



GENERAL
LC/CAR/G.142/Add.4
24 May 1985
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Ninth Session
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad
29 May - 5 June 1985

ESTABLISHMENT OF ECLAC/ILPES PLANNING UNIT
AND
ITS FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

ESTABLISHMENT OF ECLAC/ILPES PLANNING UNIT
AND
ITS FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

I. BACKGROUND

Since January 1979, when the first meeting of Caribbean planning officials was held, a series of activities have been undertaken by ECLAC within the ambit of the CDCC work programme and with the collaboration of the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Development Planning (ILPES). They were initially of an investigative nature, to determine the state of the discipline, and the constraints faced by planners. Subsequently, the work programme was oriented towards technical co-operation among some sectoral planners in an attempt to remove some of these constraints.

The extent to which the programme could make a meaningful impact on planning activities was however limited by the lack of any critical mass within the ECLAC Office in Port-of-Spain in matters related to Caribbean Planning Problems, as well as the limited capacity of CDCC member countries, and particularly the OECS countries, to make manpower available to assist in this research and to participate in its programmes, workshops and training activities.

At the same time ILPES had been endeavouring to incorporate more information about Caribbean planning initiatives into its regional studies. The response and participation of Caribbean countries to these programmes have been low, due in part to resource inadequacies as well as a perception that while ILPES' orientation might have been valid for continental Latin America, the nature of Caribbean economies posed separate and distinct problems from those experienced by the rest of Latin America.

In response to these concerns, ILPES had proposed the establishment of a distinct Caribbean Planning Unit at the Third Meeting of Caribbean Heads of Planning in April-May 1983. The response of Caribbean planners to this proposal was positive and they expressed the hope that the eventual programme of work would be consistent with, and integrated into,

the CDCC work programme and that the ILPES unit should be located in the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean to maximise the benefits which could accrue from the expertise, information and organizational facilities of that Office.

II. STRUCTURE

Since that time, ILPES has sought the resources to establish the Caribbean Planning Unit and has now been able to make a post available to complement the resources available in the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. Together with a deployment of other internal resources it will ultimately be possible to have three professional officers devoted primarily to planning activities, thus moving towards some critical mass in this area.

The nucleus of permanent staff will have access to other ECLAC and United Nations staff resources and backstopping from ILPES in Santiago, Chile. The unit will have access to the financial resources of the ECLAC and ILPES, and any bilateral or multilateral funding which might be made available to finance specific Caribbean projects.

In accordance with existing mandates given by the CDCC it is proposed that the Unit will act as the technical secretariat to the regular meetings of Caribbean Heads of Planning whose recommendations regarding its work programme will be transmitted to the annual meetings of the CDCC for approval. The CDCC secretariat will continue its close working relationship with ILPES in all matters relating to its planning programme, and with the biennial meetings of Latin American Planners.

III. WORK PROGRAMME

The integration of ECLAC/ILPES and CDCC resources will permit ongoing programmes to be maintained, while providing a greater degree of assistance to those governments requesting it to upgrade the capabilities of their planning institutions and activities.

Since the planning programme was mandated in 1980 new national issues and priorities have surfaced as a result of rapid changes taking place at the national as well as the international levels. It is now generally conceded

that the economic performance of Caribbean countries will need to be significantly improved, and they will need to enhance their capacity to sense international economic changes and to manage the process of adaptation with sufficient speed to remain internationally competitive. New emphasis will therefore have to be placed on National Economic Planning and Management, which will have to be sufficiently well informed about domestic and international trends and sufficiently adaptable to adjust to the unforeseen.

At the same time there needs to be a greater integration of social and economic policies in order to ensure a higher level of national participation in the adjustment process. For while transformation cannot be logically assailed on social grounds, since welfare benefits are integrally related to economic performance, the social impacts of transformation cannot be denied and must be mitigated wherever possible. Moreover any programme of economic planning and management predicated upon economic sacrifice can only be implemented if it is in harmony with social and cultural trends since the programme can be jeopardised by large scale public resistance.

Following from the foregoing, a summary of the new elements of the work programme which are being submitted for consideration are set out below:

(a) National Economic Planning and Management. It is proposed that mechanisms should be established to assist countries in dealing with National Economic Planning and Management. This would involve meetings of appropriate national and regional experts. The agenda for these meetings might include:

- (i) Economic Review and Analysis.
- (ii) Research on a series of domestic policy issues deemed to be important.
- (iii) Inputs from the International System:
external inputs need to be received
to condition the thinking of planners
and lengthen their time horizons.

(iv) Efforts need to proceed toward the evolution of a planning style appropriate to small states with open economies.

(v) Social implications of the adjustment process. An analysis of those social mechanisms which can foster economic adjustment should form a part of any programme of economic management.

(b) Advisory Services. The Unit, at CDCC governments' request, will formulate and organize technical co-operation projects and will arrange missions to support national development planning and economic policy management.

(c) Training. The Unit will organize and execute development planning and economic policy management training programmes for nationals of CDCC countries. These programmes will include short courses, seminars and "on-the-job training" in selected planning and economic policy offices and in the Unit itself.

(d) Horizontal Co-operation. The Unit will promote horizontal technical co-operation activities among CDCC countries and between them and Latin American countries in its areas of competence.

These activities may be organized by the ECLAC and ILPES horizontal co-operation programmes.

(e) Research. The Unit will carry on research activities under the CDCC Work Programme at the request of the System of Caribbean Planning Officers and of the Conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean.

11