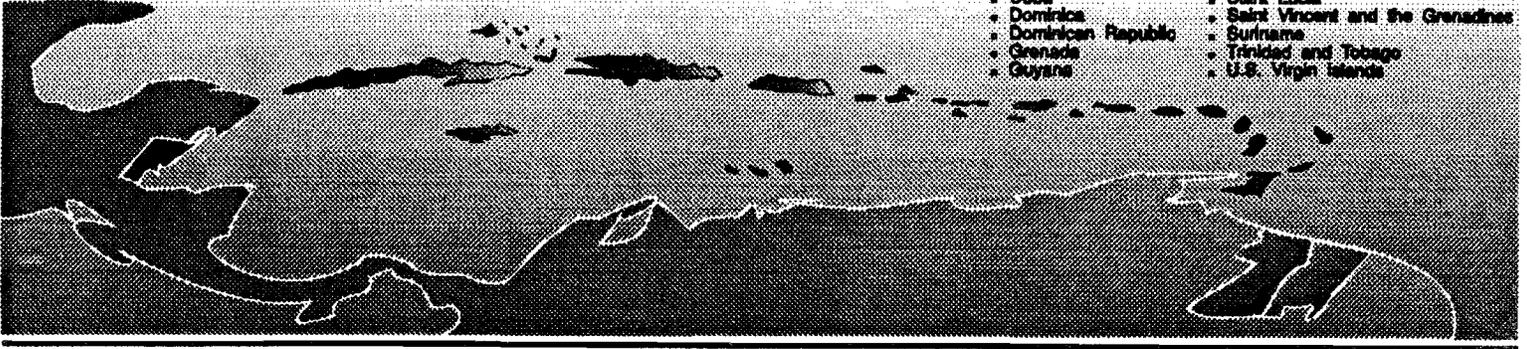




- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Br. Virgin Islands
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Montserrat
- Netherlands Antilles
- Puerto Rico
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinidad and Tobago
- U.S. Virgin Islands



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**UPDATE ON EFFORTS TO CONTINUE THE PROVISION OF
TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT TO THE CDCC MEMBER COUNTRIES**

16 DEB 1992





**UPDATE ON EFFORTS TO CONTINUE THE PROVISION OF
TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT TO THE CDCC MEMBER COUNTRIES**

Background

Over the past nine years, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC) secretariat has been providing technical cooperation to governments of the Caribbean subregion for the strengthening of their capabilities in social and economic development planning through the integration of population into their development programmes and the formulation and implementation of population policies. Given the highly complex nature of the interrelationships involved, the approach adopted has been multi-pronged and included training, research, data generation and analysis, population policy, education and the provision of information.

These activities in the Port-of-Spain Office have been carried out on the basis of a regional technical cooperation project funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); however, the project is scheduled to terminate in December 1992. The UNFPA has indicated that, due to decisions adopted by its Governing Council, it is not in a position to further extend its financing to these subregional activities. The above would result in the closing down of the demography activities in the Port-of-Spain Office at the end of 1992, unless alternative arrangements can be made.

The UNFPA has stated that a multidisciplinary team, to be located in Chile - but outside the ECLAC/CELADE realm -, will provide technical support services to both the Latin American (South and Central America) and the Caribbean countries; and that its Caribbean Subregional Office, located in Jamaica, will continue to be in a position to provide backstopping to individual Caribbean countries.

While the sincerity of the UNFPA's commitment to providing assistance to the Caribbean subregion through its revised technical support arrangements, is acknowledged, from the standpoint of the Caribbean these arrangements do not appear to take sufficient account of the unique characteristics and special situation of Caribbean countries. In particular, they do not appear to take into account the need for a long-term capability in the subregion for the provision of technical backstopping support to Caribbean countries on a continuous and well-coordinated basis. This is especially important in a situation where it would be more desirable to achieve economies of scale through a subregional approach to common population and development problems.

**Follow-up action taken by CDCC member countries
and the secretariat**

Attempts by member countries of the CDCC to secure support for the continuation of the population activities in the Caribbean, through the Port-of-Spain Office, have been supported by the ECLAC secretariat. At this point in time, however, the future of these activities in the subregion remains in doubt. An attempt is made below to bring Caribbean representatives up-to-date on the follow-up action which has been taken by member governments and the secretariat in regard to this issue:

1. CDCC resolution 32(XIII), November 1991

By a resolution adopted at the thirteenth session of the CDCC in July 1991, Caribbean governments urged the Executive Secretary of ECLAC to seek financial support for the continuation of the population programme in the Port-of-Spain Office beyond 1991. This resulted in an agreement by UNFPA to provide a one-year extension of the population project to December 1992.

2. Caucus of delegations of member countries of the CDCC, Santiago, Chile, April 1992

At a caucus of Caribbean delegations which took place in Santiago, Chile, in April 1992, concurrently with the twenty-fourth session of ECLAC, Caribbean delegates again "expressed concern at what appeared to be the impending termination of the work of the Population Unit, and disappointment that in spite of the strong concern of CDCC member governments, a way had not been found to continue what was only a minimal capability in the Port-of-Spain Office" (ECLAC/CDCC document no: LC/CAR/G.359).

At that meeting, the Executive Secretary expressed support for the needs of Caribbean governments to continue the population programme in the subregion. He explained that the problem had arisen as a result of UNFPA's redirection of its strategy in order to give priority to national activities through multidisciplinary teams. He suggested that efforts be initiated to obtain funding from a variety of donors - including the UNFPA - for a new subregional technical cooperation project and indicated that - to ensure that activities were not discontinued while those arrangements bore fruit - temporary financing from the United Nations Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (UNRPTC) would be assigned to the Port-of-Spain Office to extend the services of the officer in charge of the Programme for six months beyond 1992.

3. Special Meeting of the CDCC Monitoring Committee, July 1992

The issue was considered again at a special meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC which took place in Port-of-Spain in July 1992. The participants agreed to put a number of alternative proposals to the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, with a view to securing a long-term capability in demography for the subregion. These included that a post on the UNFPA multidisciplinary team be located in the Port-of-Spain Office; that a vacant permanent post, available in either Port-of-Spain or Santiago, be converted to a Population Affairs Officer post to be located in Port-of-Spain; and that special funding be used to fund these activities until more permanent arrangements were made.

In responding to the recommendations from the Monitoring Committee, the Executive Secretary - through communication to the CDCC secretariat in August 1992 - reiterated his previous suggestion and offered an additional possibility. He proposed - as he had indicated during the April 1992 Caucus - the formulation of a subregional technical cooperation project in the field of demography, for submission to the UNFPA or other donor agencies; and the possible inclusion of the field of population and development as part of the regular work programme of the secretariat. The process of securing extrabudgetary funding for this project would take about one year. The inclusion of the population field in the regular programme of work would entail a reordering of the priorities of the Port-of-Spain Office as currently reflected in the approved regular budget work programme and the approval of the CDCC and other higher bodies in the hierarchy of the United Nations. The two options above were not mutually exclusive.

The Executive Secretary confirmed his intention to provide limited temporary funds to finance the extension of the demography expert's contract during the first six months of 1993, "in order to partially bridge the gap between December 31, 1992 and the time when one or both of the above options bore fruit".

The other suggestions put forward by the CDCC Monitoring Committee - i.e. the outposting of an expert of the UNFPA multidisciplinary team to the Caribbean subregion and the transfer of vacant post in demography from Santiago to the Port-of-Spain Office - were also examined by the Executive Secretary. Representations were made to the UNFPA to ascertain whether it would be feasible to outpost one of its multidisciplinary team experts to the Caribbean subregion. The transfer of a post in Santiago to the Caribbean Office could not be approved internally since it would require a decision by the whole Commission.

The UNFPA responded to the above consultation, indicating that it was bound by its Governing Council's decision on the composition of the multidisciplinary team, and that it was not possible to consider a request to locate one post in Port-of-Spain. The UNFPA also indicated its conviction that the location of the team in Santiago should not have a negative impact on the technical cooperation to countries in the Caribbean subregion since technical cooperation services could be requested as needed.

4. Communication to Permanent Representatives of Caribbean countries to the United Nations

While the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat understood the position taken by the UNFPA, the arrangements being put in place by the latter organization would not seem to satisfy the need for a long-term capability in the subregion for the provision of technical support to the Caribbean countries on a continuous and well-coordinated basis, which was the position taken by the countries. This perspective on the matter was communicated to the permanent representatives of Caribbean countries to the United Nations, and to the ministries of foreign affairs of CDCC member countries.

Written responses were received from member governments of the CDCC, in support of the work of the Demography Unit of ECLAC/CDCC, and urging that every effort be made to obtain a commitment to the continuation of the work in demography at ECLAC, Port-of-Spain.

5. ECLAC/UNFPA/CELADE Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Meeting of Government Experts on Population Development, preparatory to the 1994 International Conference, Saint Lucia, 6-7 October 1992

(a) During this regional meeting, delegations from 16 Caribbean countries took the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding future funding of the Demography Unit in the ECLAC Port-of-Spain Office. Participants "paid tribute to the work carried out by the Unit.... and urged ECLAC/CDCC and UNFPA to take note of their concerns and make every possible effort to provide a more lasting basis for continued technical support to the Caribbean countries by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean" (paragraph 30a, Draft Report, DSL/1).

(b) A recommendation/resolution on the subject was also presented by the Caribbean delegations and incorporated into the draft report (Conference Room Paper DSL/1).

(c) In addition, a special consultation meeting was held between UNFPA officials (Chief, Latin America and Caribbean Division, New York, and Country Director for the Caribbean) and

representatives from the Caribbean delegations. UNFPA stated that they would be willing to assist in the provision of temporary support to the ECLAC/CDCC Demography Unit, in collaboration with other donor agencies, through the Caribbean Office.

**Need for continued subregional technical cooperation
to CDCC member countries on
population and development**

Future technical cooperation needs

The situation in the CDCC member countries indicates strongly that many of these countries will continue to require external technical support in population and development. Such assistance needs to be provided on a continued and well-coordinated basis, in order for it to be effective. Examples of the kinds of activities in which such support will be required include the following:

- There are a number of population units and population councils in some of the CDCC member countries which are still relatively new and not yet fully equipped with the staff and requisite skills. These will require technical backstopping on a consistent basis for some time into the future until self reliance is achieved;
- Requests from countries for assistance in population policy formulation are only halfway towards completion. There are other requests which are still under consideration which need to be dealt with;
- The 1990-1991 census data are about to be released, countries need assistance in the analysis of the data and in the application of the results for planning purposes;
- There are other activities related to training, research and information and communication which require follow-up action to maximise the benefits from these activities;
- Countries will need assistance to carry out national activities preparatory to the United Nations 1994 World Population Conference on Population and Development. These will include the establishment and coordination of national committees to serve as focal points for national activities as well as the preparation of position papers and national population reports requested as inputs to the Conference;

- Many population-related problems such as those concerned with youth, adolescent fertility, poverty, and unemployment could be exacerbated without the inputs of an appropriate, well-coordinated population data and research programme, to ensure the adoption of an integrated population-development planning approach to these problems. The tremendous strides which have been made recently in these areas would be unlikely to be maintained without the continuity of the technical cooperation being provided by the ECLAC/CDCC Demography Unit;
- Finally, given their small sizes and resultant limited human and financial resources (coupled with the heavy emigration of relevant skills), individual Caribbean countries are unlikely to be able to achieve a level of manpower sufficient to sustain their population-related activities for a number of years to come. These countries will still require close, well-coordinated follow-up technical support to ensure achievement of their original objectives.

Member countries of the CDCC are, to a greater or lesser extent, all in need of technical support in the activities outlined above. A number of them, by virtue of their very limited financial and manpower resources, are unable to provide resources for the effective implementation of their population activities. Nor, acting on their own, are they always able to elicit the support of the donor community in respect of their own population activities. Moreover, given their special situation of very small size economies and the similarity of their population and development problems, considerable economies of scale can be realized in the delivery of technical support to these countries, through a subregionally coordinated mechanism.

Thus a very good case appears to exist for the delivery of assistance to the CDCC countries in population and development to be conducted through a regional agency, having experience and expertise in these areas.

An agency such as this, might also more easily be able to intermediate on behalf of a number of countries with a potential donor.

Population and development nexus

The ECLAC Port-of-Spain Office is, at the present time, the only regional office in the Caribbean with a capability in the field of population and development planning and it has been serving the subregion on a continuous basis over the past eight years.

Population is now recognized as an integral part of the development planning process of any country. The economic and social characteristics of most of the Caribbean countries render their economies vulnerable to external shocks, and their social systems very susceptible to internally generated disruptions. In this context, an understanding of the dynamics of population-social-economic interaction and the projection of demographic trends are essential to the processes of economical and social planning.

All of these issues require analysis which takes explicit account of the population dimension. They emphasize the need for important strategic, economic and social frameworking, in which the population factor may be central. They emphasize the need for the improved integration of population planning into socio-economic planning. Such an integrated approach to the problems of development is strongly reflected in the work of ECLAC, in its scholarly advocacy of the need for an integrated approach to achieving social equity and sustainable development. Such an approach is also relevant and applicable to the increasingly difficult situations which Caribbean countries will be facing in coming years.

Recommendations/plan of action for consideration by CDCC

Taking into consideration the official response received from the UNFPA, whereby it is indicated that no regional or subregional funds are currently available due to a resolution of its Governing Council, the following appear to be the only alternatives available to member governments to maintain continuity in the population and development work programme of the subregion:

(a) Formulate a technical cooperation project proposal on the subject of population and development and request ECLAC to undertake the necessary representations to multi and bilateral donors to elicit the necessary funding. It should be understood that any such negotiation requires a minimum period of 12-18 months;

(b) Consider the possibility of having an official Caribbean government representation to UNFPA's Governing Council to obtain an exception to the provision of funds for the subregion;

(c) Consider the possibility of including the subject of population and development in ECLAC's regular work programme. In this respect, the CDCC should bear in mind that this inclusion will have an effect on the overall setting of priorities originally identified by CDCC and approved by ECLAC as a whole, and also that the approval of higher United Nations bodies will have to be sought before arrangements can be effected;

(d) As a partial "bridging" mechanism towards a more lasting solution, consider:

- i. Taking advantage of ECLAC's proposal to provide six work-months on a short-term basis for extension of the demography expert's work programme in population and development in 1993; and/or
- ii. On the basis of indications received from the UNFPA at the special consultation meeting held during the Saint Lucia Regional Population and Development Conference, approach UNFPA with a view to eliciting temporary support for programme activities through that agency's Caribbean Office.



