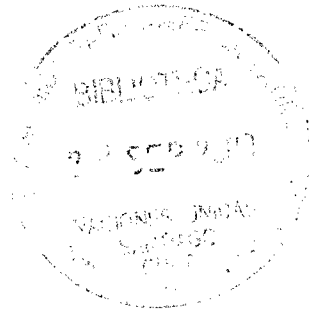




Meeting of Experts to Discuss the Establishment
of a Caribbean Digital Library on the Web
22 May 2000
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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**REPORT OF
THE MEETING OF EXPERTS TO DISCUSS THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A CARIBBEAN DIGITAL LIBRARY ON THE WEB**



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Introduction

On 22 May 2000, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), convened a one-day meeting of experts to discuss modalities for collaborating in the establishment of a Caribbean Digital Library on the Web. The meeting was held in the Conference Room of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean.

The decision to establish the Caribbean Digital Library (CDL) was based on the continuing need to increase the quantity and quality of information which is available to persons who surfed the World Wide Web for information about the Caribbean. The decision was also premised on the assumption that Caribbean librarians and information specialists working together with a common purpose could achieve a level of success which would far outstrip the sum of their individual efforts. A major outcome of this meeting was the decision taken by participants to form themselves into the Caribbean Digital Library Consortium.

Background

The Caribbean Network of Social and Economic Planning, (CARISPLAN), an earlier initiative undertaken by ECLAC, had formalized a system of cooperation to enable librarians and information specialists in the region to share bibliographic information with each other and (through the periodic publication of CARISPLAN Abstracts) with clients in the Caribbean and further afield. The objective of the CARISPLAN project was to achieve full bibliographic coverage of the published and unpublished literature of relevance to the social and economic development of the region.

The Consortium was conceived as a successor arrangement which would continue the cooperation begun under CARISPLAN, but utilize the technology of the World Wide Web as a new vehicle of information exchange.

Opening ceremony

At the opening ceremony, the Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Ms Len Ishmael, welcomed participants to the meeting, stressing in her remarks (Annex II) the necessity for organizations to retool and individuals to adapt to cope with the new demands and heightened expectations of the information age.

Information, the Director asserted, was central to the work of ECLAC and it had always been the policy, to share the information resources of ECLAC with the region. The ECLAC Ambionet Bulletin Board was one such initiative, but its effectiveness was limited by the constraints of the technology which had been available in the past. The development of the Web was, therefore, an opportunity which could not be ignored nor should it be underutilized. The Internet and other associated technologies had given a tremendous boost to the efforts of librarians and other information specialists to support the planning and decision-making of policy makers in the region with information which is timely, accurate, relevant and strategic.

The Director reaffirmed ECLAC's commitment to a regional approach to addressing the developmental challenges of the Caribbean and commended the multidisciplinary approach to the establishment of the web-based Caribbean Digital Library as an excellent concept, since it would allow the organizations to work together and actualize the benefits of this type of cooperation.

Ms Sally Montserrin, representing the National Library and Information Service Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (NALIS), in her brief remarks, welcomed participants to Trinidad and Tobago, affirmed the commitment of NALIS to the initiative and thanked ECLAC for its timely hosting of this meeting.

The meeting adopted the agenda and accepted the hours of work proposed by the Chair. See Annex I for the full agenda of the meeting. The opening session was chaired by Ms Sandra John, Chief, ECLAC Caribbean Documentation Centre.

Introduction of participants

Participants then introduced themselves, each outlining his/her expectations of the meeting and reaction to the project which was being proposed. Each participant gave a brief synopsis of current activities in their libraries or information centres, focusing, in particular, on features of their work, such as web site development and on-line catalogues, which would be of relevance to the establishment of the Caribbean Digital Library.

Participants at this initial meeting of experts had been invited from among the following:

- National information systems coordinators;
- Librarians/information specialists from regional institutions;
- Former focal points of the CARISPLAN;
- Non-governmental organization (NGO) personnel who have demonstrated an interest in electronic information access;
- Research institutions and universities;
- Caribbean Consultative Committee on Regional Information Systems (CCCRIS).

A full list of participants is available at Annex IV.

The discussion note

The Chief, Caribbean Documentation Centre, then formally introduced the concept of the Caribbean Digital Library on the Web. She referred participants to the **Discussion Note** which had been circulated to participants prior to the meeting and which gave the background to the proposal, and outlined its objectives.

The **Note** reviewed ECLAC's involvement with projects and programmes which promoted the use of technology to increase information access, in particular, the CARISPLAN network, referred to in the Introduction to this report.

The CARISPLAN modality was inevitably overtaken by advances in technology. However, the information need which the CARISPLAN network had been created to meet continued to be very real. That network had done an excellent job within the constraints of the technology which had been available at that time. However, subsequent technological developments, in particular, the emergence of the World Wide Web and its growing popularity as a vehicle for information exchange created a new collaborative context. As a result, Librarians and information specialists were now in a position to deliver a product which more closely matched the needs and expectations of users.

The Caribbean Documentation Centre was prepared to extend the CARISPLAN initiative beyond the sharing of bibliographic data to include the posting of full text documents via the World Wide Web. During the past two years, the Centre had laid the groundwork for this process by establishing a Caribbean Virtual Library located on the Web at http://www.eclacpos.org/virtual_library. The ECLAC Virtual Library, as it is currently configured, provides links to Caribbean relevant information which are already posted on the Web.

The Caribbean Digital Library on the Web would, however, extend well beyond these experimental efforts. It would be developed with the cooperation of and input from information specialists from various national systems and sectoral interests to become a comprehensive resource providing access to documents and data on subjects and sectors of importance to Caribbean development.

The full text of the **Discussion Note** is available at Annex II.

Discussion and resolution of issues

The discussion of key issues and how these might be resolved was led by Ms Audrey Chambers of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies at the University of the West Indies (UWI). At the end of the discussion, it was recommended that a small Steering Committee be established to continue to work through issues which remained unresolved at the end of the general discussion. The conclusions arrived at below are as a result of deliberations of the full meeting as well as the subsequent work of the Steering Committee.

Issues were discussed under the following headings:

- Definition of a Digital Library
- Organization and administrative structure
- Subject matter (content)
- Technical web management issues
- Participating organizations/institutions
- Copyright
- Payment and cost recovery issues
- Methods of financing
- Target audience
- Any other issues not identified above

Definition of Digital Library

The meeting:

- reviewed several definitions of the term “digital library”; and
- agreed to adopt the following working definition provided by the Digital Library Federation of the United States:

Digital libraries are organizations that provide the resources, included the specialized staff, to select, structure, offer intellectual access to, interpret, distribute, preserve the integrity of, and ensure the persistence over time of collections of digital works so that they are readily and economically available for use by a defined community or set of communities.

Vision statement

The following statement of the Consortium's vision constitutes a synthesis of similar statements submitted to the meeting:

The vision of the Caribbean Digital Library is to be recognized as the primary, authoritative, web-based source of intellectual works in, for and about the Caribbean

Organization and administrative structure

The meeting:

- agreed that ECLAC would continue take the lead role in the implementation of the Caribbean Digital Library project since the Caribbean Documentation Centre had both the resources and the expertise to do so;
- agreed that the group of information specialists present at the meeting would form the nucleus of the **Caribbean Digital Library Consortium** for the purpose of establishing the Digital Library;
- agreed that ECLAC would provide hosting services (for documents and other data), in cases where other participating organizations did not have web site capabilities;
- debated the pros and cons of establishing focal points as had been done in the case of CARISPLAN and most other regional information systems; and
- concluded that national focal points would prove useful particularly in identifying cross-sectoral documents of relevance to a particular country. However, one would need to ensure that organizations were chosen, not on the basis of any predefined criteria, but on the basis of the personal capacity of incumbent information specialists to supply "energy" to the initiative;
- agreed to establish a small Steering Committee which would continue to work on other outstanding administrative and organizational details. Representatives of the following organizations/institutions volunteered to sit on this Steering Committee:
 - Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
 - Caricom Secretariat (CARICOM)
 - Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB)

- National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (NALIS)
 - Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
 - United Nations Information Centre (UNIC)
 - Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (UWI/SALISES)
- agreed that a manual documenting all administrative procedures of the CDL would be prepared and circulated, as soon as all details of participation were worked out.

Subject matter – Content

The meeting:

- decided that the scope of the Caribbean Digital Library would be broad and comprehensive, consisting of Caribbean relevant documents and other resources, covering all subjects of importance to Caribbean development, in English, Spanish, French and Dutch, the four working languages of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC);
- agreed that in deciding whether to include an item in the Caribbean Digital Library, member institutions would be guided by the scope of the CARISPLAN Network, but the content of the Library would be extended beyond the strictly socio-economic coverage of CARISPLAN;
- agreed that the scope of ECLAC's Caribbean Virtual Library, which would gradually be replaced by the Caribbean Digital Library, should therefore be immediately broadened;
- agreed to focus on current information. Older (retrospective) documents and data would be included only where these were of exceptional significance;
- agreed that the library would be arranged under broad subject areas, with a scope note listing narrower topics which could be found under each heading;
- agreed that the CDL would be equipped with a search engine which would make searching for specific narrow topics easy, thus obviating the need for a series of subheadings;

- agreed that, as in the CARISPLAN structure, each organization would be responsible for contributing only the resources produced by their organization - this, in an effort to avoid duplication of entries;
- recommended that the first paragraph of the document could be used in lieu of an abstract. Concern was expressed about the inclusion of abstracts in each entry, since the preparation of abstracts was very time-consuming and the requirement that each entry contain an abstract or synopsis was one of the drawbacks to participation in the CARISPLAN network;
- agreed that the content should consist of intellectual work and that promotional and other ephemeral material should be excluded;
- debated the inclusion of “abstract only” items in the Digital Library. (i.e. items which were not going to be made available in full text);
- concluded that abstracts could be considered legitimate information products; and
- identified the following subject areas to be included in the Library:
 - Agriculture
 - Arts and culture
 - Economic conditions
 - Education
 - Environment
 - Finance, financial services and banking
 - Government and public administration
 - Health
 - Information and communications technology
 - Law
 - Population/demography
 - Science and technology
 - Social issues
 - Sustainable development
 - Tourism
 - Trade
 - Other subject areas of relevance to the development of the Caribbean

Technical web management issues

Mr. Dale Alexander, Computer Systems Operator at ECLAC, recommended to the meeting a list of the data elements that would be required in items contributed to the CDL. These he identified as:

- Title
- Source (i.e. name of organization which produced the material)
- Date(s)
- Universal Resource Locator (URL) (if taken from a web site)
- Organization or source of the resource
- Key words
- Abstract
- E-mail address of the contributor.

The meeting:

- agreed that resources would be accepted in any format, including, Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML), Portable Document Format (PDF), Extensible Markup Language (XML), or Moving Picture Expert Group (MPEG);
- agreed to accept the NALIS recommendation that the Dublin Core standard for bibliographic description of web resources be adopted;
- agreed that a loose system of key words be used in preference to a controlled vocabulary. A feature, recording known key words, would however be included;
- agreed to forge links with other compatible initiatives. The One World web site was suggested as one possible link;
- agreed that ECLAC would apply for the following domain name on behalf of the Consortium:
 - **caribbeandigitallibrary.org**¹
- agreed (assuming that the above domain name was available) that the URL for the Caribbean Digital Library would therefore be: **www.cadilib.org**

¹ That name being too long, the domain name was abbreviated to: **cadilib.org**

Other partner organizations

The meeting:

- agreed that all organizations which had participated in the CARISPLAN network, including organizations in Cuba, Haiti, and the Netherlands Antilles and all other countries of the CDCC would be invited to participate.
- noted that participants from national information systems, especially those in the smaller countries, had a critical role to play in the provision of general purpose items.
- identified several other organizations which could immediately be invited to participate. These are listed in Annex VI;
- agreed to actively solicit participation from the private sector;
- agreed that, following the meeting, participants would continue to submit to ECLAC the names of other potential partner organizations.

Copyright

The meeting:

- agreed that the Caribbean Digital Library web site should contain a clear statement, prominently displayed, outlining the consortium's position on intellectual property;
- agreed that legal expertise should be sought to examine the implications of existing copyright and intellectual legislation, particularly laws governing electronic resources, on the activities of the Consortium. Two suggestions were advanced:
 - legal expertise at ECLAC
 - copyright experts from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago
- agreed that all participating information specialists would be responsible to ensure that all resources included in the library were included with the knowledge and approval of their parent organizations.

Paying for documents. Availability issues

It was noted that some of the participating organizations sold their documents and might therefore have some objection to free distribution of these documents via the Web.

In this regard, the meeting:

- reaffirmed that the content of the CDL would be limited, at least initially, to those documents produced by governments, regional organizations, NGOs, and the private sector for which free, unrestricted circulation was a desired objective;
- recommended that the reasons for documents not being made available free should be investigated. If documents were sold merely to recover the cost of printing and postage, persons should be advised that posting them on the Caribbean Digital Library would not deprive the organization of any revenue;
- noted the bureaucratic difficulties associated with getting government departments to release documents in electronic format;
- resolved to lobby government departments to change this policy, highlighting the advantages to governments of having these documents on the Caribbean Digital Library;
- agreed to investigate the mechanics of selling electronic documents via the web, either through an information broker, or through a bookstore in the Caribbean region with the required e-commerce capability; and
- further agreed that the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC) would continue to research the feasibility of web-based marketing on the documents on the CDL and report to the Consortium.

Methods of financing the Caribbean Digital Library Project

The meeting considered several options for financing the ongoing activities of the Caribbean Digital Library Consortium.

The meeting:

- agreed that there was a need to attract financing for web development, computer equipment, training, lobbying, promotion, and other activities;

- suggested that the report from this meeting which would clearly articulate the objectives and potential advantages of the CDL could be circulated to potential sources of project funding;
- agreed that a membership fee could be instituted as a source of financing after an initial one-year grace period (previously agreed to) had expired;
- identified some institutions that could be approached. Among these were the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and some private sector companies;
- agreed, following a suggestion by the Chairperson of that body, that some of the seed money from the Consultative Committee on Caribbean Regional Information Systems (CCCRIS), would be made available to facilitate the start-up of the CDL.
- agreed that all participants would attempt to identify sources of funding of information technology projects. Private financing should also be considered;
- suggested that marketing on the CDL web site could be pursued as a source of revenue;
- recommended that marketing of the site should also be pursued;
- noted that if the site were to be marketed effectively, it would need to be designed by someone with the necessary skills;
- concluded that when the web-based sale of CDL documents became a reality, the issue of financing would become less critical; and
- agreed to refer the financing issue to the Steering Committee for continuing attention.

Target audience

The meeting briefly:

- considered the question of the main target users of the Caribbean Digital Library; and
- concurred that researchers and policy makers, both in the region and worldwide, in the public as well as in the private sector; regional organizations; and potential investors would be targeted.

Any other matters

Several other matters were raised. These included:

- What percentage of documents would be considered acceptable in the Library which were not available in full text;
- The issue of confidentiality. Some documents are not published for public access;
- The importance of including trade data in the Library;
- The need to seek a collaborative agreement with an information technology company;
- The need for ongoing training;
- The need to develop a procedure manual so that members of the Consortium would have clear guidelines for contributing information to the CDL;
- The need to identify and maintain standards, both in terms of the quality of the content and the procedures for contributing data and information;
- The need to keep enthusiasm at its present high level by starting input to the CDL immediately;
- The need to communicate with organizations participating in the CDL initiative exactly what their participation entailed.

The meeting:

- agreed that all these issues would continue to be discussed.

Expressions of commitment

At the meeting, representatives of all organizations expressed commitment (in principle) to assisting in the establishment of the Caribbean Digital Library. Specific individual commitments are outlined below:

- ECCB
 - Research papers; metadata; official ECCB documents which were not restricted by reason of confidentiality;

- CAFRA - Some documents; lobbying papers (subject to approval);
- CNIRD - Some documents (subject to approval of Board);
- CARICOM - Documents on web site; other documents (not meeting papers);
- CARDI - Annual report; abstracts of research papers; fact sheets; executive summaries;
- CAREC - Annual report; health resources from Caribbean countries; URLs of papers on web site; multimedia resources including posters. CAREC also agreed to investigate and follow up on the e-commerce aspects of the Consortium's activities;
- NALIS - Seek input from other libraries in the NALIS system and continue to work with ECLAC. NALIS would also concentrate on the "Standards" aspects of the Consortium's activities;
- IICA - Provide links to other web sites on agricultural information and marketing;
- DMDOC - Agreed in principle to cooperate;
- TTPLAN - Agreed in principle to cooperate, but would need to discuss distribution policies at the Ministry of Planning and Development with the Permanent Secretary;
- UNIC - Would lobby other United Nations agencies to ensure their active participation;
- OECS - Would contribute documents (not meeting papers since they were restricted); research papers;
- CDB - Would continue to support the initiative by sending URLs of CDB documents; would also investigate the possibility of financing;
- SALISES (TT) - Could commit to contributing past issues of Caribbean Dialogue. Would need to resolve issues related to documents for sale;
- SALISES (JM) - Research reports; retrospective issues of journals. Would continue to have an interest in researching all aspects of the Digital Library; Would also investigate access to statistical data;
- ECLAC - Would continue to coordinate the activities of the Consortium; lobbying other organizations to participate; host the CDL web site; prepare a project proposal for funding; and contribute all ECLAC research documents to the CDL web site.

Conclusion

As the meeting drew to a close, participants once again thanked ECLAC for organizing the meeting and spearheading an initiative which was both useful and timely. All participants committed themselves to continuing the work begun that day.

Annex 1**AGENDA**

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome
- *ECLAC/CDCC*
 - *NALIS Representative*
- 9:15 a.m. Introduction of participants
- *Participants will each be expected to outline their expectations of the workshop; give some indication of current activities in their libraries which could be of relevance to the building of the Caribbean Digital Library; and share (briefly) their own reaction to the project which is being proposed*
- 9:45 a.m. Introduction of the Concept of the Digital Library
- *The Caribbean Documentation Centre will make this presentation, identifying specific issues which would be need to be resolved during the discussion*
- 10:15 a.m. **COFFEE BREAK**
- 10:45 a.m. Discussion and (where possible) resolution of issues
- *This discussion will be led by UWI Institute of Social and Economic Studies*
 1. Organization and administrative structure
 2. Subject matter
 3. Technical/web management issues
 4. (arrangement of content, searching, etc.)
 5. List of Organizations which could be invited to participate
 6. Copyright
 7. Paying for documents and cost recovery issues
 8. Methods of Financing the project
 9. Targets
 10. Any other matters

- 12:30 p.m. **LUNCH**
- 2:00 p.m. **Viewing of the Caribbean Digital Library (as currently configured)**
- 2:30 p.m. **Discussion of issues arising**
- 3:00 p.m. **Expressions of Commitment from participants**
- 3:30 p.m. **Summary of day's decisions**
Closing remarks

Annex II

Caribbean Digital Library on the Web

Discussion Note

1. Introduction

Information, or more particularly, knowledge, is an important ingredient in the development process. Economies in both developed and developing countries are becoming increasingly knowledge-based. In fact the pace of development is now being linked to the effectiveness with which information and knowledge is amassed, disseminated and applied.

The World Bank in its World Development Report (1999) notes that “poor countries - and poor people - differ from rich ones not only because they have less capital, but because they have less knowledge”. Caribbean countries ought not to be categorised as information poor, since by and large they have the communications infrastructure necessary for information access, but the region is yet to create the enabling environment to make knowledge creation and widespread information access a seamless everyday reality. Information specialists, working together with a common purpose, can make a very significant contribution towards the creation of the environment that is needed at this time.

Against this background, ECLAC will on May 22 2000 convene a meeting of experts to discuss modalities for collaborating to replace the CARISPLAN network which had been coordinated in the past by the Caribbean Documentation Centre. A new arrangement is being proposed which should more accurately reflect current technological capabilities and people’s expectations.

The subject of the meeting will be the creation of a Caribbean Digital Library on the Web. Specific issues to be discussed in this context will include:

- (a) the content of the library;
- (b) how this content will be organized;
- (c) an appropriate management structure for ongoing maintenance of the library;
- (d) financing the initiative;
- (e) institutional policies regarding copyright and sale of documents;
- (f) training needs; and

- (g) other related matters, not yet identified here

2. Participants

Participants at this initial meeting of experts have been selected/invited from among the following:

- National information systems co-ordinators
- Librarians/information specialists from regional institutions
- Former focal points of CARISPLAN
- NGO personnel who have demonstrated an interest in electronic information access
- Research institutions and universities
- Caribbean Consultative Committee on Regional Information Systems

Twenty-four (24) persons can be accommodated at this meeting. We have tried to attract a cross section of expertise and experiences to this first meeting in order to get the process started. We anticipate however that more persons will get involved at a later stage.

The meeting will be followed by a two-day workshop on web site management for librarians and other information specialists. The meeting and workshop are scheduled for 22-24 May 2000. The objectives and expectations of these activities are outlined below.

3. Background

The United Nations ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has long been involved with programmes promoting the use technology to increase information access. CARISPLAN (the Caribbean Network of Social and Economic Planning), an early initiative of the Caribbean Documentation Centre, formalized a system of cooperation to enable librarians and information specialists in the region to share bibliographic information with each other and (through the periodic publication of CARISPLAN Abstracts) with clients in the region and further afield. The objective of the CARISPLAN project was to achieve full bibliographic coverage of the published and unpublished literature of relevance to the social and economic development of the region.

The information need which the CARISPLAN network was created to meet is still very real. That network did an excellent job within the constraints of the technology which was available at that time. However, developments which have taken place since the mid-nineties have created a new collaborative context, enhancing the capacity of libraries such that they could now deliver a product which more closely matched the needs and expectations of the users. We refer of course to the emergence of the World Wide Web and its growing popularity as a vehicle for information exchange.

The Caribbean Documentation Centre has acquired the resources and developed the expertise to extend the CARISPLAN initiative beyond the sharing of bibliographic data to include the posting of full text documents via the world wide web. During the past two years, the Centre has begun this process via the establishment of a Caribbean Virtual Library which is currently accessible at http://www.eclacpos.org/virtual_library. This Library as it is currently configured provides links to Caribbean relevant information which are already posted on the web. The Caribbean Digital Library on the Web will extend well beyond these experimental efforts.

4 The Caribbean Digital Library

4.1 Objective

The proposed Caribbean Digital Library seeks to enlist the cooperation of information specialists in the region in the building of a comprehensive resource on the World Wide Web to provide information on sectors and subjects of importance to Caribbean development.

4.2 The Concept

The Caribbean Digital Library is conceived as a joint venture initiative in which all interested regional and national information centres can collaborate, to which all can contribute and from which all can derive information when needed.

It will be decentralised both in terms of the manner in which it will be compiled as well as the physical location of the documents. Various organizations and national information systems represented at this meeting will be expected, if they agree, to contribute documents to the library in electronic form, either via their own web sites or by sending documents via e-mail to be processed and converted to a format which is most appropriate for presentation on the web.

4.3 The Structure

The library will be arranged alphabetically under several broad headings with a scope note listing the narrower topics which could be found under each heading e.g.:

HEALTH

(Including HIV/AIDS, Primary health care, health care financing, communicable diseases, aging, health statistics, etc.)

The Digital Library will be equipped with a search engine which would make searching for specific narrow topics very easy and obviate the need for a series of sub-headings.

4.4 The Content

The library will consist of Caribbean relevant documents and other resources in the following broad subject areas:

- Agriculture
- Economic conditions
- Education
- Environment
- Finance, financial services and Banking
- Government and public administration
- Health
- Information and communications technology
- Law
- Population/demography
- Science and Technology
- Social Issues
- Sustainable development
- Tourism
- Trade
- Country Documents²

Other headings will no doubt be identified and some of these modified as the project proceeds.

Initially, the content will be limited to providing in full text, those documents produced by governments, regional organizations, non-government organizations, and the private sector for which unrestricted circulation is a desired objective.

We will also, subject to the agreement of participating organizations, submit bibliographic details,

² Country specific documents will also be listed under the name of the Caribbean country indicated.

including a brief abstract where possible, of documents which are being offered for sale by participating organizations with information on the source and cost of such documents.

In addition, The Caribbean Digital Library will turn its attention in the medium term to acquiring a mechanism to facilitate the offering for sale via the web, documents which will not be made available free of charge.

4.5 Administrative Procedures

Participating libraries/information centres will submit documents, links (URLs) or other information to the Caribbean Digital Library in one of the following ways:

Libraries without their own web site should

- e-mail MS Word document to the following address: cdl@eclacpos.org
- post or otherwise submit MS Word document on diskette
- e-mail a document in HTML format
- e-mail a message with the document as an attachment in PDF format

In rare circumstances, for example, if there is key document for which there is no electronic copy

- send a clean copy of the document in hard copy to be scanned into the system.

Libraries with access to their organization's web site should:

- complete a form on the Caribbean Digital Library (CDL) web site indicating the URL where new documents are located on the web.

4.6 Ownership

The Caribbean Digital Library will be a joint venture owned by the organizations, libraries and information centres which participate in its development.

5. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, librarians (and other information intermediaries) face a challenge. But we already have built into our situations, many of the ingredients for success. We have overcome so much already.

How often have librarians been written off as anachronistic in this modern environment, the fact that Caribbean librarians were among the first professional group to embrace the use of information and communications technology, being conveniently forgotten. We have an enormous reservoir of competence. We have the commitment. The technology is also completely on our side.

Unfortunately though, the challenges do not all come from outside of our own profession. Many challenges also beset us from within. The technology has given us a false illusion of self-sufficiency. A spirit of competition rather than of cooperation now seems to prevail. And somewhere in all of this our "Caribbean" focus has been blurred. Why cooperate to do things which we are perfectly capable of doing for ourselves, by ourselves? Why indeed!

For the answer, we could revisit the rationale for the sectoral information systems which were established during the mid to late eighties. We wanted to provide access, avoid duplication, and maximise returns on our individual efforts. Those aims still remain quite valid. The Caribbean Digital Library will have many of the characteristics of a traditional library. It will be as good as the people who manage it. It will be relevant if we build it with close attention to the needs of persons who are our clients. It will be used if we make it user friendly. This therefore is our challenge.

Caribbean Documentation Centre
May 2000

Annex III**Opening Address by Dr Len Ishmael, Director****ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean
at the Meeting of Experts to discuss the Establishment of a
Digital Library on the Web
22 - 24 May 2000**

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, it is indeed a pleasure to welcome you to this meeting, the singular objective of which is to work with you collaboratively in the establishment of a comprehensive Caribbean Digital Library on the Web.

Representatives from sixteen regional, national, NGO agencies and governments are gathered here today. This is particularly noteworthy given the fact that participants have funded their own costs associated with this meeting. I have to believe therefore that your presence here is an indication of your own commitment and the commitment of your organizations, to the aims and objectives of today's meeting and the workshop which will follow tomorrow and the day after. Deliberations over the next few days represent only the first step in a long and continuous process of fulfilling the objectives of this meeting. The real challenge will come later as we attempt to maintain momentum and continue the collaboration begun here today.

In response to our invitation to participate in these sessions, one of the organizations participating here today had this to say. "This initiative could not have come at a better time." We share this view. So much in our region and in the world at large has changed and is changing. Organizations have to retool and individuals have to adapt to cope with the demands of this new environment. The Digital Library on the Web must therefore be seen in this context - as a deliberate decision to respond strategically to the expectations and new opportunities spawned by this information age.

The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has long regarded information as being central to its work. Since this office was established thirty years ago ECLAC has produced close to 1600 research documents, technical papers, reports, bibliographies, statistical data sets and other publications. This work is undertaken largely at the request of the Member Governments of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee of which this office is the Secretariat, and is ultimately for the benefit of the region's people.

Over this same period the Caribbean Documentation Centre acquired more than 35,000 documents. Most of these have been relevant to the various social, economic and sustainable development issues and priorities which have engaged the attention of our development planners and policy makers over the years.

It has always been our policy to share our resources and the results of our work with collaborators and others, across the region, but of course, we were severely constrained by the limitations of the technology that was available in the past. Our only method of dissemination was via our distribution lists to selected individuals and libraries and information centres in the region and later, through the ECLAC Ambionet Bulletin Board which was developed early in the nineties. The limitation of Ambionet was that it was only feasible for persons in Trinidad and Tobago to access because of the prohibitive cost of dialling overseas from other Caribbean countries.

The development of the Web has therefore presented a unique and tremendous opportunity that we cannot afford to ignore or under-utilise. The Internet and other associated technologies have given a tremendous boost to the efforts of librarians and other information specialists to support the planning and decision making of policy makers in the region with information which is timely, accurate, relevant and strategic.

ECLAC remains committed to a regional approach to addressing the developmental challenges of this region. The formulation of a multi-disciplinary approach to the establishment of this library is an excellent concept, since it will allow our organizations to work together and actualize the benefits of this type of co-operation.

I want to caution however that the rewards of this approach will be directly correlated with the level of commitment and continuous effort that we are willing to make. We look forward therefore not only to your enthusiastic participation over the next three days, but also to your continuing efforts to ensure that the process begun here today continues to grow and to bear fruit.

Let me, in closing, welcome you once again to our office. I want to assure you that ECLAC will continue to be committed to the aims and objectives of this meeting and to the information delivery efforts of our colleagues in the region. I look forward to reading a report of your deliberations and I wish you a most productive meeting.

May 22, 2000

Annex IV

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Mr. Dale Alexander, Computer Information Systems Assistant
Mr. Rossano Thompson, Computer Systems Operator

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Annex V
List of Abbreviations

CAFRA	Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CAREC	Caribbean Epidemiology Centre
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARISPLAN	Caribbean Information System for Economic and Social Planning
CCCRIS	Consultative Committee on Caribbean Regional Information Systems
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CDL	Caribbean Digital Library
CDLC	Caribbean Digital Library Consortium
CNIRD	Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development
DMDOC	National Documentation Centre (Dominica)
ECCB	Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
IDB	Inter American Development Bank
IICA	Inter American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture
SALISES	Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
NALIS	National Library and Information Service Authority (Trinidad and Tobago)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
TTPLAN	Trinidad and Tobago. Ministry of Planning and Development
UNIC	United Nations Information Centre
URL	Universal Resource Locator

Annex VI**The Caribbean Digital Library Consortium
Founding Members**

Present at the meeting at which the Consortium was proposed were representatives of the organizations listed below:

- Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)
- Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)
- Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC)
- Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD)
- Caricom Secretariat (CARICOM)
- Dominica. National Documentation Centre (DMDOC)
- Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB)
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
- National Library and Information System Authority (Trinidad and Tobago) (NALIS)
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
- Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES)
- Trinidad and Tobago. Ministry of Planning and Development (TTPLAN)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- United Nations Information Centre (UNIC)

