

Caribbean Subregional Review of WSSD+5
2 September 1999
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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**REPORT OF THE
CARIBBEAN SUBREGIONAL REVIEW OF THE
WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (WSSD)+5**

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The Meeting on the Caribbean Subregional Review of the World Summit for Social Development+5 (WSSD+5) was held on 2 September 1999 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: (a) to review the status of the implementation of the Programme of Action (POA) of the WSSD, convened in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1995; and (b) to assist member States of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) in preparing for the special five-year review of that POA by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000.

Attendance

The meeting was attended by the following member and associate member countries: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Also present were representatives from other United Nations organizations, regional and national organizations and from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

Opening

The Director of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, secretariat of the CDCC, Ms. Len Ishmael, welcomed participants to the Caribbean's second regional meeting to discuss the implementation of the Programme of Action of the WSSD. She informed that the first of the region's two meetings was convened by ECLAC at the ministerial level, in collaboration with a number of other agencies in 1997 in Port of Spain. At that meeting, attention was focused specifically on the issue of poverty, one of the critical elements of the POA. The outcome of the meeting was the first Regional Directional Plan of Action for Poverty Eradication in the Caribbean.

She outlined that the objective of the meeting was to review the broad scope of the POA of the WSSD, and to specifically engage in detailed analysis of four of its critical areas: employment, social integration, poverty eradication and the enabling environment.

The Director stated that ECLAC was mandated by the resolutions of the General Assembly, to facilitate the review process with its member States and that this meeting was one in a series which the secretariat had convened in order to fulfil that mandate. The Director noted that the objective of convening the meeting was to review the process of the WSSD+5 implementation and report on issues of particular relevance to the Caribbean subregion. She felt

that there were sufficiently compelling differences which set the Caribbean subregion apart, making it unique, different and special in its own way.

She concluded by highlighting the fact that the outputs of the deliberations would form part of the inputs to the deliberations of the Commission for Social Development and Preparatory Committee which are both preparatory events to the Special Session of the General Assembly in the year 2000. The recommendations from the meeting would provide a focus for continued efforts in addressing the area of social development.

Feature address

Presentation on the overview of the process of follow-up to the WSSD Copenhagen Programme of Action

The feature address was presented by Ms. Faith Innerarity, Director, Social Security, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Sport, Jamaica, in her capacity as Vice Chairman of the United Nations Commission for Social Development. Her presentation entitled **Towards Future Action for Social Development in the Caribbean Subregion: A Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the WSSD POA**, was divided into two sections. Part I provided an overview of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development in relation to the promotion of greater social equity and equality. Part II examined some policy options to be adopted if greater success was to be achieved towards the creation of more inclusive societies.

Ms. Innerarity argued that progress towards achieving the goal of “a society for all” established at Copenhagen had been very uneven. Advances had been achieved in some areas and setbacks in others. Among the major underlying factors were the economic difficulties being experienced, especially in developing countries, many of which were related to the rise of global capitalism. Globalization of the world economy had created opportunities for the development process but also social hazards, such as unstable labour markets, impoverishment, and increased marginalization of individuals and groups. She stated that within the context of increasing interdependence between economic and social issues, efforts at the local, national and international levels were needed to minimize the negative effects of globalization. There was also a need for cooperation between State and non-State actors, including transnational corporations, private institutions and civil society organizations. All actors, particularly international financial bodies should consider the social consequences of their actions.

Ms. Innerarity also focused on poverty as a root cause of social exclusion. In that regard, examination of the link between economic and social development was considered vital. It was further argued that the attainment of social equity and harmony was hampered by the existence of a range of social inequalities which must be overcome by taking cognizance of historical factors and broadening the scope of opportunities for all social groups. Violence, crime and illicit drugs were central factors in social disintegration and should be addressed if social integration was to be achieved.

She also stated that there was need to enhance national capacities to monitor and evaluate the progress achieved in implementing the specific Commitments of the Summit. The collection,

evaluation and use of data should receive priority attention. For purposes of comparison and assessment, uniform national reporting systems, including both format and time schedules, should be developed. There was a need for specific performance indicators relating to Commitments of the Summit. She identified some issues to be investigated which included the following: rural/urban dichotomies; the role of the informal sector in employment, particularly youth employment; the importance of micro-level approach; gender issues; and partnerships with civil society.

Review and appraisal of the subregional implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action

Opening remarks

Ms. Sonia Cuales, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC/CDCC, informed the meeting of the following social development issues in the Caribbean subregion since the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, held on 6-12 March 1995.

She noted the alarming increase of crime and violence and, in this regard, a noticeable decrease in the age of offenders. Increased incidence of domestic violence in the Caribbean was reported as well.

The spread of HIV/AIDS was observed as posing social, as well as economic, problems which caused an economic drain in society since affected persons dying from the disease belonged to the age group of 25-35 years. Involvement in drug abuse and drug trafficking was seen as affecting the development of young people.

In terms of demography it was reported that Caribbean societies were seeing a growing population of older persons, while intraregional labour migrants and a significant number of return migrants (particularly in Haiti and in Saint Lucia) needed special social services, which had put extra pressure on already drained available resources. In certain countries poor children were placed in private homes to do domestic work, rather than attend school. Concern was reported with regard to the impoverished banana farmers and their families.

Ms. Cuales also identified some areas where new inroads had been made, notably the increased political participation of women, a growing commitment to address the dearth of data to facilitate policy-making, the initiation of institutional reform in some countries, for example in the health and education sectors, and the progress of poverty assessments being carried out in several countries.

Country reports

The following countries reported on the initiatives taken and the constraints encountered in following up on the WSSD Copenhagen Programme of Action:

Haiti

The issue of poverty was of grave importance to the country. Haiti's approach had been to implement both short-term and long-term strategies, and emergency programmes. The long-term strategies included the rehabilitation and increase of national production, an increase in employment and an increase in agricultural production. Its best practice was to include beneficiaries in the execution, implementation, follow-up and action of these programmes. It was reported that the main constraint faced by the country had been the lack of financial resources.

Barbados

Some of their initiatives taken post-Copenhagen included, *inter alia*, the fostering of social integration and the promotion of productive employment. In developing a strategy for poverty eradication, Barbados established the following:

- (a) A poverty eradication committee;
- (b) A poverty alleviation fund;
- (c) A monitoring committee to assess the progress of children in Barbados;
- (d) An urban development commission;
- (e) A rural development commission.

Government facilitated the establishment of two hostels, one for battered women and one for fire and flood victims.

The following constraints on social development were reported:

- The small size of the economy of Barbados
- The high numbers of unattached youth
- The need to review and develop legislation with respect to social development
- The large populations of AIDS and substance abuse victims
- Globalization and trade liberalization

The initiatives were as follows:

- To develop accurate monitoring/assessment tools for poverty
- Gender planning
- To encourage the media to focus more on education and accurate reporting, rather than sensationalizing the news
- To increase employment opportunities

Bahamas

While there was little evidence in Bahamas of absolute poverty, there were pockets of poverty, which had been targeted through amendments to the local constitution. Also, there had been an increase in social services aimed at moving away from poverty. Unemployment had also

been reduced, and attempts had been made to create an environment conducive to investors. Other initiatives had been to establish national policy for older persons; to establish a council for monitoring older persons; to implement an act to regulate residential care facilities/establishments. In all of this, two main constraints were faced: (1) lack of funding for social development, and (2) limitations to establish collaboration with NGOs to alleviate poverty.

Trinidad and Tobago

As part of its initiatives, a Ministerial Council of Social Development aimed at promoting collaboration among organizations and a Civil Council of Social Equity was established. Considered as its best practice was the initiation of a Partnership Programme (“Adopt a Community”) to engage communities in their own development. This programme incorporated a range of organizations that helped to implement the communities’ plans. One of the main constraints, related to the issue of collaboration of government agencies, was that bureaucracy decreased the understanding of poverty at the community level, and as such it was difficult to find agencies willing to fund the same issues that the communities wanted to address. Nevertheless, Trinidad and Tobago had taken steps to increase media participation and the involvement of civil society.

Anguilla

This country reported that since 1995, the following initiatives had been taken:

- Expansion of productive employment
- Social integration and services for all
- A commitment to equal education and health care for all
- Public sector and health reform
- A social needs assessment completed in 1998
- A new and better working definition of "poverty", in relation to the country
- Human resource development and the implementation of substance abuse programmes
- A review of the children’s bill and other government policy relating to women and employment
- A review of data collection and tools for analysis

Montserrat

Very important to Montserrat was the issue of housing needs. This had been the main area of focus for government. As a result of the growth of the population of the older persons displaced in the evacuation practices from south to north of the island, recreational facilities and two new homes for the older persons were built. Also, homes for the mentally challenged and a centre for rehabilitation were established. The country was in the process of reviewing its social welfare policy to ensure that the needy benefited fully.

Saint Lucia

This country reported that it had not made any inroads into establishing a systematic programme to implement the Programme of Action on poverty eradication, a sign as to the number of problems faced, to date, in its efforts. The main constraint faced was the absence of an appropriate institutional framework within which strategies could be coordinated. There had also been a lack of employment focus for persons with special needs. Nevertheless, as a first step to establishing a poverty eradication plan, a poverty assessment study was conducted. Also, with respect to the banana crisis, an impact study was done so as to develop a social recovery programme to address specific needs of farmers and their families. Saint Lucia reported that it was in its formative stage of establishing a Skills Development Centre to address the direct needs of the employment sector.

With respect to social integration, however, there had been some progress reported. Initiatives included the establishment of a Social Reform Commission and of a cultural policy attempting to integrate culture into the whole policy development and formulation arena.

Antigua and Barbuda

There were emerging trends in this country that needed special consideration, such as domestic violence and the orphans it produced, the question of substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and the increasing numbers of “middle class” older persons.

Guyana

This country’s constraints to social development were the limited human resources available to assist with implementing projects, and the associated costs of implementing these services. It was realized that the programmes that were implemented earlier should have been continued over a period of time so as to facilitate proper evaluation.

Jamaica

The quest for social development was of extreme importance to this country, and has engendered a certain level of impatience throughout its population. With respect to poverty eradication, civil society played a crucial role in poverty assessments and a National Poverty Eradication Plan, approved by Parliament in 1995, had reduced by half the number of persons living below the poverty line in certain communities. It also aimed to promote economic and social growth and development.

With respect to the expansion of productive employment, the matter of training was seen as critical to improving the employment potential of workers. Entrepreneurs needed to undertake ongoing training so as to keep abreast of technological advancements.

In the area of social integration, a universal scheme was implemented to provide coverage to everyone without any form of discrimination. There had been provisions made for the indigent.

Suriname

It was reported that considerable emphasis had been placed on areas of sustainable growth and development of population, especially older persons and the poor. In so doing, the Government of Suriname had restructured social policy and improved social services, promoted structural improvements and development of living conditions at both community and regional levels. The Government also took initiatives to reduce unemployment, such as training for job seekers and micro-entrepreneurs and the creation of specific funds to provide support to those entrepreneurs facing financial constraints.

With respect to social integration, Suriname targeted several groups within the population through: the execution of projects aimed at development and protection; policy reformulation to promote involvement of certain groups within society; providing technical assistance in the form of personnel; education and training; collaboration with international and other organizations.

Netherlands Antilles

It was reported that Central Government's original attempt to tackle the social problems of the islands indirectly by focusing on economic projects had proved futile. As such, the representative of the Netherlands Antilles reported that there was a new and more proactive plan in place aimed at integrating the economic policy process with social policy development and social integration.

In this context he noted that the Central Government would encourage decentralization of social development planning and establish national systems to monitor the relationship between economic planning and social development.

In this regard, the main obstacle encountered had been the lack of sufficient social policy instruments, which presented some measure of difficulty to policy makers in channeling economic development in the right direction.

Decentralization and stimulation of local social development was considered to be the national government's strategy in dealing with the issue of poverty. With the aim of empowering marginalized groups with the skills necessary to play an active role in the policy of local and central governments, these governments called for:

- Institutional transparency and accountability
- The participation of civil society and local private organizations in social and economic policy-making and evaluation of government
- The implementation of a poverty eradication monitor at both national and central levels to monitor the output of local poverty eradication policies

In attempting to address the high levels of unemployment, the Government planned to focus on, inter alia, job-training, human resource monitoring and new labour and social security regulations.

Presentations

Poverty eradication

In his paper entitled **Poverty in the Caribbean**, Dr. Edward Greene, Consultant, Pan American Health Organization-World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), Washington, D.C., examined the poverty issues in the Caribbean based on the existing evidence. Dr. Greene reported that many studies had been undertaken and several poverty alleviation programmes initiated, and that regional and international organizations continued to collaborate with national governments and civic society groups in implementing such relevant programmes supported by appropriate economic and social policies. He stated that the main emphasis of these policy responses was to establish specific mechanisms aimed at reducing the inequities the poor faced in accessing opportunities that would increase their chances of getting out of poverty. With a broad definition of poverty as “insufficient resources for an adequate standard of living”, Dr. Greene admitted that this definition required qualification, since poverty might be an absolute or relative condition.

Dr. Greene acknowledged the fact that poverty reduction and issues related to equity were multidimensional in scope. His paper, therefore, provided linkages between poverty and education, health, labour markets, gender relations and ethnicity. In taking an in-depth look at such linkages and associated issues, generally, Dr. Greene's results supported existing studies that showed that poverty was more prevalent among those with less schooling and formal training, the malnourished, the unemployed and the marginalized ethnic groups. In this context his basic recommendations were as follows:

- (a) With respect to education and health, there should be investments in human capital, along with interventions by governments to ensure that public resources were directed to subsidize those most in need;
- (b) Remedial action should be taken on labour market practices and strategies for increasing access to the segmented labour markets through training programmes and other incentive schemes;
- (c) Since gender yielded inconclusive results, greater attention should be placed on refining the measurement of the gap between male and female. However, engendering employment and work and national budgets were essential to improving gender equity;
- (d) Special programmes should be put in place to enhance the skills of poor youth. Such programmes were of crucial importance since the major sources of poverty among youth were lack of education and very high unemployment rates.

Women and poverty

Ms. Alicia Mondesire presented a paper on **Gender Issues in Poverty Analysis in the Caribbean**. The author made reference to the globalization phenomenon, especially with

respect to trade liberalization, which has had the effect of increasing poverty in the Caribbean. The paper focused on:

- The reasons advanced for using a gender filter in poverty analysis;
- Gender related trends in access to certain resources that relate to poverty;
- Poverty reduction strategies in use;
- Issues to consider in the way forward

She noted that there had been recent skepticism concerning the addition of a gender aspect to poverty, i.e., that female heads of households (FHHs) were more prone to poverty than male headed households. Investigations, however, have indicated that in the social condition defined as poverty, there were real and distinct gender gaps. There was, in some cases, a confusion in the understanding of poverty terminology which was basic to the data collected, for example, the term “head of household” was due to an inherent assumption that the breadwinner in a family was the head. Many times, the male would be labeled the breadwinner when in fact the female was the main provider. In spite of the lack of economic contribution, the person questioned would still view the male as the “head of household”. This could result in an inaccurate picture of the poverty landscape due to poor communication of terms. In spite of this the data showed very gender specific biases. On a similar theme, the presenter advised that restraint should be shown when using information, such as household data and other analytical methods, some of which did not incorporate differential access to the resources within a household, which might be gender dependent.

In the work force participation, stereotyping was evident where women were disproportionately represented in certain sectors. In the education system, there was an increasing problem of young girls dropping out of the system and lower performance levels at the earlier stages of education. This bias continued in the housing sector, where both the quality and number of houses accessed by FHHs were lower than that of their male counterparts (in some cases, ethnic origin played a part in determining the standard of housing obtained). In spite of this, there was on average, a larger family size within FHHs than for the male counterpart, which usually correlated with greater deprivation for respective individuals.

However, in spite of all this the use of gender as an independent predictor of poverty status is not advised since other circumstances may contrive to obscure the real picture.

One delegate recommended that note should be taken of the fact that there were different ways of defining the “poverty line”. In this regard she said that in whichever way it was defined, female heads of households were more likely to be found below the poverty line.

Useful indices that were being promulgated were the United Nations Development Programme “Human Poverty Index” (UNDP/HDI) and Gender-Related Development Index. These looked beyond economic needs and examined other factors, such as gender empowerment, gender development, life expectancy and capabilities. These have paved the way for the notion of “human” poverty as opposed to “income” poverty. These have proved useful for gender analysis since they attempted to unearth the psychological processes involved in poverty, for example, the coping mechanisms in males vs. females and other psychological effects that

underlie the male/female poverty situation. By the use of community group meetings (the so-called “focused group process”) a clearer picture emerged as to the actual state and conditions of poverty. This enabled a more comprehensive index to be postulated. Thus far, however, these indices relied on few variables and, therefore, one could obtain varied rankings for the same country depending on which was used.

In order to obtain a clearer picture of poverty within a country one should use a “gender filter”, since present data indicated that poverty was not uniform among the female and male sections of the society. A major cause of the problem appeared to be differential access to resources. In spite of the little gender disaggregated data present in the Caribbean, the region had to proceed with what it had accumulated thus far, and draw reasoned inferences. To prolong action until studies had been completed was unwise since the present situation was dynamic and serious enough to warrant immediate attention.

In order to arrest the problem of poverty, especially gender-related, data needed to be routinely gathered for a clearer picture to emerge and to tackle the issue of gender inequality. Further, macro-policy and institutional biases that perpetuated poverty, e.g., little spending on empowerment, needed to be restructured and form part of the mainstream planning within government ministries. Strategies should direct efforts to resource access, participatory planning and freedom from psychological stress.

Poverty reduction strategies should be judged on whether they had contributed to altering the structure of income inequality and the perpetuation of these structures. Coupled with this was the need for proper redistributive strategies of the resources of the society, which if not addressed, would continue to hamper any attempt at poverty eradication.

Productive employment

Mr. Reynold Simons, Senior Specialist, Employment and Labour Market Policies, International Labour Organization (ILO) Caribbean Office, Port of Spain, presented a paper entitled **Globalization and Employment in the Caribbean – A Review of Labour Market Policies in the Nineties in Light of the Commitments of the World Summit for Social Development**. This presentation examined the development of employment and policies concerned with such in the Caribbean since the Copenhagen Summit in 1995.

Mr. Simons noted that the economies of Caribbean States were subjected to rapidly increasing pressures from the globalization process which included:

- Changing demands for commodities and services;
- The global system demanding new production and competing strategies;
- The uncertain nature of capital flows.

These, he said, served to determine the type of policies and strategies that were promulgated on the labour and employment sectors. The Caribbean nations needed to make use of the opportunities provided while being constrained by geographic size, lack of human resources, limited capital and very small market shares.

Most Caribbean economies adopted economic policies of financial deregulation of their monetary systems, the principles and conventions associated with free trade, and some privatization of government industries, all with varying levels of impact. Focus remained on macroeconomic stability and fulfilling the conditions of Structural Adjustment Programmes. Generally there was a decrease in unemployment and an increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, Mr. Simons noted that the significant increase in the informal sector indicated that employment created was characterized by low productivity, low income and low social protection. In the formal sector, the increase in outsourcing of work to subcontractors and the increase in contract work also made for decreasing job security and social protection.

In spite of the adopted economic policies, the hope for a large decrease in unemployment did not materialise due to:

- (a) The level of surplus labour that was created by aforementioned policies;
- (b) Lack of local entrepreneurship to take advantage of the opportunities created;
- (c) Lack of systems to allow for transition;
- (d) The nature of the productive units within the countries, which tended to have some protection or special incentives accorded to them.

Hence unemployment remained in the double digits with a disproportionate percentage of young people and a gender bias, showing disproportionately more women unemployed.

To counteract some of the above effects and to attempt to ascertain future conditions, labour market policies revolved around education and skills training, labour market information and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. However, implementation remained a problem since policy development, decision-making and human resources were scattered throughout various agencies. To a large extent, even the ministries of labour were sidelined from the general processes.

Mr. Simons continued to explain that in the context of the Caribbean situation, certain issues had continued to assume prominence and needed to be properly dealt with to ensure a stable labour situation. These included:

- (a) The urgent need to formalize a definition of unemployed, the absence of which had resulted in figures that were highly variable, depending on the source and this hindered planning and policy development.
- (b) The education system, which was not yet coupled to the demand of the labour market, whereby jobs became available; there were no qualified citizens to assume the positions. In addition, graduates from the education system did not get the returns expected from their performance in the system, which had led to migration in many instances. Unemployment among youths had remained above 30 per cent in most countries. There was a prevalent and not

unsubstantiated view, that the labour market in the Caribbean would be unable to absorb the demands placed on it by that group.

(c) The issue of gender bias still remained a problem in some countries with persistent traditional social norms and lack of support services both combining to keep women's participation in the work force lower than that of their male counterparts.

While the private sector had become increasingly active, several constraints at the levels of administration, policy and implementation still inhibited its full potential to alleviate the unemployment situation. Mr. Simons continued to say that Export Processing Zones had been increasingly ineffective since they had not been able to forge economic linkages which integrated the manufacturing and services sectors.

In recognition of the above, the strategies suggested below have realized the inadequacy of relying solely on macroeconomic policy to solve the problems of unemployment, while acknowledging that labour market policies should be integrated into the macroeconomic framework for positive reinforcement. Taking into account the thrust of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the following recommendation was made:

That Caribbean nations should be encouraged to devise strategies, plans, programmes and policies to:

- Achieve higher economic growth rates
- Increase productivity and efficiency within the labour sector
- Increase and facilitate the proliferation of small enterprises
- Develop social contracts and partnerships to avoid social conflicts which hamper implementation
- Increase the equitable distribution of benefits
- Strengthen institutions for policy analysis and management
- Seek participation in the global economy and regional economic integration

Social integration

Dr. Neville Duncan, Reader in Caribbean Policy Issues, University of the West Indies, Barbados and ECLAC Consultant, presented a paper entitled **Progress on Social Integration in the Caribbean: 1994-1999**. The document focused on several core areas of social integration, namely gender issues, special needs groups, ethnic populations, children and their parents/guardians and the processes and mechanisms which sought to address the issues and problems associated with these groups.

In addressing the issue of social development, Dr. Duncan reminded the meeting that institutionalized inequalities in societies were seen as impediments to social participation, and that in order to advance social and economic development, there should be cooperation among all relevant groups and partners. "The promotion of social integration entails the elimination of existing inequalities in fundamental rights and freedoms and the creation of an institutional framework at national and international levels conducive to participation and cooperation."

He stated that the governments of the region had committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (1994) and to a number of other covenants and, in so doing, had embarked on achieving a higher measure of social solidarity through legislative provision. However, in trying to establish a social agenda for the twenty-first century based on global and national progress for all groups, sustainable solutions required outward radiation of efforts. In this regard, without a widespread and institutional approach to data collection, analysis, monitoring and evaluation of social indicators, the real patterns of problems that existed among certain needy groups went unnoticed by policy makers. Dr. Duncan made an urgent call for more efficient reallocation of human and financial resources in this area, which should be recognized as being as important as macroeconomic development.

Dr. Duncan put forward a range of recommendations aimed at going beyond diagnosis and policy prescription, into the realm of strategizing for public policy, raising macro-development issues that should be built into a common policy framework and implementational plan. He saw this approach as an instrument to transform the technocratic view of policy into an autonomous empowering of policy makers to tackle obstacles in their quest to address the problems of socially excluded groups, and the problem of growth in numbers of the impoverished and disadvantaged, associated with economic growth in societies.

He concluded his presentation with the following list of recommendations:

- (a) The creation of a fully autonomous financial and technical statutory corporation, legislated to give a high degree of autonomy to the operation of reconfiguring and empowering statistical departments of units of government as they engaged in the collection of social statistics relevant to the policy process and national long-term planning. The corporation should also be responsible for supervising the monitoring and evaluation of governmental and other social programmes;
- (b) Each government should ensure comprehensive reflection in national laws of conventions and accords which they ratified and that the appropriate policy changes and monitoring mechanisms were implemented;
- (c) The construction of public education programmes;
- (d) Full implementation and immediate reflection in national budgets of the Lima Accord, agreed to at the IV Ministerial Meeting on Children and Social Policy held in Lima, Peru, in November 1998. Mechanisms should be created to ensure that the Accord was implemented;
- (e) The need to devise national estimates and a budgetary preparation schedule which would incorporate people's concerns into national policy. This was a critical step towards transforming social welfare into social development, which was necessary to sustain economic growth;

(f) The emission of an urgent call for national consultation to allocate real resources by public and private interests as a way to fully integrate special needs populations into national development activities;

(g) That governments of the Caribbean subregion sponsor a national consultation to ensure social justice for all as a means of resolving issues of racial disadvantage in achieving a dignified life, supported by the benefits of modern utilities and practices.

The enabling environment: Globalization and governance

Ms. Judith Wedderburn, Project Director, Jamaica Office of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and ECLAC Consultant, prepared the paper **The Enabling Environment: Globalization and Governance**. The paper was presented by Ms. Sonia M. Cuales of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat.

The author acknowledged the positive role of the globalization process in greatly increasing trade and capital flows and technological developments, opening new opportunities for sustained economic growth and the development of the world economy. She saw the possibilities for developing countries as many, but that an integral part of the globalization process was trade liberalization which was itself a part of a wider liberalization and economic reform process of structural adjustment programmes which many Caribbean countries have had to undergo. The World Trade Organization (WTO) and multilateral financial institutions were being challenged to demonstrate how some of their policies and programmes could be used to increase the capacity of developing countries to actually benefit from the globalization and liberalization processes rather than constrain their attempts at achieving sustainable social and economic development.

The document also stated that the rapid and often severe processes of change adjustment have been accompanied by intensified poverty, rising unemployment and social disintegration and, generally, threats to human well-being. In this scenario, the focus has to be on how these developments have negatively affected the vulnerable groups (women, children, older persons and adolescents) as demonstrated in the study. Governments have been constrained in their efforts to create and maintain "an enabling environment" conducive to social development with equity.

While acknowledging that there might have been weaknesses or errors on the part of governments, Ms. Cuales reported that constraints at both the global (globalization, trade liberalization) and national (structural adjustment programmes) levels had affected governments' efforts at ensuring that social development took place effectively and efficiently for all social classes.

She concluded that the real challenge facing Caribbean countries was how to engage in a competitive game on a playing field that was not level, while at the same time designing and implementing effective national policies which would eventually lead to sustainable economic and social development.

Working groups

The meeting then continued in working groups, each focused on the following themes: employment creation, poverty eradication and social integration. Each group was mandated to assess the obstacles for achieving each goal and to recommend steps that should be taken to overcome these obstacles. The following matrix, **The Way Forward/Recommendations**, contains the reports of the working groups and reflects relevant discussions and recommendations of the meeting.

The Way Forward/Recommendations

Issue	Obstacles	The Way Forward/Recommendations
<p>Poverty</p>	<p>Poverty was seen by some as a denial of rights. At present, social exclusion of the poor was observed as well.</p> <p>Most islands have a narrow social security system at the moment.</p> <p>The need to elaborate a specific Poverty Eradication Plan was identified for most islands. It is important to put systems in place to demonstrate how, by which means and when eradication of poverty should be achieved.</p>	<p>Countries have to look at development in terms of entitlements. Define rights and poverty in terms of access to basic social services, including health, education and employment. The exercise of effectively defining people's rights was seen as a consultative process in order to get input from those whom the policies are geared to assist.</p> <p>Countries have to revise the extent to which this could be extended to the poor and unemployed.</p> <p>There is a need to establish an entity to coordinate various elements of the Poverty Eradication Plan (PEP) and make commitments to achieve this plan. Similarly, to establish a proper institutional framework which calls for the need of an intersectoral approach. The systems in place in Barbados and Jamaica were illustrated.</p> <p>The need to provide effective budgetary provision was underscored to ensure all programmes are funded. Therefore PEP must incorporate discussions of budgets. More monitoring and social impact analysis should be undertaken to ensure that target groups actually benefit from programmes designed.</p> <p>The mechanisms to improve planning and implementation of plans need to be dynamic and response oriented. For example, collaboration mechanisms should be put in place with key research agencies, such as the University of the West Indies (UWI), the University of Guyana, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). Also, special consideration should be paid to the need for inter-island</p>

Issue	Obstacles	The Way Forward/Recommendations
		<p>collaboration so that countries could learn from each other's experiences which is, in fact, the basic mandate of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat.</p> <p>The role of CARICOM's Council on Human and Social Development (COHSOD) was emphasized and it was agreed to put pressure on CARICOM to ensure that the Council was active in this regard.</p> <p>The role of United Nations organizations was also highlighted. The work these organizations carry out in the region was commended and it was agreed that this role was critical in the process, especially with regard to providing useful linkages to the United Nations system on the whole.</p>
Employment Creation	<p>Lack of stability of the political system and prevalent civil unrest has so far hampered foreign investment.</p> <p>Lack of continuity of government programmes or projects.</p> <p>Poor management practices, for example, corruption administration and non-application of management principles prevail.</p>	<p>Parliamentary democracies in the Caribbean region should be shored up so that investors can feel secure in attempting financial projects within the region. Promotion of good governance principles needs to be advocated.</p> <p>Ruling governments need to seek and obtain consensus with the other political parties in their countries when planning meaningful and viable development projects, so that these are continued regardless of the governing political administration.</p> <p>Employers must develop and adopt benchmarks for labour, in terms of what is acceptable behaviour. Mechanisms must be designed to ensure productivity of State and private sector employees.</p> <p>Barbados has instituted a public sector reform programme in an attempt to build a social contract or partnership with the private sector, unions and government. This ensures that labour and employment policies achieve consensus, which will allow for smoother implementation.</p>

Issue	Obstacles	The Way Forward/Recommendations
	<p>Culture, habits and work attitude that have been developed over the years in the Caribbean workplace, foster low productivity.</p> <p>Education of workers is not in tandem with the needs of the present or future job market.</p> <p>Lack of social contracts and uncoordinated efforts in labour agenda.</p>	<p>The work attitude developed by Caribbean people needs correction or elimination. It is well known that Caribbean people can be productive abroad, so that systems that reward excellence and negate mediocrity and poor performance need to be instituted in the region.</p> <p>Barbados has a National Productivity Council, which examines various industries/plants etc., designs benchmarks and productivity schemes and is concerned with changing the work ethics and structures of work places for improved efficiency. It needs to be realized that the working environment has changed over the past decades, and that a restructured working environment, conducive to market demands needs to be entrenched in places of employment.</p> <p>Labour policies must involve training of workers to take into account future needs of the job market. In addition there needs to be a tighter coupling between the education system and the needs of the society.</p> <p>State needs to ensure that within the financial system, the private sector climate is “investment friendly”.</p> <p>Public Sector Reform and multisectoral collaboration to assist in social partnerships remain essential to assist both in employment generation and in the production of competitive goods and services. There must be a system for collaboration among agencies whose mandates impact on employment and labour.</p> <p>Comprehensive labour policies need to be defined. Most, if</p>

Issue	Obstacles	The Way Forward/Recommendations
		<p>not all of the Caribbean focuses on employment and jobs outside of any given labour policy. Hence the potential for conflict in plans and programmes.</p> <p>All possible avenues that supply jobs or absorb labour need to be considered in the present situation of surplus labour; thus job creation should be a multi-pronged approach and on many fronts to avoid overdependence on any one sector. In Grenada, EPZs and cottage industries are being promoted as these are expected to generate immediate and sustained employment. Certain civil groups have also been formed and function as advisers to the small business people, attempting to inculcate business knowledge and other relevant skills.</p> <p>The government needs to be the leading partner in many Caribbean nations in terms of employment generation, since the private sector is unable to deal with the surplus labour, or may not have the financial capacity to stimulate economic growth, without assistance.</p>
Social Integration	<p>Policy makers responded poorly to needs/wants of the people. Policies that are designed often do not suit their needs.</p> <p>There is a lack of political will.</p> <p>Migration tends to affect social integration and class structure.</p>	<p>Advocacy at the highest level. People need to be informed of their rights. To this end, there is need for better information dissemination in the countries. Targeting is imperative.</p> <p>Countries need to change their mindset at all levels since if there is no political will there will certainly be no improvements.</p> <p>Illegal immigrants need to be properly integrated unless they represent serious threats to the country.</p> <p>Particular attention has to be paid to non-documented migrants.</p>

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	<p>Tourism was seen to be a major determinant in the decline of the family unit since mothers were employed to work on shift systems and were therefore not at home at the times when their families would need them most.</p> <p>Decentralization of the health sector has had a negative effect on young people.</p> <p>There is also a massive migration of nurses and doctors to other countries.</p> <p>It was suggested that at present, many medical centres lack medication that is needed by the population. It was felt that many doctors are in collusion with pharmacists or they themselves own pharmacies and are intentionally not supplying the hospitals and medical centres with the drugs so that the wider population would have to source them from their drug stores.</p> <p>Several social programmes are put in place without adequate implementation modalities and culturally sensitive approaches, thus missing proper targeting and effectiveness for needy populations.</p> <p>Policies relative to indigenous people have been inadequate and poor.</p>	<p>It was recommended that women should be expected to work only on normal day shifts and that day care centres for children should be provided.</p> <p>Research has to be carried out to assess how people are affected by decentralization of the health sector and to what extent the quality of care has deteriorated in the centres.</p> <p>Government should monitor the supply and dispense of medication, such as to maintain reasonable levels of widespread availability and equal access to medication in the country.</p> <p>Social programmes need to be adequately designed monitored and evaluated to assess the impact of these programmes on the society and to ensure that they are appropriate for the culture of Caribbean societies.</p> <p>Reform of policies related to indigenous people in the Caribbean should ensure that they are fully integrated beneficiaries of social programmes in these programmes.</p> <p>Assistance should be given to NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) technically, financially or otherwise. There should also be capacity-building for organizations, using NGOs' resources.</p> <p>The population should be sensitized to the needs of other groups. There should be respect for the human rights of</p>

Issue	Obstacles	The Way Forward/Recommendations
		<p>people with disabilities. In particular, respect is commanded for the rights of the child.</p> <p>Governments have to assess the impact of the media – there is a new acculturation affecting Caribbean society.</p> <p>There should be support groups for victims, community development programmes and neighbourhood watch.</p>

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