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**REPORT OF THE HIGH LEVEL FOLLOW-UP MEETING TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 60<sup>TH</sup> SESSION 2005 WORLD SUMMIT  
*STRENGTHENING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THE WAY FORWARD FOR CARIBBEAN SIDS***

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## **Introduction**

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), convened a High Level Follow-up Meeting to the United Nations General Assembly 60<sup>th</sup> Session 2005 World Summit-Strengthening Social Development: The Way Forward for Caribbean SIDS, in Port of Spain, Trinidad, on 13 October 2005.

The meeting sought to provide an opportunity for experts in the field of social development in the Caribbean subregion to consider strategic actions that could be recommended to advance the intentions of the Summit at the subregional and national levels. This was in keeping with the mandate given to ECLAC by the 2005 World Summit Outcome (A/60/L.1) as stated in paragraph 155:

“a) to Promote global dialogue and partnership on global policies and trends in the economic, social, environmental and humanitarian fields. For this purpose the Council should serve as a quality platform for high-level engagement among member States and with the international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society on emerging global trends, policies and action and develop its ability to respond better and more rapidly to development in the international economic, environmental and social fields”;

and in

“c) to ensure follow-up of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the internationally agreed development goals, and hold annual ministerial-level substantive reviews to assess progress, drawing on its functional and regional commissions and other international institutions, in accordance with their respective mandates.”

Thirty participants from six CDCC member countries were present, namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname. In attendance at the meeting were a number of ministers with responsibility for social development, ambassadors and representatives of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and United Nations agencies. The list of participants of the meeting is attached as Annex I.

The meeting followed the agenda as detailed below:

1. Welcome and opening remarks
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

3. Review of the outcome document of the United Nations General Assembly 60<sup>th</sup> Session 2005 World Summit, September 2005
4. Recommendations for subregional and/or national level strategies
5. Closure

**Agenda item 1:  
Welcome and opening remarks**

Mr. Neil Pierre, Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, welcomed the participants to the meeting. He reminded all present of the full participation of world leaders at the 2005 World Summit, held in New York on 14-15 September 2005, and the Caribbean governments' contribution to the Outcome Document. He suggested that the Summit was an opportunity for governments to reaffirm the vital role played by conferences and summits in shaping a broad development vision for the world.

He indicated that although such a meeting was included as part of the work programme of ECLAC, its timing was selected so as to build on the momentum generated by the recently concluded Summit. Mr. Pierre thanked the ministers, ambassadors, heads of United Nations agencies, and other experts present for demonstrating their commitment by their presence, to the task of advancing the social and sustainable development goals of Caribbean (SIDS) in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Participants were assured by Mr. Pierre that the output of the meeting: the framework for advancing the social and sustainable development goals of Caribbean SIDS - in keeping with the MDGs, would be brought before the CDCC meeting scheduled for January 2006 for consideration and action.

Ambassador Byron Blake, in his capacity of lead negotiator on behalf of the Government of Jamaica, which was Chair of the Group of 77, was invited to deliver special opening remarks. He reminded participants that the results of the High level Summit had to be moved to the implementation stage and he congratulated ECLAC for convening this meeting which should act as a catalyst to that process. He highlighted a number of the outcomes of the Summit which he viewed as important for the Caribbean.

Significant among them was the recognition that developing countries required 'policy space' to be able to achieve the MDGs as each developing country had differing challenges and, as such, the policies to address these challenges would need to be different. He, therefore, expressed pleasure in the agreement by the Summit that the programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS ought to be implemented. Ambassador Blake asserted that in pursuing the development agenda, developing countries should adopt two strategies:

- (a) A defensive strategy – to ensure that development was kept on track and that there was no roll-back with respect to goals already achieved; and
- (b) An offensive strategy – to push forward so as to meet new objectives.

He urged all countries to establish and implement comprehensive strategies for achieving the MDGs by 2006, and suggested that there needed to be a subregional framework for implementation for the Caribbean, since each country, by itself would not be able to achieve the goals of the MDGs.

He reminded participants that the issue of financial resources had dogged all the summits. However, it was anticipated that Official Development Assistance (ODA) would be doubled by

2010, since the developed countries, with little exception, had agreed to contribute 7 per cent of their national income to ODA.

He concluded that there must be comprehensive treatment of debt, not only for the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC)s, but also for the low-income and middle-income countries; and that the Caribbean was in a peculiar situation, since some of the countries were too rich to receive aid, and too small to attract private investment. It was therefore important, he reiterated, for the Caribbean to develop its comprehensive strategy for the implementation of the MDGs urgently.

### **Agenda item 2: Adoption of agenda and organization of work**

The meeting adopted the agenda as presented and agreed to open the floor for a roundtable discussion following presentations on the outcome document of the UNGASS 2005 World Summit. In order to meet the task of agenda item five, it was agreed that three working groups would be formed to deliberate on recommendations for strategic interventions.

### **Agenda Item 3: Review of the outcome document of the United Nations General Assembly 60<sup>th</sup> Session 2005 World Summit, September 2005**

ECLAC presented an overview of the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit, “Strengthening Social Development: The Way Forward for Caribbean SIDS”. The presentation sought to focus attention on those aspects of the outcome document dealing directly with the issues of poverty reduction and sustainable development. The presentation highlighted specific issues for consideration that could form the basis for strategic interventions to advance the achievement of the development goals at the subregional or national level.

In regard to the recommendation that governments take quick impact initiatives, the presentation highlighted the possibility of the expansion of school feeding programmes using home-grown foods, where possible, and the elimination of user fees for primary education and for health-care services, if those still applied, as possible actions for consideration.

Where rural and agricultural development was concerned the issue of food security was highlighted. This was advanced based on data pointing to food scarcity issues following the devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan to Grenada’s agricultural production and more particularly its food production capacity for domestic consumption.

As an approach to addressing poverty eradication, the recommendations regarding employment creation particularly to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of national policies were highlighted. This, particularly in light of research which indicated that the unemployment problem in the Caribbean was predominantly a youth phenomenon and the unemployment rate for young females was higher than that of their male counterparts for most countries in the subregion.

In regard to issues of sustainable development, paragraph 55 (c) was highlighted in which the global community committed to taking further action to ‘assist countries to improve their resilience and integrate adaptation goals into their sustainable development strategies’. It was suggested that for Caribbean SIDS, this matter was not of little significance in light of their vulnerability to natural disasters. It was further indicated that in paragraph 66 countries agreed to take ‘concrete action to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS through the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy adopted by the International Meeting’.

In regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women, focus was given to the recommendation for the achievement of universal access to reproductive health by 2015 and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and the girl child.

The representative of the CARICOM Secretariat was invited to address the Summit outcomes. She spoke to the “Brief for CARICOM Delegations attending the United Nations High Level Plenary Meeting (the World Summit)” and posited that the establishment of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) was critical to the region’s achievement of its commitment to sustainable development. The briefing document identified three key issues that were the platform for CARICOM’s intervention in the High Level Plenary and, therefore, were recommended for consideration to the experts in attendance at the meeting. These were to:

(a) Ensure access to adequate levels of ODA during the 2005-2009 MDG schedule to finance strategic infrastructural requirements to ensure sustainable development and competitiveness;

(b) Re-enforce the importance of appropriate development-oriented trading arrangements that allowed CARICOM States to build capacity and secure access to markets for goods and services produced within the Community;

(c) Support gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights both of which were integral to poverty reduction strategies and would complement the existing and proposed new initiatives of the social sector.

The representative of CARICOM identified a number of the critical social issues and challenges facing the region. These included the role of education in poverty alleviation; the concerns of gender stereotyping in the school curriculum; violence in schools; and male underachievement. In regard to the rights of children, it was suggested that special regard ought to be paid to issues such as children at risk to physical and sexual abuse; substance abuse; infant mortality; child maintenance; trafficking in children; and the early sexual initiation of young persons, particularly in light of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic. Where youth were concerned, the creation of productive employment was an issue, since the evidence suggested that youth were facing an era of jobless growth.

She concluded by reminding participants that although much had been accomplished in the subregion where improved social statistics were concerned, there was still room for the building of capacities in data systems to better monitor the achievement of the MDGs.

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean invited participants to take part in a roundtable discussion and opened the discussion by appraising the meeting of the outcome of the recently concluded Caribbean Regional Meeting as follow-up to Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, held in St. Kitts and Nevis, on 5-7 October 2005. He presented outcomes of the meeting which he considered to be relevant to the discussions underway and reported that the meeting had agreed to explore the possibility of developing a knowledge management system for the Caribbean, which would include the Caribbean Diaspora and which would seek to develop a science and technology policy framework for the Caribbean. The meeting also concluded that efforts would be made to mainstream sustainable development into development planning and most importantly would seek to develop a coordination mechanism at two levels: (a) political or policy level; and (b) technical level.

He stated that efforts would be made to institute a core group comprising selected representatives from regional institutions, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) member States, the Non-Independent Caribbean Countries (NICCS), and the continent-based Caribbean countries: Guyana and Suriname. This core group would have responsibility for the development of an implementation plan for the region. He reported that the meeting had agreed that the CDCC would be the best placed institution to oversee this political role. At the upcoming CDCC meeting scheduled for January 2005, endorsement of this proposal would be considered.

The representative of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was invited to speak to the report of the Task Force on Gender and Poverty, entitled "Gender and the Millennium Development Goals: More specific Targets and Indicators for the Caribbean". She identified a number of issues which required attention if the goal of gender equality was to be achieved. She brought to the meeting's attention selected recommendations made by the Task Force. Key among them was a call to provide teachers with the necessary skills that would enable them to develop methodologies that would address the learning differences between boys and girls. Understanding the construction of masculinity, the Task Force recommended, could enable better design of programmes that could reduce the drop-out rates of boys and encourage fathers to participate in the education of their children. Finally she suggested that from a subregional perspective, there was need for assistance to be provided to Haiti, to enable that country to meet the MDGs with particular relevance to the universal access to education.

Arising out of the presentation made by ECLAC and CARICOM and taking cognizance of the issues raised by the Director of ECLAC a number of issues were then raised. Among them was the recognition that a regional approach to social development was essential. There were calls to ensure that the benefits derived from the adoption of the CSME were felt in the social arena and it was suggested that this could be achieved through the harmonization of legislation and other social protection measures across the subregion.



Another area which received widespread support among participants, was the importance of strengthening the communication processes to ensure that persons at all levels throughout the region were sensitized to the MDGs and provided with opportunities to give and receive feedback about their concerns. One expert suggested that those responsible might not be communicating effectively with the people to whom development really mattered. It was suggested that, increasingly, globalization processes caused some groups of people to be left behind and therefore the Caribbean would be wise to increase and make meaningful its interactions with the Non Governmental Organizations and members of civil society. It was also felt that intragovernmental communication was not as good as it could be, thus not reaping the benefits which could redound from high levels of coherence in social programme design and delivery.

Education was an area of widespread concern. Although access to primary and secondary schools were not considered as unmet needs, the view was expressed that enhancing the quality of the education being received was an essential component of Caribbean development. It was agreed that taking cognizance of the gender differences within the education system brought about by socialization could reduce the drop-out rates of boys and improve their performance in the school system. Further, provision of access to tertiary education, coupled with the creation of opportunities in areas such as research and development, was proffered as interventions which could serve to reduce the brain drain.

The issue of the conduct and management of data collection, processing and analysis was viewed as important if proper monitoring of the MDGs was to occur. Strengthening skills in evidence based planning and programming in the social sector was viewed as a requirement by the experts in attendance. As well, it was agreed that the requisite resources, human, technical and financial, needed to be allocated to build capacity for data collection and analysis and for successful implementation of the MDGs.

In the area of gender equity the meeting was reminded that the needs of the girl child still required addressing, particularly in regard to reducing early initiation into sexual activity; the right to return to school after pregnancy so as to enable the breaking of the cycle of poverty; and the inadequacy of child care services which caused girl children to be kept at home to provide child care to younger siblings. The meeting was reminded not to alienate boys as attempts were made to treat with the problems of girls. In that regard, one expert shared an initiative that was aimed at strengthening the skills of men to accept the role of mentor to younger men and young fathers in particular. It was also agreed that social protection was required to support families in crisis.

It was drawn to the meeting's attention that despite the fact that many of the countries in the Caribbean subregion were classified as middle income countries, there were persistent pockets of poverty, severe hunger and malnutrition. In light of these concerns, the issue of food security was identified as one which the region had to address. Participants noted that without proper nutrition the learning capacities of children could be reduced, thus hindering or delaying the regions efforts at improving its human resource base. Because the region was constantly threatened by natural disasters, food security issues needed also to be placed higher on the agenda, to reduce the negative effects following a disaster.

The roundtable discussion concluded that implementation of the MDGs was a critical challenge which the subregion had to face. The meeting was advised by Ambassador Blake that success in developing a strategic plan for implementation of the MDGs could result in attracting resources.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Recommendations for subregional and/or national level strategies**

The participants were divided into three working groups to consider Conference Paper 1 “Scaling up the Caribbean’s response to social development goals – Challenges identified from selected speeches of Heads of State in attendance at the 60th UNGASS 14 - 15 September 2005” and Conference Paper 2, “Social Development Matrix – Framework (5 year) for advancing the Social and Sustainable Development Goals of Caribbean SIDS in keeping with the MDGs” and to make recommendations on strategic interventions that could take place at the subregional or national level to advance the agreements which were made at the 2005 World Summit. Conference papers are attached in Annex II.

Following their deliberations, participants reconvened in plenary. The reports of the working groups identified a number of strategic interventions.

Among the issues identified for addressing at the subregional level were: the informal sector, vulnerability of small States, science and technology policies and transnational crime. In regard to the informal sector, additional research was recommended which could result in recommended policy for improved market access, better social protection and strategies for enhanced micro financing. Strategies that could support access to new development resources and strengthen the empirical evidence around the economic, social and environmental vulnerability of SIDS, thus increasing their capacity to address the building of resilience, were considered to be of an urgent nature and warranted continued investigation at the subregional level. Interventions which promoted a culture of innovation and research and supported advances in science and technology targeted at the productive sector were considered essential for development and, in order to achieve the benefits of economies of scale, should be addressed at the subregional level. The meeting also expressed the view that addressing the threats to social cohesion caused by transnational crime and fuelled by the illicit drug trade required intervention at the subregional level. Identified among such strategies were increased research on the causes and consequences of crime, including its financial cost, improved data collection on crime and the strengthening of the judicial system.

At the national level, recommendations were made concerning the need for the development of localized hazard mitigation and disaster plans; scaled up response to the HIV/AIDS crisis involving prevention, treatment and care; deepened response to strengthening the human resource base through improved early childhood education; sharing of best practices in improving computer literacy at the community level; and strengthening statistical capacities to monitor the MDGs.

The meeting received a proposal for the convening of a subregional meeting in the first quarter of 2006, which was warmly received. Such a meeting, it was suggested, could focus its attention on issues such as the social aspects of meeting the CSME; the harmonization of social protection initiatives for the Caribbean; and the impact of debt servicing on Caribbean SIDS on their actions to achieve the MDGs.

#### **Agenda item 5: Closure**

The meeting agreed on the following:

1. That a completed Social Development Matrix would be available for consideration early in the new year;
2. That the Social Development Matrix may act as a guide for countries in fulfilling their resolve at the 2005 Summit, to adopt, by 2006, and implement, comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals;
3. That the matrix would be presented to governments at the next scheduled CDCC meeting to be held in January 2006;
4. That ECLAC would work with development partners in the subregion to make the recommended meeting of ministers with responsibility for social transformation and social development a reality.

The Director of ECLAC, in bringing the meeting to a close, thanked the participants for their attendance and valuable contributions.

The meeting formally closed with participants exchanging the usual courtesies.

## Annex I

### **List of Participants**

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Annex II

HIGH LEVEL FOLLOW-UP MEETING TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 60TH SESSION 2005 WORLD SUMMIT  
*STRENGTHENING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THE WAY FORWARD FOR CARIBBEAN SIDS*  
PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, 13 OCTOBER 2005



SOC/2005/1  
12 October 2005  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**SCALING UP THE CARIBBEAN'S RESPONSE TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS -  
CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED FROM SELECTED SPEECHES OF HEADS OF STATE  
IN ATTENDANCE AT THE 60<sup>TH</sup> UNGASS, 14-15 SEPTEMBER 2005**

CHALLENGES	DOCUMENT/ SPEECH	PROPOSED STRATEGIC RESPONSE/ACTION
<p>Threat to Social cohesion from trans-national crime; illicit drugs and HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Transnational threats such as narco-trafficking, arms smuggling, money laundering and terrorism</p> <p>Socio Economic threat from HIV/AIDS</p>	<p>Hon Ram Goolam, President of Mauritius, on behalf of SIDS</p> <p>Hon Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda</p> <p>Hon Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda</p>	
<p>Susceptibility to natural disasters; weak risk management planning; lack of building codes; access to insurance;</p> <p>Vulnerability of coastal regions to natural disasters</p> <p>Vulnerability to natural Disasters</p> <p>Vulnerability to natural disaster</p>	<p>Hon Ram Goolam, President of Mauritius, on behalf of SIDS</p> <p>Hon Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados</p> <p>Hon Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis on behalf of CARICOM</p> <p>Hon Baldwin Spencer Prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda</p>	
<p>Stop poor people from being poor</p>	<p>Hon Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados</p>	
<p>Address the equity gap</p> <p>Address the human development gap</p> <p>Safeguard social progress already achieved</p>	<p>Hon Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados</p> <p>Hon Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis on behalf of CARICOM</p> <p>Hon Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis on behalf of CARICOM</p>	



CHALLENGES	DOCUMENT/SPEECH	PROPOSED STRATEGIC RESPONSE/ACTION
<p>Strengthen the Human Resource base</p> <p>Capacity building in information and communications technology</p>	<p>Hon Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis on behalf of CARICOM</p> <p>Hon Baldwin Spencer Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda</p>	
<p>Supporting our neighbours in time of distress</p>	<p>Hon Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda</p>	

Annex III

HIGH LEVEL FOLLOW-UP MEETING TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 60TH SESSION 2005 WORLD SUMMIT  
*STRENGTHENING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THE WAY FORWARD FOR CARIBBEAN SIDS*  
PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, 13 OCTOBER 2005



SOC/2005/2  
12 October 2005  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

*Social Development Matrix*  
*Framework (5 year) for advancing the Social and Sustainable Development Goals of*  
*Caribbean SIDS in keeping with the MDGs*

**GUIDE**

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	NATIONAL LEVEL RESPONSE	SUBREGIONAL RESPONSE	RECOMMENDED AGENCY	PERIOD FOR ACTION	
					SHORT TERM (1-2)	MEDIUM TERM (3-5)
People working in the Informal Sector	Research to better understand the informal sector in Caribbean so that better policies can be formulated to address the situation of persons working in those sectors	Begin collection of data on the informal economy	Selected country study	ECLAC in collaboration with ILO	X	
Children in poverty	Utilise information arising out of the mics surveys for policy initiatives	Selected countries are embarking on the mics surveys	Disseminate information	UNICEF ECLAC		
Tracking of MDGs	Support the strengthening of NSOs	Govt support NSOs	Provide Technical Assistance	CARICOM UNDP ECLAC	x	x
Youth at risk	Undertake qualitative and quantitative research to better understand the causes and dimensions of youth marginalization			ECLAC UWI UNICEF		
Social Issues arising from CSME	Monitoring social trends in light of CSME	Government support the collection of data	Technical assistance	CARICOM ECLAC		X
Tracking Poverty Reduction	Increase support for NSOs	Government continued committment	Harmonisation of tools	CARICOM CDB ECLAC UWI		
Reducing risk to Natural disaster	Identify those most vulnerable to ND and provide social provisioning for such	National level risk reduction planning and vulnerability assessments	TA	CDERA CARICOM, ECLAC, CDB	X	X
Reducing Urban Poverty	Address squatter regularisation in urban centres; improve access to social services	Develop and implement land use and Building codes				
HIV/AIDS	Ensure access to health services and and treatment and cure: Examine links between HIV/AIDS and poverty					
Promoting partnerships for MDG achievement						