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Meeting of Librarians
and Documentalists
29 November - 2 December 1977
Port of Spain, Trinidad

REPORT ON MEETING OF
LIBRARIANS AND DOCUMENTALISTS
(Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago)



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA Office for the Caribbean

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MANDATE

1. The Second Session of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 16 to 22 March 1977, agreed "to convene a Meeting of Regional Experts (Librarians and Documentalists) to finalize details on the orientation and scope of the Caribbean Documentation Centre in relation to existing needs for co-ordination and development."^{1/} Accordingly, under the joint sponsorship of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the meeting took place in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on 29 November to 2 December 1977.

ATTENDANCE^{2/}

2. Representatives of the following member countries of the Committee attended the meeting: Bahamas, Barbados, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Republic of Cuba, and Trinidad and Tobago. Representatives of Belize, Dominica and Montserrat attended as Associate Members and the Netherlands Antilles as Observer.
3. Representatives of the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) also attended the meeting.
4. A representative of the UNESCO Office also attended the meeting.
5. In addition, special consultants were also present.

^{1/} Report of the Second Session of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) /E/CEPAL/CDCC/21/Rev.1/.

^{2/} The full list of participants, observers and guests appears in appendix 1.

6. The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:
 1. Opening address
 2. Information as a regional resource
 3. Information needs of Caribbean policymakers including national information priorities
 4. Information facilities in the Caribbean
 5. Regional co-operation on information services.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

7. At the plenary sessions, papers were presented and formed the basis of discussions. Oral presentations on some country facilities were also made. The list of papers presented is given in appendix II.

8. General discussions followed the presentation of the papers. It was then agreed to have detailed discussions in Workshops of the following specific topics:

1. Priorities and prerequisites for development planning
2. Identification of resources in the Caribbean and obstacles to endogenous development of information systems
3. Sub-regional institutions: their inter-relations and their relations with non-Caribbean institutions.

9. A demonstration was made of an experimental on-line link to major information resources in data banks located abroad. This demonstration was organized by UNESCO in collaboration with CONACYT-Mexico and was carried out concurrently with the meeting. A representative of CONACYT explained the techniques applied in the transfer of information by these methods and emphasized that such an installation would serve mainly to reinforce national information resources and was not a substitute for them. Delegates were invited to submit queries, answers to which were searched in the variety of data bases linked to the Tymnet system, which was in turn connected via Mexico to Port of Spain and served as the telecommunication network for the demonstration.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS

10. The meeting unanimously agreed to the following reports and recommendations of the Workshops:

Report of Workshop "A"
Priorities and Prerequisites for Development Planning

1. The Workshop expressed agreement with the proposal for the establishment of a Caribbean Information System as described in the paper put forward by the CDCC Secretariat, entitled "The Caribbean Documentation Centre and Regional Co-operation for Information", and considered it more relevant to discuss the mechanisms for implementation of the proposed system, than the subject matter suggested by the Secretariat, under the heading "Priorities and Prerequisites for Development Planning".

2. Some of the delegates felt that the broad subject areas to be considered of prime importance by the information system should be science and technology, socio-economic information and cultural data. Within these broad categories the Secretariat should establish specific priorities based on requests and needs from member governments.

It was agreed that there is an urgent need not only to co-ordinate the existing information systems in the sub-region, but also to create new information; that is to say, to stimulate research and intensify the production of data in identified priority areas. The lack of cultural data necessary for the nation-building process, and the lack of knowledge related to national cultures were viewed with concern. It was underlined that the interchange of information need not be impeded by the ideological direction of Caribbean states, particularly with reference to science and technology. The problem of the non-use of knowledge, of its inaccessibility and unavailability to various types of users should not be overlooked.

3. The Workshop felt that it was a matter of course that the Caribbean Information System should aim at the creation of an informed society.

4. There was agreement on the urgent need for institutionalizing regional co-operation as far as information is concerned and for strengthening national systems. It was pointed out that this meeting, mandated by the CDCC, provides a unique occasion for putting forward clear cut recommendations in relation to the development of information sciences in the Caribbean. It was also pointed out that sub-regional co-operation, interchange of ideas and experience and mutual assistance in the development process, cannot be achieved if national information systems are

not strengthened through vigorous actions by member governments, supported where necessary by external assistance. Mandates given at a sub-regional level were interpreted to indicate, in a broad sense as a first step towards the establishment of a national information policy and a commitment to implement such a policy.

5. In view of the weakness of information infrastructure in some countries, the Workshop insisted on the need to give special attention to this category of countries in the setting up of Caribbean information networks, which should be specifically geared to reducing the level of disparity in development between different National Information Systems. Such a strategy would, at the same time, guard against inhibiting the more advanced national information systems.

6. It was recommended that the Workshop endorse the proposal contained in Paper No. 6, and qualify it by a commitment to adopt a "pump priming" role in relation to less developed national systems. The significance of the work done by the ECCM Secretariat was acknowledged, and its possible co-ordinating role in this aspect underlined."

7. It was proposed that the next step would be for the ECLIA Office for the Caribbean to prepare a document identifying the minimum elements and obstacles to the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the UNESCO Conference on NATIS, held in Jamaica (1975). The document should also elaborate concrete steps to be taken in the present circumstances towards the setting up of machinery for sub-regional co-operation in the field of information. It was emphasized that the Workshop is not requesting another survey but a specific feasibility study along the lines proposed.

8. It was agreed that Paper No. 6 represents a compromise solution between the "grand design" of a sophisticated information system, and a strategy predicated on the progressive development of rudimentary systems from the "bottom up". Such a strategy was received as being more appropriate to the circumstances prevailing in the Caribbean today.

Recommendations

9. Consistent with the mandates of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC), to stimulate an endogenous process of development in Science and Technology and in Social and Economic Sciences, it is recommended that a Caribbean information system covering these areas be established.

10. It is also recommended that appropriate emphasis be given to the cultural aspects of development, which are viewed as being indispensable to the processes of nation-building, and the Caribbean integration process. It is accepted, however, that the specific demand of participating Caribbean countries will, in due course, determine the specific emphases in the initial stages of growth of such an information system.

11. It is further recommended that due emphasis be given to the creation of knowledge and the stimulation of knowledge and research, since very important dimensions of the Caribbean societies are still unexplored.

12. The institutionalization of sub-regional co-operation in the field of information sciences is urgent. The Workshop endorsed the creation of a Caribbean Information System aimed at creating an informed Caribbean society. It is recommended, in this context, that the projected sub-regional system be specifically geared towards the strengthening of national information systems.

13. The Workshop welcomed and endorsed proposals put forward by the ECLA Office for the Caribbean, and recommends that concrete steps be taken to implement them. The following measures are recommended to accelerate realization of the Caribbean Information System proposed in the above-mentioned paper:

- i. that the CDCC countries and particularly the LDC's be encouraged to formalize, to the extent possible, their existing information systems;
- ii. that an interim working party be appointed preparatory to the establishment of the Congress:
 - (a) to identify the essential characteristics of national information units relevant to actualization of sub-regional co-operation. The working party would also propose guidelines for the different organs proposed for the Caribbean Information System;
 - (b) to study the concrete linkage of the Caribbean Documentation Centre with existing structures, with the active involvement of the less-developed national systems, and to study the ways in which such structures could be integrated with the projected Caribbean Information System;

- (c) to identify the barriers which have so far prevented the implementation of proposals for national information systems, and to initiate with the assistance of available expertise in the sub-region a programme of direct assistance to overcome these barriers. Priority to the less developed national systems should be given to the extent possible;
- (d) that the working party together with such national and international assistance available, involve itself directly with the programming of development of the mentioned systems in CDCC countries, with particular attention to the need of less developed national systems;
- (e) that the working party should seek to establish the scope and specific priorities of the Caribbean Information System; and
- (f) that the CDCC Secretariat, in consultation with the working party, prepare recommendations for the necessary funding by Caribbean governments and external agencies over the next triennium for the Caribbean Information System.

14. Since the mandates of the CDCC for action at the sub-regional level in the field of information cannot be implemented without "topping up" at the national level, the Workshop further recommended:

- i. the representatives of each country undertake to propose the early establishment of a national advisory committee to stimulate governmental action in their territory for the development of national information systems and support of the Caribbean Information System;
- ii. that the CDCC Secretariat and the nucleus of the Caribbean Documentation Centre undertake to stimulate the formation and support the action of each territorial committee.

Report of Workshop "B"
Identification of Resources in the Caribbean and
Obstacles to Endogenous Development of Information Systems

1. The Working Group devoted its efforts to the identification of obstacles to the development of information infrastructures in the majority of the countries. These obstacles can be classified under the following headings:

- i. Political - Lack of Government commitment to the establishment and continuing support of national information policies.
- ii. Socio-cultural - Lack of a clear conception of the role of information by Caribbean societies as a whole; traditional dependence on external sources of information which are not always relevant to local needs; language barriers which prevent the sharing of information.
- iii. Economic - Lack of sufficient, guaranteed, and continuing budgetary support for information-related activities.
- iv. Organizational - Lack of local information infrastructure, insufficient numbers of adequately trained staff; inadequate knowledge of existing and needed information resources; absence of user education programmes; absence of guidelines, standards, common norms and methodologies for establishment of national and sub-regional programmes.

2. It is recommended that viable lines of action to overcome these obstacles are:

- a) the design and establishment of national information policies backed up by suitable legislation to guarantee their implementation;
- b) the appointment, by the government of each country, of an advisory body responsible for the promotion and implementation of the national information policy;
- c) obtaining bibliographic control of nationally produced publications, conventional and non-conventional, within the frameworks of the UNISIST guidelines;
- d) creation of training programmes designed to educate information specialists and users at all levels;

- e) the establishment of mechanisms to ensure collaborative efforts at regional levels for information sharing (development of common bibliographic tools, compilation of directories, etc.: co-operative cataloging programmes, exchange of publications);
- f) the active participation by governments in any international programmes offering assistance in the establishment of information systems (e.g. UNESCO, CLADES);
- g) the taking into consideration of problems of information creation and transfer when CDCC develops its removal of language barriers programme.

3. Up-grading of National Archives

The results of UNESCO's Archives and Record Management Programme (ARMP) which is expected to be launched in 1979, could be used for the up-grading of the region's archive and record management activities. It was also pointed out that, subject to approval by the UNESCO General Conference, a pilot project for a co-ordinated library and archives development programme would be set up in the Caribbean region. The LDC's representatives request that particular attention be paid to their needs in the development of this project.

4. The meeting noted that there was need for a Code of ethics relating to the right of individuals and groups to have access to information. It requested the Secretariat to obtain information on this matter from international sources and to make this available to member countries.

Report of Workshop "C"
Sub-Regional Institutions, their Inter-relations
and their Relations with Non-Caribbean Organizations

1. This Workshop consisted of three persons: the librarians of the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the ECLA/CDCC Secretariat. The group examined the extent to which their collections and services overlapped, and attempted to seek solutions to avoid duplication of resources and to determine areas of specialization. It was agreed that while the three Caribbean co-ordinating agencies (i.e. CARICOM, CDB and ECLA/CDCC) overlap in their spheres of interests, as is reflected in the holdings of their documentation centres, there are different areas of emphasis relative to their work programmes and priorities as mandated by governments.
2. The Libraries of these institutions will therefore co-operate where possible, in specific areas, so as to optimize the use of resources and avoid the duplication of effort in the dissemination of information.
3. To this end the libraries have agreed:
 - to rationalize the acquisition and effective utilization of current awareness services; to share the results of bibliographical endeavours; to ensure that these Documentation Centres are kept aware of the restricted material emanating from their respective institutions;
 - to develop a strategy for sharing resources as far as non-Caribbean material is concerned.
4. The Working Group also felt that the CDCC should take positive steps to initiate action by the Governments of the Region to secure and service the presently unused collection now known as the Caribbean Regional Library formerly that of the Caribbean Commission. This collection, now housed in Puerto Rico, is vital to the development process in the Region.
11. The meeting recommended that the CDCC Secretariat take the necessary action with Governments either jointly or severally, or with organs and agencies of the United Nations System, or with other organizations involved in information systems in order to implement the above recommendations as early as possible.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. Member States of the Committee

BAHAMAS

Kevin Higgins, Economist, Economic Planning Unit
Hyacinth Winder, Assistant Librarian, Ministry of
Education and Culture

BARBADOS

Chalmer St. Hill, Chief Librarian, Public Library
Gladstone E. Pollard, Senior Assistant Secretary,
Ministry of Education

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Miriam Michel de Campusano, Director, Technical Department
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Martha Maria de Castro Cotes, Chief, Technical Department,
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Bibliographic Services of the National
Autonomous University of Santo Domingo

GRENADA

Princess A. Abraham, Specialist Librarian, Ministry of Education
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GUYANA

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Anne Marie Prudent, Director, Department of External Affairs Library

JAMAICA

Henry Fowler, Deputy Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, Paris
Sheila I. Lampart, Executive Secretary, National Council on
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Maitland Rose, Senior Systems Analyst, Ministry of Education
Myrtle Hazle, Planner (Education), National Planning Agency

REPUBLIC OF CUBA

Lázaro Pérez Tápanes, Director-General of Scientific and
Technical Information of the State Committee
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Luis Pensado Bec, Director-General of Planning of the
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Gerardo Fernández, Documentalist, Documentation Centre,
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TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Lynette C. Hutchinson, Director of Library Services,
Ministry of Education and Culture
Patricia Raymond, Librarian, Ministry of Finance (Planning and Development)
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and Development)

2. Associate Members of the Committee

BELIZE

Roland Lisle Clarke, Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Education
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José Orlando Puga, Economist, Ministry of Finance and Economic
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DOMINICA

Cornelia Henry-Williams, Acting Librarian, Dominica Public Library

MONTSERRAT

Violet Jane Grell, Librarian, Public Library

3. Observers

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

Rose Mary de Paula, Director, Public Library, Curacao

4. Caribbean Inter-Governmental Organizations

Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM)

Carol Collins, Librarian

Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)

Nancy St. John, Librarian

Eric Armstrong, Senior Economic Statistician

5. United Nations System

A. Specialized Agencies

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Lincoln Earle Samarasinghe, Chief, Section for Development of
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B. Cepal System

Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA)*

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Julio Cubillo

6. Special Guests

University of the West Indies (UWI)

J. Edward Greene, Deputy Director, Institute of Social and
Economic Research, UWI, Jamaica

Alma Jordan, Librarian, UWI, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago

Alan Moss, Acquisitions Librarian, UWI, Barbados

University of Guyana

Joel P. Benjamin, Assistant Librarian

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Shahid Akhtar

Lynette Yip Young

Ricardo Cifuentes

7. Technicians for On-line Demonstration
(Courtesy UNESCO)

Enzo Molino (CONACYT)

Patricia Garza (CONACYT)

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

- Paper No. 1 - Information Needs of National Policymakers
Economic Planning - Market Economy Countries
by Eric Armstrong, Senior Economic Statistician,
Caribbean Development Bank
- Paper No. 2 - Plans for the Co-ordination of Library and
Information Services in Jamaica by
Sheila I. Lampart, Executive Secretary,
National Council on Libraries, Archives and
Documentation Services
- Paper No. 3 - The Role of the University Library in Meeting
Government's Information Needs for Development
by Yvonne Stephenson, Librarian, University
of Guyana
- Paper No. 4 - Documentation for Economic and Cultural Development
in Belize by the Government of Belize
- Paper No. 5 - Existing Facilities for Meeting the Information
Needs of Planners and Policymakers - CARICOM
Member Countries by Carol Collins, Librarian,
Caribbean Community Secretariat
- Paper No. 6 - The Caribbean Documentation Centre and Regional
Co-operation for Information by Wilma Primus,
Documentalist/Librarian, ECLA Office for the
Caribbean
- Paper No. 7 - The Inventory as an Instrument of Change: The
Case of Development Information and Documentation
Infrastructures in Latin America by the Latin
American Centre for Economic and Social
Documentation (CLADES)
- Paper No. 8 - Information: The Neglected Resource by
Shahid Akhtar and Lynette Yip Young, Information
Sciences Division, International Development
Research Centre
- Paper No. 9 - Regional Networks in the Fields of Information by
L.E. Samarasinghe, Chief, Section for Development
of Information Infrastructures, General Information
Programme, UNESCO
- Paper No. 10 - Information Systems Existing in the Dominican
Republic by Pedro Gil Iturbides/Dra. Martha M. de
Castro Cotes, Director/Representative, National
Library, Dominican Republic

- Paper No. 11 - Methodological Scheme for the Economic Planning of the Activity - Scientific and Technical Information by Luis Pensado Bec, Director-General of Planning of the State Committee of Science and Technology, Cuba
- Paper No. 12 - Some Comments on the State of Information Services Development in Guyana by Jean Craigwell, Librarian, National Archives
- Paper No. 13 - Information Needs of Caribbean Policymakers in the Field of Science and Technology by Dr. Ken S. Julien, Chairman, National Advisory Council, Trinidad and Tobago
- Paper No. 14 - A Framework for Caribbean Regional Co-ordination in Information Services by Dr. Alma Jordan, Librarian, University of the West Indies
- Paper No. 15 - Conception of the National System for Scientific and Technical Information of the Republic of Cuba by Lázaro Pérez Tápanes, Director-General of Scientific and Technical Information of the State Committee of Science and Technology, Cuba
- Paper No. 16 - Report of Workshop "A"
- Paper No. 17 - Report of Workshop "B"
- Paper No. 18 - Report of Workshop "C"
- Paper No. 19 - Draft Report of Meeting
- Paper No. 20 - Barbados and Regional Co-operation in the Library and Information field by Chalmer St. Hill, Chief Librarian
- Paper No. 21 - Problems of Documentation in Haiti by Agousse Telfort, Librarian, CONADEP

