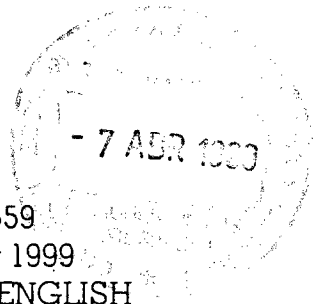
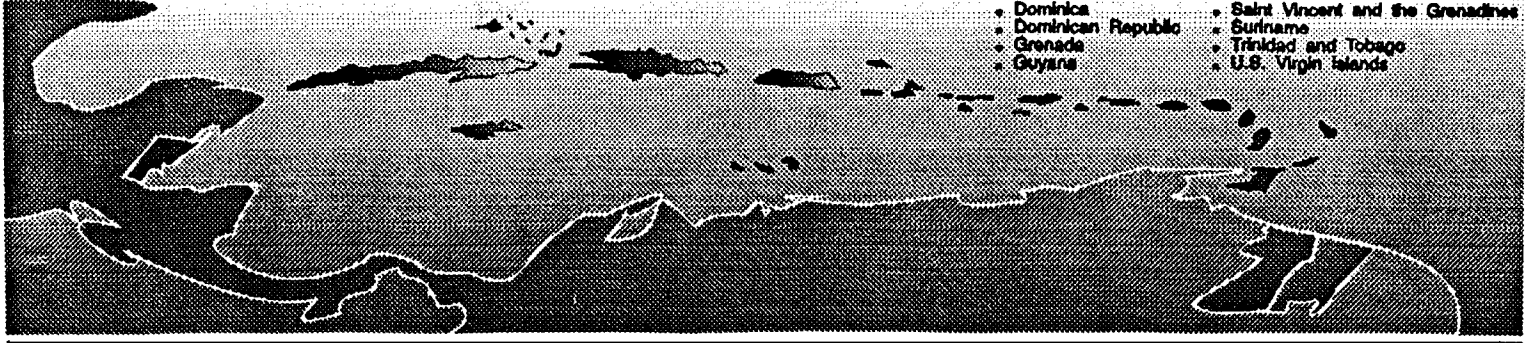




- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Br. Virgin Islands
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Montserrat
- Netherlands Antilles
- Puerto Rico
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinidad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



GENERAL
 LC/CAR/G.559
 26 February 1999
 ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF
 THE SECOND CARIBBEAN SUBREGIONAL TELECONFERENCE
 OF THE BOARD OF PRESIDING OFFICERS
 OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN
 IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN





REPORT OF
THE SECOND CARIBBEAN SUBREGIONAL TELECONFERENCE
OF THE BOARD OF PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE
ON WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

19 February 1999

Agenda item 1:
Call to order

The call to order of the teleconference began at 10:00 a.m. and was completed at 10.15 a.m. by Ms. Asha Kambon. To allow for full participation, guidelines were given to participants, which included proper identification procedures. In attendance at the teleconference were: Ms. Marva Alleyne, Director of the Women's Affairs, Barbados; Ms. Vivienne Daflaar de Leander Deputy Director of the Department of Welfare, Family and Humanitarian Affairs and Ms. Ann Phillips, The Netherlands Antilles; and Sra. Ana Milagros Martinez, External Relations Department of the Federation of Cuban Women, Cuba.

Agenda item 2:
Welcome

Ms. Len Ishmael, Director, Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), welcomed participants and indicated that ECLAC was pleased to host the teleconference which was viewed as an important event in the preparatory process for the Mid-term Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The assurance was given that the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, within the context of its resources, would provide the support required with respect to the issues, which were being addressed in the meeting's agenda.

Agenda item 3:
Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without any changes being made by participants.

Agenda item 4:
Report on the twenty-seventh Meeting of the Presiding Officers
of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean,
San Salvador, El Salvador, 2-4 December 1998.

Ms Vivienne Daflaar de Leander of the Netherlands Antilles, presented her report on this meeting. She noted that both Presiding Officers for this meeting, from the

Netherlands Antilles and Barbados, who were charged with liaising with the English-speaking Caribbean, found that the time frame between the two previous Board Meetings too short to do so with all their assigned countries. She noted that the ECLAC Santiago Office, has advised that all member States had not completed the questionnaire (relevant to the Directory of National Machineries) and that more statistical information, especially on women and gender related projects, was needed. Further, the Presiding Officer asked that all countries complete the questionnaire for dispatch to ECLAC, Santiago. The Netherlands Antilles, Barbados and ECLAC's Social Affairs Officer, offered to assist in this matter.

Some of the findings, as analysed from those countries which had submitted questionnaires, indicated the need for the following: women's desks in all member States; seminars and workshops on planning; research on women's income; a women's seminar for Parliament; follow-up work to Beijing; and more use of radio and television programmes to promulgate awareness of women's issues.

Discussion

Ms. Kambon informed the conference that the following theme for the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women had been agreed upon at the Board Meeting: Gender Equity- Foundations for a Just and Equitable Society. The meeting was reminded that both the mid-term reviews of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Regional Plan of Action would be formulated in a parallel manner, thus avoiding duplication of resources on the part of governments.

Also noted was the fact that recommendations were made for the advancement of gender mainstreaming and gender equity in the annotated agenda of the December 1998 meeting. Ms Daflaar de Leander promised to distribute to participants a written copy of the report, which she had presented.

Agenda item 5: Twenty-eighth Meeting of the Presiding Officers to be held in the Caribbean

At the San Salvador meeting, informed Ms. Kambon, the Board of Presiding Officers took the decision to meet twice annually. Meetings had been held in various subregions of the Latin American and Caribbean region. This was in an effort to facilitate all countries, especially those for which the cost of and time spent travelling to Santiago proved to be problematic.

Two meetings have been planned for 1999, one for April (to be held in the Caribbean) and the other in November (to be held in Santiago). The hope was expressed that a Caribbean country would host the earlier of the two meetings. In this respect,

Barbados was suggested as the probable host for the April meeting. The Barbados representative was reminded that there was little cost to hosting this meeting since the host country needed only to provide the meeting site. The Board Members paid their own way and documentation was made available by ECLAC, Santiago which serviced the meeting. The ECLAC Port of Spain Office would provide any back up technical assistance that might be required.

Ms. Marva Alleyne of Barbados requested that a decision on this agenda item be delayed to give her time to receive a response from her Permanent Secretary, which she felt was imminent. The tentative date for this meeting was suggested as 26-30 April 1999.

Sra. Ana Milagros Martinez reminded the meeting that Cuba as well as the Netherlands Antilles had hosted such meetings in the past and offered to host a Board Meeting possibly in the year 2000 as her country was already committed to supporting other meetings scheduled for 1999. Cuba regretted being unable to act as host on this occasion.

Agenda item 6: Eighth Session of the Regional Conference

In her report to the meeting, Sr. Ana Milagros Martinez suggested that for the next session, discussion papers should be faxed to countries before the conference. She reported that Cuba would present a paper on gender equity within the context of human rights. She indicated that Cuba felt that there was room for an analysis of equity and its various linkages to culture and family relations, etc., which would encompass the Beijing issues. She informed the conference that Cuba would be co-presenters on the topic of gender equity with Mexico and that from her understanding the structure of the previous conference would be retained.

Discussion

Ms. Kambon thanked Cuba for their concise report and informed the conference that at the seventh session, in Mar del Plata, presentations had been made by countries on issues related to the Platform for Action, such as, women in decision-making; and the elimination of violence against women. These papers had been discussed by working groups, which formulated positions on these issues. She expressed the hope that there would be greater participation from the Caribbean at the eighth session, particularly in the form of contributions to papers and the presentation of same. This was one way to strengthen the presence of the subregion. Note was made that, so far, only Cuba had volunteered to make presentations and that there was still time for the other Board Members from the Caribbean to do so. This was seen as especially important in light of the comments in the past regarding the perceived Latin focus of previous meetings.

Ms. Alleyne, Barbados, although in agreement with this statement which was endorsed by Cuba, suggested that more time was needed to prepare a position paper and that a core of experts was needed to assist in this process. She, therefore, suggested that a subregional consultation should take place in preparation for this and indicated Barbados' interest in preparing a paper on human rights.

In response, Ms. Kambon recommended that, firstly, perhaps Barbados and the Netherlands Antilles should collaborate, both having shown some interest in this topic and, secondly, that all issues of concern to the Caribbean, be integrated into the papers being prepared on human rights and gender equity.

The representative of Cuba said that all comments and inputs from the Caribbean for integration into papers to present a Caribbean view at the meeting would be welcomed.

Barbados emphasized the need to formulate guidelines to make the paper useful and that specific aspects of gender equity and human rights needed to be identified for inclusion in the paper.

In light of the reported high level of non-response to telephone communication by ECLAC, Santiago, from the Caribbean subregion, regarding the questionnaire on the National Machinery, the Netherlands Antilles noted the importance of the current Board Members communicating with all Caribbean member States to obtain their views. It was suggested that Cuba, the Netherlands Antilles and Barbados, with the assistance of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, could engage in the process of data collection and liaising with the other Caribbean countries. It was decided that Cuba, Barbados and the Netherlands Antilles would, among themselves, decide which of the countries they would adopt.

Ms. Ann Phillips, the Netherlands Antilles, indicated that preliminary work was already being pursued on the issue of Women and Economy - i.e., women in entrepreneurship - and the Netherlands Antilles were willing to make inputs on this topic and to inform other countries on the findings. This topic could also be accommodated within the topic of human rights and gender equity. Ms. Phillips indicated that the Netherlands Antilles does not possess full knowledge of or the expertise on this topic and would, therefore, welcome inputs from other Caribbean countries.

Barbados indicated that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was also doing work in this area and further advised that the Plan of Action for Poverty Eradication which emanated from the October 1996 Ministerial Meeting held in Port of Spain, Trinidad, could provide additional information on this topic.

Ms. Kambon reminded participants that topics chosen must be kept within the theme of the Conference and acknowledged that Mr. Ernesto Ottone, Secretary of the Commission, had spent time on the issue of Women and Economy and Equity and, therefore, it was an appropriate one. A modality could be considered for the fleshing out of this topic as a paper for presentation at the eighth session of the Regional Conference. It was further suggested, and agreed upon, that the issue be raised at the next full Board Meeting.

Agenda item 7:

Beijing Mid-term Review - the Caribbean Subregional Preparatory Process

With regard to this matter which arose out of the last Board of Presiding Officers Meeting, Ms. Kambon noted the discussion of the process of the Beijing review. ECLAC had a responsibility to ensure that governments were prepared for the process and therefore, a three-pronged approach to the review was now being prepared.

First, questionnaires were sent to Caribbean Ambassadors to the United Nations Missions in New York for transmission to focal points. To facilitate the timely analysis and data collection required of the questionnaire, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, also sent copies to the focal points. The date for completion is 30 April 1999. Secondly, to further assist in this preparatory process, ECLAC will host three regional technical level meetings bringing technical officers together in small groups. The subregion was divided into three groups based on language and geography to facilitate this process. The countries are grouped as follows:

Group 1: Belize, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Suriname, Netherlands Antilles, Aruba, Puerto Rico and Cuba. Suggested host, Cuba.

Group 2: Anguilla, Cayman Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, United States Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Jamaica, and the British Virgin Islands. Suggested host, Jamaica.

Group 3: Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Suggested host, Trinidad and Tobago.

Formal requests for the hosting of the meetings to the respective countries will be soon dispatched.

Thirdly, a ministerial level meeting will be hosted by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in collaboration with other supporting agencies in September 1999, Port of Spain, to review the subregional report and the extent of implementation of the Plan of Action in the Caribbean. It will also serve to prepare for future meetings, towards the culmination of the review process.

Discussion

Cuba indicated that it had received the questionnaire and was already working to complete same. Ms. Milagros Martinez noted that Cuba will attend the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting, 1-19 March 1999, and suggested that this time could be used by participants from the Caribbean subregion to meet to further discuss these issues. Ms. Ann Phillips also informed of her attendance at that meeting from 12 to 19 March and endorsed this idea. Ms. Kambon promised to inquire about the participants from the Caribbean subregion who would be in attendance at this meeting and the possibility of conducting a caucus during the meeting. Cuba also suggested that the technical meeting take place at the end of March or in April in light of people's attendance at the CSW.

Ms. Kambon further stated that the scheduled September 1999 meeting, carded to be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, would address initiatives to further the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. This would be the last ministerial meeting to be held before the Mid-term Review. It would be used as a preparatory meeting for the eighth Regional Conference on Women, as well.

The representative of Cuba informed the meeting that she understood that the eighth session of the Regional Conference would be held in the first quarter of 2000 and not the last as had been considered at the last Board Meeting.

The teleconference closed with the usual courtesies.

.

.

.

.

