



# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRIES  
IN THE CARIBBEAN DURING  
COVID-19

# CARIBBEAN ECONOMY

CARIBBEAN ECONOMY TO  
CONTRACT ACCORDING TO  
LATEST ECLAC REPORT

# COVID-19

ECLAC CALLS FOR WOMEN'S  
RIGHTS TO BE GUARANTEED  
DURING COVID-19

# Contents

- 4** Caribbean economy to contract according to latest ECLAC report
- 8** Exploring the role of Social Development ministries in the Caribbean during COVID-19
- 10** ECLAC calls for women's rights to be guaranteed during COVID-19
- 12** Fashion with a purpose
- 14** Saint Lucia's iconic Castries market is getting a makeover
- 16** State of Affairs



## About us

Issued on a monthly basis, The Hummingbird offers strategic insights into the latest projects, publications, technical assistance missions and research carried out by ECLAC Caribbean. In addition to these, sneak previews are provided of the most salient upcoming events, alongside enriching follow-ups to previously covered issues. With a view to featuring a variety of facets of Caribbean life and lifestyle, The Hummingbird also zooms in on cultural activities and landmark occurrences through an eye-opening regional round-up.

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# International Days

**3 May**

World Press Freedom Day

**15 May**

International Day of Families

**17 May**

World Telecommunications and Information Society Day

**22 May**

International Day of Biological Diversity

**29 May**

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

# Upcoming Meetings

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WHO, World Health Assembly, Seventy-third session - Geneva

**25 - 29 May**

ECLAC, Thirty-eighth session - San Jose

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**ECLAC Caribbean**  
Posted Apr 29

Borrowing is not an option for #Caribbean countries.  
Read more in the following press release: <https://bit.ly/3f3YKHO>



**For most of Caribbean economies, limited fiscal space pose a significant challenge towards recovery.**

ALEJIA BARRAZA  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF ECLAC

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**ECLAC Caribbean**  
Posted Apr 27

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide and global growth forecast.  
<https://bit.ly/34hGO7H>



**Figure 1 : Confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide and global growth forecast**  
(Number of cases and percentages)

Global GDP growth forecast (right scale) — Confirmed cases (left scale)

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**ECLAC Caribbean**  
Posted Apr 17

The #ECLAC's #COVID19 Observatory compiles and makes available public policies that the 33 #LAC's countries are taking to limit the impact of the pandemic. Check it now and share it: <https://bit.ly/2RmySg8>



**COVID-19 Observatory**  
in Latin America and the Caribbean  
Economic and social impact

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## Caribbean economy to contract according to latest ECLAC report

**The** latest report issued by ECLAC reveals that Caribbean economies are expected to contract by -5.3% in GDP due to the negative impact that the COVID-19 crisis will have on the demand for tourism and other areas of the economy.

Launched during a virtual press conference transmitted live from ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, on 21 April 2020, by Executive Secretary Alicia Bárcena, the report entitled, 'Measuring the impact of COVID-19 with a view to reactivation', states that the coronavirus pandemic will lead to the worst contraction that Latin America and the Caribbean has ever experienced, exceeding even those seen in 1914 and 1930.

Presenting the report, Bárcena explained that the coronavirus crisis has impacted to Latin America and the Caribbean in five major areas; through a reduction in international trade; a fall in commodity prices; an increase in risk aversion and worsening of global financial conditions; a steep decline in the demand for tourism services; and a

reduction in remittances.

The Executive Secretary observed that the countries of the region have announced a range of measures to moderate the socio-economic impact of national efforts to contain the spread of infection, which must be reinforced by public spending. Access to financial resources based on the flexible support of multilateral financing organizations, accompanied by low-cost credit lines, debt servicing relief, and possible debt forgiveness is therefore urgently needed.

The report also notes that while exports are forecasted to fall by approximately 15% across LAC, unemployment rates are expected to reach 11.5%, bringing the total number of unemployed people throughout LAC to a staggering 37.7 million. The combined economic downturn and soaring level of unemployment will undermine the ability of millions of households to meet their needs. Some 29 million people are projected to fall below the poverty line; 16 million of these will experience extreme poverty.

"The leaders of the G20 should be in favour of multilateral organizations making loans at favourable interest rates and alleviating the debt of countries that are highly indebted, deferring it or forgiving it. This is needed in the light of limited fiscal space. Exceptional measures are required to confront what is an unprecedented crisis. There will be no progress without international cooperation and solidarity," Bárcena stated.

The changes required for the region's economies to bounce back will be many and far-reaching, and will include greater reliance on production networks, diversifying suppliers in terms of countries and companies, favoring locations that are closer to final consumption markets (nearshoring), and relocating strategic production-related and technological processes (reshoring). ■



## EC Dollar remains stable amid Covid-19

**The** Eastern Caribbean (EC) dollar has remained stable amid regional and global lockdowns prompted by the spread of the coronavirus.

In a recent press release, Timothy Antoine, Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) said as of 24 April 2020 the EC dollar, which is pegged to the US dollar, “remains very strong”, backed by foreign reserves at 100.3%. The exchange rate with the US remains at \$2.7 as at 05 May 2020.

In order to reduce the economic impact of the pandemic on the economies of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU), he said people must continue to follow health protocols.

“Our health requires that we do, and our economies demand that we do. And if we don’t, if we get careless and complacent, we are going to be forced back into lockdowns, back into shutdown and we will impose and will heap upon ourselves more economic difficulty”.

Antoine also stressed the importance of properly managing finances, expanding connectivity through digital tools and of adopting a growth mindset that will alter the delivery of business services.

“Our working assumption is that this is a marathon, not a sprint,” he noted, as he encouraged people to distinguish essential from non-essential spending, focusing on needs and not wants.

“We need to use our limited finances wisely. At the personal level, at the household level, at the business level and at the government level – all of us, because money is scarce.”

He also encouraged residents to support regional solidarity and to “feed your faith, not your fears”, underlining that social distancing need not mean spiritual distancing.

“Fear has a useful function. It alerts us to danger, real and potential, but once we have been alerted, we have to pivot from fear to faith because if we don’t, we are going to be paralyzed by fear” ... “Everyday count three blessings ... it will help your state of mind”.

Driven by the temporary loss of revenue from the tourism sector, the ECCU has predicted a decline in economic output in 2020 of between 10% and 20% across the currency union.

“In all likelihood, the economic damage of this pandemic will outlast the pandemic and in the absence of a vaccine, we’re likely to have a protracted recovery process” ... “12 to 18 months does not appear to be unreasonable,” he said.

There are however positive benefits which are being derived from the pandemic. Apart from a reduction in the price of imported oil in the countries of the subregion, the pandemic will leave a legacy of stronger health systems. ■

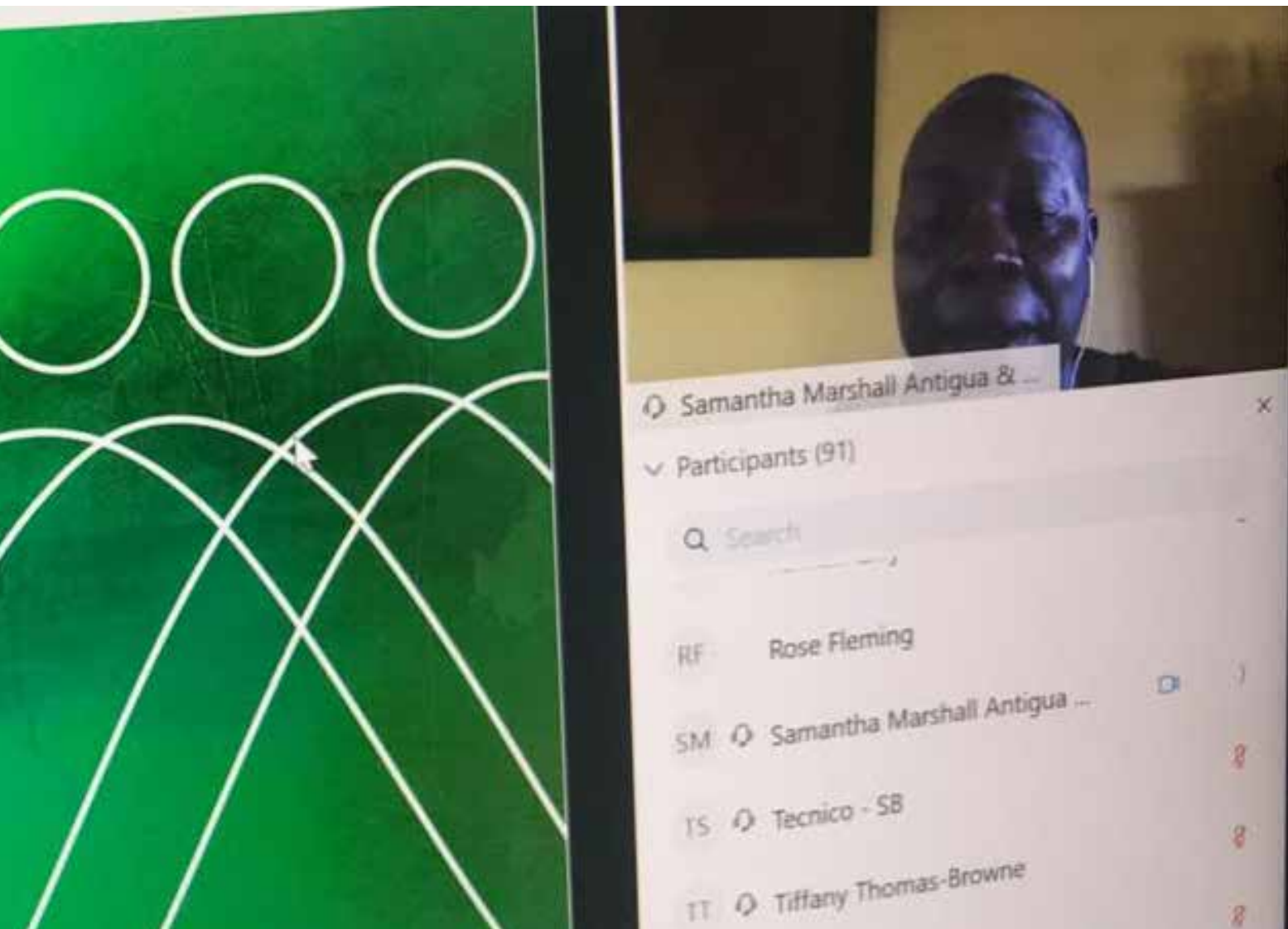
Virtual meeting  
“The Role of Ministries of Social  
Development in the face of the  
COVID-19 pandemic in the  
Caribbean”  
April 21, 2020

*The  
Hummingbird*



Exploring the role of  
**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
MINISTRIES IN THE CARIBBEAN  
DURING COVID-19**





In the face of the challenges brought about by the relentless global spread of the COVID-19 virus, ECLAC's Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, has encouraged Caribbean countries to commit to upholding the social well-being of citizens. This, during a virtual meeting organized to discuss the role of Caribbean Social Development Ministries in response to the crisis, on 21 April 2020. The meeting was attended by ministers and senior decision makers from 18 English, French and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries and territories.

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# Exploring the role of Social Development ministries in the Caribbean during COVID-19

**Moderated** by ECLAC Caribbean Director, Diane Quarless, the meeting aimed to foster collaboration and opportunities for mutual support by providing a platform for discussing problems and challenges related to the pandemic, including knowledge, progress made and opportunities for joint work at the sub-regional level.

Bárcena addressed the region's socioeconomic situation and social protection measures in the context of the current health crisis, pointing out that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on the economic, social, physical and mental state of individuals.

"In urgent circumstances such as those we now face, it is you, the leaders responsible for social welfare, who are charged with finding solutions to the needs of those living on the street, persons with disabilities, migrants, and senior citizens", Bárcena said.

Social protection systems are coming under considerable pressure with the implementation of mitigation strategies to control the spread of COVID-19 in the Caribbean. The crisis will affect several social sectors, including health, labour and education, with a disproportionate impact on vulnerable people with

underlying health conditions, older people, unemployed youth, the underemployed, women, unprotected workers and migrant workers.

Bárcena argued that even before the spread of COVID-19, the region's social situation was deteriorating. "Inevitably, the virus will affect countries in different ways, depending on their respective capacities to respond to the illness and on the resources available to cope with it at a national level. In that sense, we are aware that in the Caribbean, despite decades of progress on human development, countries face growing poverty and income inequality,"



Photo of attendant at virtual meeting



“

*In urgent circumstances such as those we now face, it is you, the leaders responsible for social welfare, who are charged with finding solutions to the needs of those living on the street, persons with disabilities, migrants, and senior citizens...*

- Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary, ECLAC

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In the Caribbean, medical and health facilities are insufficient for the level of potential demand and are heavily dependent on imports of equipment and inputs. This is a major problem because, to date, 24 countries around the world have restricted exports of medical equipment, medicines or their ingredients.

The novel coronavirus will also disrupt activities in educational establishments, and will have a significant impact on learning, especially for children in rural areas in light of existing disparities in access to digital devices and broadband Internet. More generally, the limited access to ICT implies a low level of readiness in the subregion to operate in a virtual environment in the current crisis.

High dependency on food imports creates additional challenges in terms of food security; challenges that are further aggravated by the specific vulnerability of the Caribbean to climate-related natural disasters. Moreover, the looming 2020 hurricane season, which starts in less than three months, places the subregion and its people at greater risk, even as governments grapple with the impacts of the pandemic.

Against this backdrop, ECLAC Executive Secretary highlighted that solidarity and collective responsibility are key to containing and confronting the pandemic, and warned that the crisis may deepen expressions of

discontent, mistrust and disaffection with democracy, which constitutes a significant risk to social cohesion. For that reason, she concluded, “it is urgently necessary to advance towards less unequal and more caring societies, leaving no one behind.”

Senior government officials participating in the meeting gave account of numerous efforts already being carried out at the country level to mitigate the negative effect of the pandemic on the well-being of those most at risk across the Caribbean. Attention is being given in particular to those most economically vulnerable, notably women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and migrant populations.

It was suggested that public policies should be coordinated to address the health crisis, which has brought grave socio-economic impacts. ECLAC encouraged consideration of action based on the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development (RAISD) agreed by the member countries of the Conference in Mexico City, in October 2019. The Regional Agenda focused on 56 lines of action grouped along four axes of implementation: universal and comprehensive social protection systems; policies to promote social and labour inclusion; a strengthened social institutional framework; and regional cooperation and integration.

The meeting was attended by representatives from Anguilla,

Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

Other virtual attendees included the UN Resident Coordinators from the subregion as well as representatives of UN agencies, funds and programmes and of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The meeting was organized by the Secretariat of Welfare of Mexico, in its capacity as chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and by ECLAC. ■



## ECLAC calls for women's rights to be guaranteed during COVID-19

**The** coronavirus has served to highlight the inequalities between men and women, ECLAC Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena asserted.

Speaking at the 'Briefing of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Machineries for the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: The response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis from a gender perspective', the Executive Secretary stressed that "it is crucial to reflect upon and take action regarding the diminished visibility that care and women's diverse activities have in the region's economies. It is essential to devise responses to the population's needs using a gender approach."

Moderated by ECLAC Caribbean Director, Diane Quarless, the virtual meeting was held on 8 April and brought together representatives from 15 Caribbean countries and 14 Latin American states. This activity included the special participation of María-Noel Vaeza,

UN Women's Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean, who underscored that the impacts of COVID-19 are different for women and men.

Vaeza said, "There will be no effective response to COVID-19 if impacts on women are not addressed and gender dynamics are not integrated into the response. I recommend the allocation of sufficient resources to respond to the needs of women and girls, as well as avoiding the reduction of funds for existing programmes, ensuring that the immediate needs of women working in the health sector are addressed and adopting direct compensation measures for informal workers, including domestic and migrant workers."

Three main issues were at the center of discussion. The first was the need to analyze the distinct economic and social scenarios of the current crisis and its differentiated impact on women in

the short, medium and long term. The second was the importance of exchanging information on the main initiatives that governments in the region are carrying out, with special consideration for women's needs and gender inequalities in the framework of the current crisis. The third was the need to promote regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation initiatives that support a coordinated response to the coronavirus crisis by incorporating lessons learned in the region and other parts of the world.

Based on ECLAC's latest estimates, COVID-19 could push up to 107 million women across Latin America and The Caribbean into situations of poverty. The measures to contain the pandemic could have effects on women's formal labour due to their concentration in the most affected sectors, such as social services, wholesale and retail sales, business services, and transportation, storage and communications. These four sectors account for 78% of all

employed women in LAC. In addition, quarantine and public health measures will also have an adverse effect on people in the informal market and in small businesses.

Furthermore, the limited and unequal coverage of health systems affects people's access to care and reinforces women's unpaid work. In this way, the containment and quarantine measures deepen the crisis of care in the region: 72.8% of all people employed in the health sector are women, while paid domestic work represents 11.4% of employed women. Meanwhile, in the period prior to this crisis, women spent one third of their time on domestic work and unpaid care. Today, with the closure of schools, social isolation and an increase in the number of sick people, the extra burden of unpaid work has intensified.

In response to these challenges, the Executive Secretary said that it is necessary to design and implement comprehensive public policies based on a gender and rights perspective to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in the short, medium and long term to ensure "that what is being planned and implemented in this crisis scenario does not worsen those phenomena of inequality and injustice that we have been working so long to roll back."

In particular, Bárcena invited participants to think about how the measures being taken by States in the region are affecting the structural constraints of gender inequality laid out in the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030.

Moreover, the Strategy contributes to incorporating a gender perspective into the policies adopted to confront COVID-19 and its consequences, since it allows for carrying out campaigns to broadly disseminate the services available to guarantee women's rights; it promotes regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation initiatives; it furthers the availability of data on the effects on people and the economy, disaggregated by sex, and prospective studies; it fosters participation through virtual platforms to consult with women's and feminist organizations about strategies to tackle the pandemic; and it expands fiscal space to mobilize enough public resources to take on COVID-19 with a gender perspective.

"We are facing an unprecedented crisis where clearly the role of States and intergovernmental organizations will be decisive for coordinating actions that allow us to get past the emergency as soon as possible and to undergo an economic and social recovery, leaving no one behind," Bárcena affirmed. ■



## Jamaica launches online training for tourism workers

**Jamaica** has launched what officials are calling a "substantial investment" in its tourism sector amid the pandemic, with a new free online training programme for tourism workers affected by the crisis.

Jamaica's Centre of Tourism Innovation is running the programme in partnership with the US-based National Restaurant Association and the American Hotel and Lodging Institute, along with Jamaica's Human Employment and Resource Training-National Service Training Agency.

The programme will deliver online training and certification courses.

Tourism officials said more than 6,500 people have signed up for the programme since it launched last week, with classes having started 27 April 2020.

"The Caribbean is the most tourism dependent region in the world and tourism accounts for nearly 11% of global GDP. In the case of Jamaica, we are very proud that the programme has been so well-received by our hospitality workers. There is no better time than now for them to retool and upskill," said Jamaica Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett.

"It is a smart investment in staying resilient, which will pay handsome dividends when the tourism sector returns to normal. It is a demonstration of the importance of the Government's Human Capital Development strategy." ■





Photo of Swag Style masks courtesy: <https://dpi.gov.gy/fashion-with-a-purpose/>

## Fashion with a purpose

It has now become necessary to wear face masks in public as a precaution against contracting the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and for limiting the spread of infection.

Many, particularly young people, while aware of the importance of protecting themselves, struggle with the idea of donning a mask. They contend it is “uncomfortable and boring.”

Coming to the rescue is 25-year-old Guyanese designer Parish Cadogan, who is on a mission to change their rhetoric with his fashionable, comfortable and safe masks, that are now in demand.

Cadogan who owns “Swag Styles” brings a range of fashion statements and trends to the designing of face masks. This

he noted has attracted younger customers who were originally hesitant to wear a face mask.

“I also give them the option to design their mask and make it their own. It doesn’t have to be plain; it can match their t-shirt as well. For the children, I use whatever cartoon character they like. So, I’m making it more fashionable, more fun and they will want to wear it,” he shared.

Cadogan reported that orders have been rolling in and persons are realizing they can protect themselves and be fashionable too. While he initially targeted millennials, the designer said even middle-aged persons, are now clamouring for his masks. The up-and-coming fashion designer has taken his hometown and social

media by storm with his custom designs.

He kickstarted his entry into the fashion industry by hosting a successful ‘pop-up’ shop at East Coast Demerara, where several persons came out to get their graphic t-shirt designs for the village’s annual J’ouvert and Mash celebration.

Cadogan emphasized that while his facemasks are stylish, more importantly, they protect the wearer. ■



## Grenada to benefit from ECLAC statistics expertise through anonymized microdata analysis

**For** the first time in the Caribbean, there are official statistics on violence against women and girls (VAWG). This is because several countries have recently carried out national surveys, as part of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence. These surveys include the Grenada Women's Health and Life Experiences Survey in 2018, along with similar exercises carried out in Jamaica (2016), Trinidad and Tobago (2017), Guyana (2018) and Suriname (2018).

An independent analysis of the results of the survey carried out in Grenada, by UN Women, is due to be published in May 2020. Given the sensitive nature of the data contained in the report, it is important that the dataset be anonymized.

ECLAC Caribbean's Associate Population Affairs Officer, Francis Jones, explained that

the recommendation is for the anonymized microdata to be made available to approved researchers under a license agreement, while the Central Statistics Office of Grenada could publicize the availability of the dataset on their website.

"This means that a researcher wishing to receive a copy of the data would have to request access, providing information about their research institution and their proposed use of the data. The applicant would have to sign an agreement which sets out their obligations to protect the confidentiality of the microdata, for example, not to seek to re-identify individuals in the data, not to pass the data to third parties, to store it securely, etc.", Jones said.

The survey dataset contains detailed information on violence against women, the different forms that violence can take, and

a wide range of potential risk factors which may be associated with violence. The most obvious analysis that researchers are likely to want to carry out is to compare how the prevalence of different kinds of violence is associated with risk factors (such as poverty, consumption of alcohol or employment status) and basic social and demographic characteristics (such as age, ethnicity or age of first marriage).

Jones added that it is likely that a similar approach will also be used in the sharing of information in the datasets from Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, since there is a strong case for making microdata available to researchers. Only by making the dataset available to a wider number of researchers can the true potential of the dataset be realized, thus generating a better return on the investment in data collection. ■



*Photo of Castries Market by Gene93k - CC BY-SA 3.0*

## Saint Lucia's iconic Castries market is getting a makeover

**Saint Lucia's** iconic Castries Market has a major new look, thanks to partial completion of the first phase of its Market Redevelopment Project.

The project, started last year, has added a colorful new character to the market, which was built in 1891.

But it's not just cosmetic — the revamped facility has 100 stalls for organic produce vendors, while the comfort station has been spruced up and refurbished.

"Not only will this create a nexus

between authentic Saint Lucian products and the export market, but visitors to our shores would be able to be a part of this experience. The Castries Market bears so much rich history and will become an even greater staple in the city's centre, once complete," said Saint Lucia Tourism Minister Dominic Fedee. The project will also create a "Container Box Park" for micro-enterprising cosmetic shops, cafes, pubs and eateries.

The wider project will also add a "state-of-the-art" food court, high-end restaurants and meat and fish depots, among other

additions.

"This reopening will provide many opportunities for growth among traders and an opportunity for vendors to make it truly their own. It is also more than a market, it is a tourism product and a one stop center for business needs," said Castries Mayor Peterson Francis.

The second phase of the project will see the building of a new viewing tower and duty-free shopping stores. ■





## Virtual COVID-19 platform created to enable local SDG implementation

**The** Local 2030 Islands Network has launched a virtual platform for islands on COVID-19 to communicate challenges and draw strength from shared solutions, as part of the network's mission to connect and strengthen island leadership on sustainable development and resilience.

The platform hosts virtual convenings focused on responding to COVID-19 with early themes identified by islanders. The first convening addressed the COVID-19 related disruptions to the tourism economy and explored opportunities for building back better.

The Local2030 Islands Network is the world's first global, island-led network devoted to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through locally-driven, culturally-informed solutions.

The Network brings together a diverse set of island nations, states and communities from all regions of the world -- islands tied together by their

shared island experience, cultures, strengths and challenges.

One of the recent convenings asked the question, "How are islands facing the COVID-19 related tourism crisis and their ideas on building back better?"

Panelists at this session attempted an answer by way of discussion on how many islands are dependent upon tourism as a key driver of economic activity. With the global tourism economy now severely disrupted due to COVID-19 - and with no end in sight - islands face a looming economic crisis.

The next virtual convening will take place on 14 May 2020, and will discuss the approaches that islands are planning for their economic recovery and resilience. ■

# Codfish Fritters, Guadeloupe Style

## What you will need:

- 200g Salted fish
- 100g flour
- Water
- 1 bay leaf
- 30g garlic
- 100g onion
- 40g scallion
- 50g soft pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 eggs

## Preparing the Codfish:

1. Rinse the salt fish under cold running water. Place it in a large bowl and cover it with cold water to desalt.
2. Refrigerate for 24 hours, changing the water three times in the process.
3. Drain, putting the fish into a small pan, covering with cold water. Add a bay leaf and poach the cod for 10 minutes over low heat; drain in a sieve.
4. Crumble the fish into very small pieces with olive oil.

## Batter:

1. Put the flour into a large bowl, mixing with water in order to obtain a smooth paste; let the paste stand for one hour.

## Herbs and spices:

1. Wash and peel the garlic cloves, onions, scallions and soft pepper. Chop finely.

## Make te batter:

1. Combine the flour paste, crumbled fish and the other ingredients finely chopped.
2. Separate egg yolks from the whites and add them to the cod mixture. Beat the whites into a firm peak. Add the beaten whites into the paste carefully.

## Frying the batter:

1. Heat the oil at about 350F.
2. With a tablespoon, take the batter and drop it directly into the oil. Fry the fritters until the color turns brown on one side, then flip them over.
3. Drain on a baking sheet. Serve immediately.







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## SOCIAL MEDIA



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