

ADDRESS TO REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON
'POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT' FOR FAMILY PLANNING

by

Mr. Clyde Applewhite - Director, ECLAC

Madam Chairman, Honourable Minister, Distinguished Guests, Participants...

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Trinidad and Tobago Family Planning Association on the celebration of their 30th Anniversary and in the successful achievements of their programmes. The organisation of this seminar in which Family Planning is being discussed within the context of national economic and social development, is but one example of the progressive spirit of this association and of the dynamism of its leadership.

ECLAC is honoured to be given this opportunity to collaborate with the Trinidad and Tobago Family Planning Association as well as with CARICOM, USAID, UNFPA and PAHO in the planning and conducting of such an important Regional Seminar, one which seeks to strengthen the links between family planning and national development in Caribbean countries.

This seminar has emerged from the recognition that population issues must be viewed in a broader context, and that the practice of family planning and the reduction of fertility are, after all, only the means to an end - the enhancement of human welfare. Therefore, they cannot be isolated from other aspects of social and economic development.

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This concept was given new significance and legitimacy at the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest and reinforced at the 1984 Conference in Mexico. The Statements from the leaders of Caribbean governments at the Mexico meeting also reflected an endorsement of this view.

ECLAC is responsible for assisting in economic and social development and its programme of work relates basically to the promotion and strengthening of technical and socio-economic co-operation among its member countries. This involves activities in collaboration with national governments as well as with regional and national NGO's as reflected in our collaborative activities with the Region's Family Planning Associations.

Strengthening the links between the family planning and development is an essential part of the work programme of the ECLAC/CELADE Demography Unit, headed by Dr. Barbara Boland. The Unit was established almost two years ago to assist governments in the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action. The activities of this Unit relate to research; training; evaluation and improvement of the systems for collecting vital registration and other population statistics; assisting governments in the formulation and implementation of population policies; promotion of the use of population data as inputs into social and economic development plans and programmes; and establishment of systems for effective utilisation and dissemination of population information.

The objectives of this seminar are very much related to our work concerned with the integration of population in development planning in which assistance is being provided to eleven countries in collaboration with CARICOM in the formulation and implementation of national population policies. As you may have seen, within these policies, family planning is viewed as one element in the package of development programmes and as an instrument of national development.

Since family planning programmes are carried out within a variety of social and economic contexts, and their effects coincide with those of other socio-economic influences on contraceptive use and fertility, the strengthening of links between these population influencing programmes (socio-economic and family planning) should not only serve to enhance their synergism but also assist in increasing the cost-effectiveness of these programmes, an important consideration in these times of limited financial resources.

We hope that this seminar would assist members of the Regional Family Planning Associations in obtaining the basic information needed for programme formulation of this nature through an increased understanding of the relationships between socio-economic forces, fertility and the broader environment.

We would also like to wish the participants success in their exercise of drafting recommendations for strengthening links between family planning and national development.

And we wish to assure you that ECLAC/CELADE stands ready to offer any technical assistance you may need in ensuring the implementation of these programmes.