts have been made to elevate these peculiarities so that the policies of these agencies may be informed and hopefully modified. The support of regional professionals in this activity cannot be overstated, yet it would appear that there are just two or three countries, which consistently support these activities at the regional and international levels.

The Caribbean currently has two seats on the Commission on Human Settlements, which hosts biennial meetings in Nairobi. Barbados and Jamaica are the current holders of these seats for a four-year period. Efforts to crystallize a broad-based Caribbean position in preparation for this meeting in May 1999 evoked a limited response from Caribbean planners. A communiqué from this CARICOM sponsored caucus was indeed prepared but it would have been a more satisfactory effort if there were a broad base of support.

The subregion has subscribed to the Meeting of Shelter and Settlements Ministers and High Level Authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean since 1991. Currently Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago are members of the Executive Committee of this regional agency. The Committee meets once annually and the attendance by the Caribbean planners is limited to three or four countries.

The issue needs to be raised and reasons for its occurrence identified. It is to be noted that preparations for the five-year review of the Istanbul Declaration by the General Assembly of the United Nations have commenced, and their success depends upon the active participation of the various countries in the region, both at the national and regional levels. Because of this, countries in the subregion should be preparing themselves for a Subregional forum sometime between May and December 2000. Caribbean Planners ought to be able to recognize the opportunities which these activities offer for a mutual sharing of ideas and for elevating the planning issues to the regional and international forum.

PLAN OF ACTION

Attempts to address some of the many issues, which face planners in the region, must necessarily be multipronged. Arising out of the discussions at the workshop is the concern with the planner who is the key in driving the process. At the same time, the planner in a modern Caribbean has to be conversant with technology and to utilize it to obtain answers to critical planning questions. In this context, therefore, this report recommends a three pronged strategy focusing on:

- The planner, his/her awareness of self and role. Simultaneously the strategy focuses on raising the level of awareness of the critical role and importance of the planner;
- Improving the use of information technology;
- Improving the planning process in the region and incorporating the planner fully into the national effort.

The recommendations for technical assistance, technical cooperation and training are framed within this context.

Technical assistance needs

Incorporation of vulnerability and hazard analysis in development plans

Countries in the Caribbean cannot prevent the disastrous effects resulting from such natural phenomena as hurricanes. By careful allocation of land uses however the worst effects of these events may be reduced. It is not unknown for instance to have settlements sited in river valleys, which flood and wash away any development.

In spite of the benefits of effective physical planning in this area the incorporation of such elements in the development plan and the development control processes is very limited. Indeed the breach in this respect is filled by disaster coordinators who are themselves not trained as planners.

Plan of Action

1. Recruitment of a consultant to prepare guidance notes for the treatment of issues of disaster mitigation in national development plans;
2. Securing the assistance of other agencies in the hosting of a workshop for development planners;
3. Publication of the policy and design guides.

Regional planning journal

Physical planners in the subregion have for sometime been writing and delivering speeches and lectures in various forums on topics of relevance to the profession. Despite this, there is no body of Caribbean planning literature, which might serve to inform practicing planners and to provide reference, and other, texts to students of the subject.

A regional planning journal provides the opportunity for documenting and publishing planning literature, which focuses on the Caribbean and its peculiar problems. Such a quarterly electronic journal would receive articles from practicing planners on themes to be determined by the editorial committee.

Apart from the more formal document described above, there is the opportunity in the subregion for the publication of an informal document which seeks to maintain contact with planners largely through the sharing of information. This briefing note might focus deliberately on practical planning issues and their resolution, while allowing the journal to target a more academic audience.

Plan of Action

1. ECLAC to invite, at most, five professional planners in the subregion to compose a steering committee to assist in the compilation of existing published and unpublished material;
2. Steering Committee to invite all professional planners to submit any articles, speeches or lectures which they have delivered;
3. Meeting of Steering Committee should be held :
 - (a) To evaluate the material which has been submitted and classify it for publication;
 - (b) To compile the first publication;
 - (c) To develop a schedule of publications for a one to two year period;
 - (d) To agree a plan of action for the sustained publication of a journal.
4. List of publications to be placed on the web site

Preparation of background document for the formulation of a body of professional planners

The Caribbean Conference of Town and Country Planning Societies (CCTCPS) is the only regional professional body. Indeed its major achievement to date is the postgraduate programme in Planning and Development, which currently is conducted in the UWI. In 1989 the CCTCPS and the Trinidad and Tobago Society of Planners (TTSP) formally approached the University of the West Indies to request it to provide professional planning training. Following this, the University received guidance from the Society in relation to professional matters.

The regional society has been inactive for sometime. Indeed, some of the national societies appear to have gone into a period of inactivity. The reasons for this situation are unclear and need to be investigated.

At the same time, however, there is the need for a network of planners who might interact both formally and informally lend support to each other. Finally, it is a potential provider of a professional reference point, which is so very necessary in countries in the subregion, which are deficient in planning skills.

Plan of Action

1. Establishment of a committee of Professional Planners to:
 - (a) Review the status of the regional body;

- (b) Assess the level of activity of the various national bodies;
 - (c) Canvass the views of professionals for the formulation of a regional professional body;
 - (d) Identify the difficulties which existing bodies experience and which explain their current level of activity;
 - (e) Make recommendations for the type of professional body which is required in the region.
2. ECLAC to invite professional planners from existing societies along with a representative of the CCTCPS to form a steering Committee;
 3. Proposal to convene a two day meeting of the Steering Committee to review the findings of the consultant and to develop a plan of action for the establishment and sustained development of the organisation.

Harmonised databases/indicators for the definition, collection, organization, storage, retrieval and analysis of relevant terrestrial and marine information for comprehensive land use planning

Countries in the region have already been involved in an exercise of preparing indicators for use in comprehensive planning. There is no systematic use of this information in spite of its importance to the planning process.

Select countries need assistance in compiling the data for this exercise.

Plan of Action

1. Review of the extent of the use of indicators in physical planning and the mechanisms in place for their use;
2. Evaluation of the indicators and their relevance to the Caribbean environment;
3. Compilation of indicators relevant to the needs of Caribbean countries;
4. Provision of technical assistance at the national level to select countries identified in the greatest need.

Technical cooperation

Twinning of planning offices

The twinning of planning offices is a mechanism for ensuring a transfer of technology and for lending support to planning offices, which do not have the requisite level of resources. Efforts at this commenced sometime ago, but have since died following the completion of the regional project.

The programme would work at two levels where, on the one hand, experienced professionals in the donor office would assist the recipients in resolving select issues. At the same time, provision is made for visits by officers from the recipient office to observe practices in the donor office.

In many instances, the major resource which prevents this interchange is finance. The role of the regional or international agency would then be to provide the financial support for those countries, which have more limited resources.

Plan of Action

1. ECLAC office to secure the approval of the various planning offices in the region for this twinning exercise;
2. ECLAC Office, in consultation with other agencies to identify donor and recipient offices and establish a relationship;
3. Provision to be made for at least two interchanges per year between donor and recipient offices.

Regional meeting of CARICOM Ministers of Planning in preparation for Istanbul+5 Prepcom, New York, February 2001

The General Assembly of the United Nations proposes to review the experience of Istanbul in 2001. In order to effect this a preparatory process has been instituted commencing 01 December 1999, at the national level. This process includes two global preparatory meetings in May 2000 and February 2001. At the same time, the preparatory process makes provision for national and regional level meetings. The latter meetings are slated for the period October to December 2000.

The region can benefit significantly from attendance at such a subregional meeting where common issues might be raised and solutions found. At the same time, such a forum offers opportunities for the drafting of resolutions for their presentation at the meeting in February. It is anticipated that at this time the preparatory committee meeting will be held at the same time as the meeting of the Commission on Human Settlement.

Over the past four years, Ministers of Shelter and Settlement in the Caribbean have been meeting to discuss common issues and to present a definitive statement of the

Caribbean Shelter and Settlement issue. The first such meeting in 1995 was held in Barbados prior to the attendance of the prep-com in Nairobi. The major output of this meeting of Ministers is the Caribbean Regional Plan of Action, which was made a document of the Istanbul Conference.

There is much scope for increased attendance at ministerial meetings, particularly by the less developed countries of the region. In many cases limited national budgets have prevented full participation. The location of a focal point for organizing such meetings also contributed to the pattern of attendance at these meetings.

Plan of Action

1. ECLAC to open formal discussions on the hosting of a subregional conference;
2. ECLAC to invite a country in the region to host the conference;
3. ECLAC to offer technical assistance to the host country in preparing for the conference;
4. ECLAC to assist in securing funds for attendance of the less developed countries;
5. ECLAC to fund the preparation of the conference proceedings and any resolutions or declarations.

Meeting of Chief Planners and Ministers of Physical Planning

The provision of a forum for the interchange of ideas and the identification of common approaches to solving physical planning issues would assist greatly in raising the morale of the professionals. At the same time, such meetings have the potential to foster a better understanding of the roles each group plays and the difficulties encountered in doing this.

Plan Of Action

1. ECLAC to agree to host this conference and to determine the modalities of doing this;
2. ECLAC to invite a country in the region to host the Conference;
3. ECLAC, and the host country to prepare agenda and any background papers for the conference;
4. ECLAC to fund the attendance of members from the less developed countries and as well as the proceedings of the meeting.

Training needs

Skills upgrading in use of GIS Technology already in place. Ad Hoc certificate training

The development of a technical and managerial expertise is integral to the strengthening and capacity building required to deal with GIS technology. These needs should be met at the regional level because countries share common interests and problems. Already discussions are underway among Caribbean trainers and educators on this subject. In February 1999, the UWI Campus at St. Augustine, along with the Ministry of Planning in Trinidad and Tobago, hosted a meeting to further the Plan of Action, which was developed at an earlier workshop in Jamaica in November 1998.

To date, training in GIS Technology is offered at the UWI Cave Hill Campus, in Barbados and the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago. There is, however, no systematic training for technicians in this area.

The need in this area is for a certificate course, which might be developed on a modular basis. These modules might be so designed as to be carried out on a stand-alone basis or as part of a certificate/diploma course. Their target group should include:

- Senior managers in government who need to familiarize themselves and be sensitized to the potential of GIS;
- Professionals who are seeking opportunities for continuing education, and
- Students who are desirous of developing GIS as a career.

Plan of Action

1. Recruitment of a consultant GIS Specialist who would be expected to liaise with all the tertiary level planning or related educational institutions in the region in order:
 - (a) To review the courses which are currently on offer in the region;
 - (b) To evaluate these courses particularly as they relate to courses of study for planning technicians;
 - (c) Identify additional modules for a certificate programme;
 - (d) Prepare details for these new models and make recommendations for the modification of existing models.
 - (e) To recommend the most appropriate institutions for conducting such courses.
2. UWI and UTech and other institutions to evaluate this course with the view of granting it accreditation;

3. ECLAC to assist in identifying funds for grant assistance to students from less developed countries

Training of planning technicians

The role of the planning technician in planning offices is increasing in importance. Indeed in some countries in the subregion the planning technician is being required to assume responsibility in the decision making process, which would otherwise be exercised by professional planners. Indeed this situation coincides with those in which there is a scarcity of professionals.

The University of Technology currently offers a three-year diploma programme for planning technologists. At the same time the UWI, St. Augustine, the University of Guyana and the University of Technology have already started work on the formulation of a course. These efforts are supported by a number of agencies including the IDB, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Department for International Development (DFID), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The major difficulty with these courses as avenues for training planning technicians is their length, which requires that such individuals be away from their work for periods of up to three years.

In view of this, there would appear to be the need for efforts at the regional level for in-house training courses for planning technicians. These programmes should be designed to provide a link with the programmes that are being offered, or are under consideration, by the various tertiary institutions. Because of this, these in-house programmes may be:

- Orientational in nature, geared to meet the needs of the new entrant to the office;
- Office specific focusing on aspects of the development planning or development control processes which are peculiar to the particular country.

The adoption of the modules, which are taught within the institutions, through a distance-learning programme based on extensive use of the computer should also be considered. Such a programme should also be flexible enough to allow users to be able to manage their otherwise busy schedules while qualifying.

Plan of Action

ECLAC to provide technical assistance to one country, which would be used as a model, to:

1. Liaise with the Chief Planners and their Ministers in identifying the specific needs of the office;
2. Liaise with the tertiary institutions which offer planning education and training in evaluating the modules;

3. Make recommendations for the selection of courses for use in in-house training;
4. Adapt the select modules for use in an electronic environment through a largely self taught method;
5. Liaise with training/ personnel officer in promoting the use of computer technology to provide in-house training services;
6. Conduct a training programme for users of the training package.

Training of lawyers in planning law

Planning Law is a specialist area of the law and its study forms a significant component of any physical planning educational programme. In spite of its importance in the development process the subject is not compulsory in law school. The result of this is that representation of planning offices at appeal hearings has much scope for improvement. This improvement could be facilitated through the exposure of practicing attorneys to the law governing by way of a seminar/workshop.

Plan of Action

1. ECLAC to coordinate the compilation of planning law appeal cases within the Caribbean;
2. Proposal for a two-day workshop for Attorneys at Law who are attached to, or work closely with planning offices;
3. University to work on the design of a core module in planning law.

Projects

Study of the Caribbean City

Caribbean cities may be categorized as small to medium sized, when measured in terms of global standards. As cities, their problems are the same, except that the magnitude is somewhat less. They however require the same level of management. In spite of this, however, there is relatively little attention paid to small cities and their management. There are however important lessons to be learnt from such a study both for local planners and managers of these settlements and for other planners and related professions.

Plan of Action

1. ECLAC to identify a small city in the Caribbean which satisfies criteria of being managed;
2. ECLAC to recruit a consultant to prepare a report that highlights the issues and challenges confronting this city and the strategies adopted for dealing with them.

Conduct of management audits

The value of management audits lies in their identification of solutions, to problems within the planning process. The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has already conducted such an audit in Saint Lucia and there is a demand for similar audits in other countries in the region. The greatest benefit of these audits is derived where there is political will to improve planning systems and processes.

Plan of Action

1. ECLAC to identify countries in the region whose planning processes are in need of review;
2. ECLAC to provide technical assistance to review the planning process and to make recommendations for its improvement;
3. ECLAC to obtain the views of the country and their support for the recommendations.

Revitalisation of the review of planning legislation

Physical Planning Legislation has been updated using a draft model, and has been approved for use in a number of countries. In other countries, discussion is either active still, or may have been curtailed, because of the loss of impetus or the lack of resources. Associated with this is the compilation of planning law cases.

Plan of Action

1. Updated Acts to be compiled and used as reference material in the planning programmes in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago;
2. Symposium to review planning legislation to be conducted;
3. Rationalisation of planning and related environmental legislation in a number of countries.

Regional GIS

The problems of land and information management in the region include:

- Lack of knowledge of, and access to existing land and environment data stores;
- Duplication of data collection and storage efforts;
- Paper based storage;
- Shortage of relevant personnel, and
- Inadequate training of personnel involved in the activity.

The adoption of GIS technology could go a long way in addressing some of these problems. Already automated GIS have been established in each member country of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) under a project sponsored by the UNCHS. At the same time, other agencies, including the USAID, CIDA, and IDB, have assisted particular sectors in various countries in securing the GIS technology. Some countries in the subregion are also streamlining their land management operations and developing GIS operations but in larger measure, there is no comprehensive approach to the adoption of GIS.

In November 1997 representatives at the Caribbean Conference of Geographic Information Systems expressed concern at the fact that there was not a transfer of experiences among countries in the region. This resulted in many cases in unnecessary expenditure. There are opportunities to learn from each other, and a need to promote the coordination of GIS development, technology and transfer within the region to effect savings.

Plan of Action

1. Provide technical assistance for the following:
 - (a) Review of the level of use of GIS in the various Caribbean countries along with existing policies and position papers;
 - (b) Liaise with governments in the region and relevant institutions to identify areas of interest to be incorporated in the policy;
 - (c) Recommendations on the elements of a policy framework for the coordination of GIS development and technology transfer within the region;
 - (d) To compile directory of skilled Caribbean professionals in the area of GIS use, including National GIS Co-ordinators
2. Conduct a regional workshop/conference for representatives from the various countries in the subregion to consider the recommendations of the consultant;

3. Government GIS officials to secure widest support at the national levels for the policy among political decision makers;
4. Produce a draft manual, using the findings of previous studies, etc.

Public participation modules

A draft manual was completed, after wide ranging consultation with regional personnel. The status of the draft needs to be ascertained.

Plan of Action

1. Review status of the draft document;
2. Promote the document at the national level in the print media;
3. Publish the document;
4. Encourage its use in the field and as a training reference.

Best practice study – Caribbean forum on best practices

The Ibero-American and Caribbean forum on Best Practices aims to foster dialogue among its members in the area of sustainable development and management. The Development Planning Unit of the University of the West Indies is a coordinating agency for this programme within the Caribbean.

The objective of the forum is to achieve self-sustainability. It is currently supported by limited funding from Spain and this is to be discontinued at a time in the future. The value of this mechanism, and its ultimate growth and survival, is in its expanded coverage throughout the Caribbean. This can be achieved through the adoption of a technology, which facilitates accessibility and interaction along with appropriate public relations.

Plan of Action

1. ECLAC to utilize internal expertise to develop an intranet forum;
2. The Development Planning Unit to reactivate the Best Practice Programme.

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