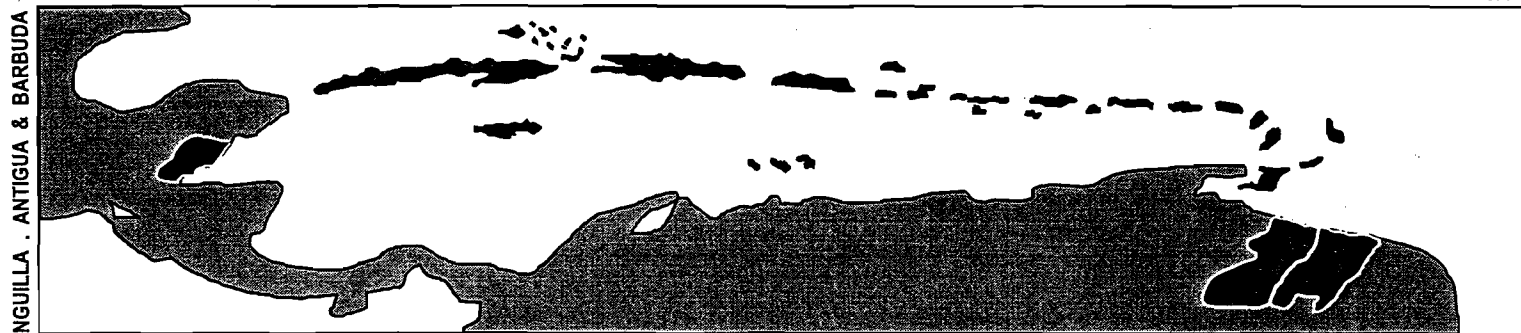


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Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting
on the ICPD+5 Process for the
Caribbean Subregion
24-25 January 2000
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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**REPORT ON THE AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING
ON THE ICPD+5 PROCESS FOR THE CARIBBEAN SUBREGION**



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

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE

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REPORT ON THE AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON THE ICPD+5 PROCESS FOR THE CARIBBEAN SUBREGION

Introduction

The first meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Population and Development for the Caribbean subregion was held 24-25 January 2000 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, at the offices of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC).

The objectives of the meeting were:

- (a) To propose a subregional approach toward fulfilment of the International conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action; and
- (b) To advise and assist governments in their participation in the Third Sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development which will meet during the twenty-eighth Session of ECLAC in April 2000 in Mexico.

The following constituted the Group: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Ms. Asha Kambon, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC/CDCC, acted as secretary to the Expert Group. (See list of participants attached.)

Agenda item 1: Opening

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat welcomed participants and thanked them for making themselves available for this important meeting. Participants were reminded of the work of the ad hoc advisory group during the ICPD+5 review and appraisal process and congratulated those who had worked hard to ensure that the Caribbean was well prepared for all stages of the preparatory process.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as follows:

1. Opening
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Review of ICPD+5 outcomes

4. Elaborate a short-term subregional strategy for the implementation of the goals agreed upon during the ICPD+5 review process
5. Review plans for the Third Sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development
6. Close

Agenda item 3: Review of ICPD+5 outcomes

In reviewing the outcomes of the mid-term review of the ICPD+5 participants sought to formulate project proposals that would address gaps and unmet needs in the subregion. It was recognized that subregionally, work in three areas of the ICPD programme were being addressed. These were: (a) Population and development strategies; (b) Adolescent and reproductive health programmes; and (c) Advocacy and Information, Education and Communication (IEC).

The following documents formed the working documents of the meeting: *The Caribbean subregional review and appraisal report on the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD+5)*; the *Report of the Subregional Meeting on Population and Development ICPD+5 Review*, held on 17-19 November 1998; the *Report on the Open-ended Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the ECLAC Sessional Ad Hoc Committee*, held in Santiago, Chile, 14-15 December 1998; *The Caribbean Plan of Action on Population and Development Follow-up to ICPD*, 28 June 1995;

The meeting took its mandate from Item 22 on page five of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) Report which, "instructed CELADE and the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean to give priority to the following activities: censuses, youth, ageing, international migration, training, geographical distribution of the population, and follow-up to the Programme of Action through the design of appropriate systems."

Participants agreed that many of the items listed under Item 22 continued to be priority areas. It was suggested that certain agencies in the subregion were taking the lead in specific actions to address some of the issues. Action regarding the 2000/2001 census was being led by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and ECLAC; and youth issues in the Caribbean by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Caribbean area office.

The meeting then examined specific issues:

Youth

It was reported that Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname had been the recipients of the UNFPA's programming thrust in the area of adolescent and reproductive health, which was observed to be service-oriented and community based. The Jamaica programme was ahead of counterpart programmes in Guyana and Suriname which, because of their size, were experiencing difficulties with respect to access to services. It was noted that the non-project territories had similar youth projects but would benefit from UNFPA support to strengthen their projects. Participants agreed that programmatic efforts needed to be strengthened for the prevention and treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). It was reported that many of the experts in the subregion expressed the view that there was a need to identify some mechanism which did more than keep record of the number of people infected by HIV/AIDS. Addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS among young persons should begin in earnest. With the aforementioned in mind, there was consensus that the mid-term review thus presented an opportunity for modification of any existing programmes.

It was observed that the campaign for HIV/AIDS prevention and education seemed to be waning. The issue of HIV/AIDS in schools and the need for a protocol on care for and management of HIV/AIDS-infected students to prevent infection caused by injury was also addressed. A policy statement on the epidemic was deemed necessary and, in general, good public health management, failing which the entire population would be at risk. In this vein, participants called for the reinstatement of 'notifiable diseases' in schools. As well, a statement at the policy level that Maternal and Child Health (MCH), AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Family Planning Services be integrated at the service delivery level in one package as part of current health reform strategies would be useful.

Participants lamented the lack of continuity of UNFPA projects. This occurred often as a result of a lack of capacity at the national level to continue the project or because the project had lost the priority which it had initially received, once donor funds came to a halt. Experts suggested that what may be needed was technical assistance to build governments' capacity to sustain project activities commenced by donors.

Despite the foregoing discussion, however, participants agreed that the essence of youth issues was being addressed by UNFPA but that the programme needed to span the entire region. Such programming should make every effort to address: youth pregnancies; gangs and violence; and the maxi-taxi/ZR Van culture. In addition, participants noted that teenage fertility statistics may be misleading as early term abortions were being "pill induced"

by the use of 'zythrotec' with its unfortunate negative side effects. Participants noted that in France 'the morning after pill' was being distributed in schools and that the impact of this on teenage fertility should be examined.

Training

Participants sensed that across the subregion the importance and relevancy of the use of socio-demographic data in policy analysis was now being recognized but not necessarily being fully utilized. It was reported that the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus was now engaged in a training course "Applied Social Statistics for Decision-Making" which was deemed useful and ought to be tailored to policy planners at the regional level to effect informed policy-making. Updated training in RETrieval of DATA for small Areas by Microcomputers (REDATAM), Statistical Application Software (SAS), Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) was seen as essential.

Ageing

The meeting was reminded of the review of the issue of the ageing which had been undertaken by the ECLAC/CDCC hosted meeting on the aged, which formed part of the mid-term review for the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in 1999. The integration of appropriate services for the aged, a recommendation from that meeting, was revisited. Dr. Jacqueline Sharpe, a member of the Trinidad and Tobago Population Council, informed the meeting that the Council had begun researching the situation of the elderly in Trinidad and Tobago and was in the process of producing a report of its findings. The study was conducted in two parts, one, by interviewing institutions which cared for the aged and secondly, those persons 50 years and over. The aim of the study was to ascertain what types of provisions were being made for the future, defined as 10 years hence.

Given a life expectancy of over 65 years, the meeting agreed that the ability of the aged to care for themselves and to continue to contribute economically was worthwhile for further analysis. The effect of their continued employment on the employment and upward mobility of youth also required attention. As well, the 'older-old', i.e. those who could no longer look after themselves were seen as an issue that demanded attention. The meeting was informed that Jamaica was engaged in a study on 'poor-relief' and the aged.

International migration

International and intraregional migration were noted as important issues for the subregion. The question of the human rights of migrants was raised. One case of particular concern was that of Haitians in the Dominican Republic.

The meeting heard of reports that Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic were being deported and that during the deportation process, access to documentation which could prove status, such as, birth certificates and passports were being denied. Children of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, it was reported, were also being denied access to schools.

A recommendation to establish a Subregional Advisory Group on Migration, which would confer with the Puebla Group – a Regional Advisory Group on Migration on issues such as these - was advanced. It was suggested that more information be secured about the work of the Puebla Group, its current activities and the necessary authority required for interaction with the Group. It was decided, however, that the social impact of internal migration, for example on female-headed households, should also be investigated.

The issue of urbanization of Caribbean populations was also deemed to warrant urgent attention. Note was made of the danger to and destruction of the environment in the name of economic development, and therefore, it was suggested that the link between Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and population and development issues should be strengthened so as to achieve a balance between economic and ecological development. This was another area proposed for consideration.

A future action that emanated from the closing session of the December 1998 meeting and captured on page 5 was "... the design of a mechanism of indicators to ensure appropriate monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action." The meeting recommended, therefore, that the expert group form a central component of that mechanism to monitor the implementation of the ICPD POA at the subregional level. At the national level a focal point could be identified. Such a person, it was felt, need not necessarily be the person with responsibility for the national census, as he/she might already be overburdened with this activity. In terms of development of specific indicators, it was felt that the Ad Hoc Expert Group could undertake work in the identification of such indicators.

Agenda item 4: Elaborate a short term subregional strategy for the implementation of the goals agreed upon during the ICPD+5 review process

Based on the review conducted of the ICPD+5 outcomes, the gaps and unmet needs identified and assessed, the meeting agreed on the following subject areas for the development and formulation of policy and project proposals at the subregional level for consideration in the short and medium term.

Adolescent/Youth

There was a need to address issues that ensured youth: (a) developed in a healthy manner; (b) were prepared to be contributors to society; and (c) did not descend into poverty. Issues, such as special education for youth and the development of structured interaction between adults and youth, needed attention. Concern was expressed for children between the ages of 10-14 years attending middle schools/Junior Secondary Schools, who were often left to their own devices and subsequently, engaged in inappropriate activities.

A review of best practices and relevant studies in the subregion would be undertaken in an effort to make recommendations for policy. The review, it was agreed, could include that of national policies, international conventions and agreements and best practices (regional and international). The target group to assist in this review would be Directors of Youth and Health Ministries, youth organizations, social planners and regional parties such as the UNFPA. Areas for review would include:

- (a) Reproductive health and reproductive rights;
- (b) Poverty;
- (c) Education;
- (d) Labour;
- (e) Employment;
- (f) A gender analysis of youth development issues i.e. employment, crime, drop-out rate, educational attainment level etc;
- (g) Crime (gangs and violence);
- (h) Headship (youth in households with diverse family structures); and
- (f) Demographic analysis

The project would seek to empower and develop youth through access to reproductive health and rights information.

Social security systems and the aged

An anomaly noted was that even though the general retirement age was 60 years, National Insurance Scheme (NIS) payments and some pensions did

not commence until 65 years and in some cases at different ages for men and women. Additionally, coverage and benefits were insufficient and thus rationalization of these systems was seen to be necessary to achieve adequacy in the provision of benefits. Therefore, a review and reform of welfare, social security systems and better human resources to manage the schemes properly in the Caribbean was needed.

Such a reform process should focus on the following:

- (a) National Insurance Schemes;
- (b) Retirement benefits;
- (c) Food stamps;
- (d) Poor relief; and
- (e) Medical benefits and health insurance schemes

It was suggested that such an undertaking could involve the convening of a meeting of experts to explore and assist governments in the formulation of proper policies in the interest of the aged. Experts would comprise directors of financial planning, social planners, pension scheme managers and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and councils on the aged. Studies would be presented and country profiles developed for discussion at the meeting. The objective of the meeting would be to arrive at consensus on recommendations regarding best practices.

Migration

The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean was commended for its completed studies on: *The Impact of Immigration on Caribbean Micro-states: the Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Saint Maarten, United States Virgin Islands (LC/CAR/G.540)*, and *A Study of Return Migration to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Territories and the British Virgin Islands in the Closing Years of the Twentieth Century: Implications for Social Policy, (LC/CAR/G.550)*. It was suggested that a further area of study could be on the effects of migration on the Caribbean family structure and patterns of socio-economic behaviour. More importantly it was felt, however, that additional work needed to address the following:

- (a) Harmonization of immigration laws (with the assistance of International Organization for Migration (IOM));
- (b) Development of a policy on international migration;

- (c) Policy on returning residents;
- (d) Reintegration of immigrants;
- (e) Brain drain;
- (f) Labour and gender;
- (g) Impact on family;
- (h) Trafficking (of migrants – commercial sex workers); and
- (i) Human rights

The geographical component of this issue would also be investigated i.e., geographical distribution of the population and the impact on socio-economic and environmental variables. Embarkation on this project was proposed pending the country reports of the 2000/2001 Census.

Participants deliberated on a methodology the Expert Group could adopt that could support the political directorate of the subregion in their pursuit of policy regarding freedom of movement in the Caribbean. A study on the reduction of barriers to intraregional migration (working, visiting) and the reorganization and harmonization of immigration laws in the Caribbean was proposed as one such approach.

Training

The group understood that Training in REDATAM and GIS was being planned by CELADE and the Expert Group looked forward to CELADE's outreach to the Caribbean. Technical assistance to ECLAC/CDCC member governments to strengthen their capacity in the use of demographic and social statistics was, therefore, proposed.

The target groups for training were policy makers, technocrats, line managers in the public service and private sector i.e. Family Planning and other NGOs.

In the current context of population and development issues (particularly the integration of population and development issues into planning) in the Caribbean, the training should strengthen the capacity of technocrats in the subregion in the following areas:

- (a) The enhanced use of demographic/social statistics;
- (b) Sensitization of population and development issues;

- (c) Project proposal writing;
- (d) Report writing;
- (e) The development of reliable, sound and valid social data;
- (f) Data collections protocols;
- (g) Analysis;
- (h) Use in policy formulation; and
- (i) SPSS, SAS, REDATAM and GIS training

It was proposed that training could be appropriately and flexibly designed for country and subgroups, creatively using new technologies and telecommunications. Collaboration could be arranged with CELADE, the University of the West Indies Distance Training and Education (UWIDITE), ISER and other like institutions and relevant experts.

The time-framework for accomplishment of these initiatives was set to coincide with ECLAC's biennium.

Agenda item 5: Review plans for the third sessional ad hoc committee
on population and development

Participants explored the possibility of convening an Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on Population and Development parallel with the ECLAC/CDCC meeting scheduled for March 2000 to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the CDCC. The timing of the meeting was of utmost importance as CDCC provided a direct link between ECLAC and the subregion and governments would have a direct input into the work of ECLAC.

The purpose of the meeting, therefore, would be to: (a) review national level post-ICPD activities; (b) set priorities at the national level; (c) obtain a mandate for future priorities in ECLAC's work programme; and (d) give direction and focus to ICPD follow-up activities.

Should funding for such a meeting become possible, the meeting should:

- (a) Seek participation of ECLAC/CDCC member countries, the UWI, CARICOM and NGOs;

(b) The agenda should take off where the 'Bahamas Consensus', left off in order to give countries a sense of progress since ICPD 1994 - what was agreed to, what has actually been done and what needs to be done;

(c) The drafting of a resolution for adoption at the Ministerial Meeting. In that regard it was suggested that such a resolution should contain the following:

(a) Note that as per page 19, 6 (vii), and closing session, page 5, of the working document in which ECLAC was mandated to followup the ICPD Programme of Action, participants agreed to adopt the following resolution:

(i) Establish systems and mechanisms for follow up to ICPD at the subregional level

(b) Call for the establishment an Advisory Ad Hoc Expert Group on Population and Development for the subregion.

(c) Detail the mandate of the expert group which would include the tasks of:

(i) Monitoring the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action;

(ii) Advising on methods to advance the process of full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action;

(iii) Advising on population and development policies and programmes in the subregion; and

(iv) Developing monitoring instruments which could take the form of reviews of country level reports, expert papers and studies, and developing indicators to measure implementation.

Participants agreed that:

(a) The composition of the Group would be open to all ECLAC/CDCC member countries; and

(b) The Group would meet annually or as was deemed appropriate.

Agenda item 6: Close

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat thanked everyone for their valued contribution to the discussions and agreed with participants that the objectives of the meeting were well met. Participants were assured of the quick disbursement of the meeting's report, preparation of the draft resolution and development of proposals which would be prepared formally for the consideration of the Ad Hoc Expert Group. It was agreed that the report of this meeting would be shared with the UNFPA Caribbean Office and CELADE for their information, among other agencies.



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