INT-0141

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

Office for the Caribbean

SOME THOUGHTS ON IMPLEMENTATIONAL APPROACHES

TO THE CDCC PROGRAMME

Prepared by

S. St. A. Clarke

SOME THOUGHTS ON IMPLEMENTATIONAL APPROACHES
TO THE CDCC PROGRAMME

The work programme that ECLA has been charged with implementing
seems to offer some difficulties (in some quarters) deriving from its
comprehensiveness. The central point is that the range of studies
and operational activities extends beyond the subject scope of ECLA's
traditional work programme, and takes into its ambit various subject
areas that are considered to fall in the domain of other bodies and
institutions. [1]

An initial classification of the subjects may be made into three
broad groups:

> (i)   items which would be implemented exclusively within
>   the ECLA framework;

> (ii) items whose implementation require joint activity of
>   ECLA with some other body or institution;

> (iii) items which may best be implemented by other bodies
>   on ECLA's behalf, within the CDCC authorization and
>   the scope of their own institutional mandate.

This broad grouping, which is in a way an oversimplification, provides
a vehicle for addressing problems of implementation that arise as the
result of the organization of the United Nations system, the allocation
of subject areas of responsibility to autonomous and semi-autonomous
bodies, the mechanisms and traditions that have developed relating to
independence of bodies, and agreements that operate for joint activities.
It is not intended to comment on those aspects in these notes.

Group (i) approach

For the purpose of the present considerations, the ECLA system
comprising ECLA, CELADE, ILPES, the Joint ECLA/FAO Division, and the
joint ECLA/UNIDO programmes, are treated as the first group. The

---

[1] A preliminary identification by the Programming Office gives
the list: CELADE, ILO/PREALC, WHO, UNESCO, UNCTAD, ICAO, ITU, UPU,
FAO, UNIDO, UN(N.Y.) Coastal Area Development, LOS Conference Secretariat,
ITC, SELA, CLADES, UN(N.Y.) Centre for Housing, UNDRO, WMO.

rationale for this is that whether directly or indirectly, there is already within the executive authorities of ECLA some machinery for stimulating activities that can be performed by the various units.

The specific tasks that correspond to subject areas normally covered by this group would need to be supported by staff at the Port-of-Spain duty station and staff drawn from those units at Santiago. The essential question is whether all the tasks will _de facto_ devolve on the Port-of-Spain staff, or whether the other units will undertake some tasks and if so how. Subject tasks allotted to Port-of-Spain staff present one main difficulty - that of the volume of work as against the quantum of resources.

Tasks that subject-wise fall within the competence of CELADE, ILPES, etc., present the problem that the instinctive approach is to attempt to perform them in Santiago, at considerable distance from the geographical area of operations. The deficiencies that arise by working outside the socio-political economic environment cannot be overcome by correspondence. Further, the volume of such correspondence creates additional work for the POS staff, thus impairing their ability to overtake the specific tasks that they should perform. <u>The sensible solution is the assignment of some minimum of personnel from those units at Santiago, to Port-of-Spain</u>.

- Efforts to expand the work of the Santiago units to POS have consistently failed (even in respect of ECLA itself) because for whatever reasons staff have never been decentralized to that duty station. In large part, this is attributable to the conscious or unconscious application of the views that the Caribbean is peripheral not only in a geographical sense, but also in the sense of the sum total of ECLA-system activities. The central question is therefore whether the CDCC programme is regarded as being of sufficient importance for the effort to be made to overcome the strictures that up to now have operated.

While there has been statement of the policy of decentralization within ECLA itself, generally, it has not been implemented up to now in respect of the Caribbean Office. Further, there is the question of

whether there is such a policy of decentralization in ILPES and CELADE.
Even short-term assignments may be difficult to arrange given financial
restraints, for the simple reason that the programmes designed at
Santiago have seldom contemplated work in the Caribbean; and accord-
ingly the corresponding financial provisions reflect this situation.
In any event, response to the challenge of the CDCC, if serious, will
require special effort; and in 1976 at least, demands some readjustment
in priorities. The outcome of course will be a measure of just how
peripheral the Caribbean is deemed to be.

No comment is made here on organizational or institutional
arrangements as these are regarded as being "within the house".

Group (ii) approach

The second group of items which may be approached by some kind
of joint activity by ECLA with some other body or agency offers a wide
spectrum of possibilities. First, however, it has to be recognized
that various sections of the programme were inserted on specific
request of other bodies and agencies. 2/ In these cases it is only
sensible to proceed on the basis that those bodies and agencies, anxious
to participate in CDCC activities, have already committed themselves
to some kind of joint activity with ECLA (however close or loose) and
will carry the main load of implementation. This being the case, the
ECLA role becomes one of supplementing and co-ordinating those activities.
Tasks under sections B - The <u>agricultural sector</u>, E - <u>Public health</u>,
F - <u>Education and culture</u>, J - <u>Coastal area development</u>, etc., fall
within these considerations.

The immediate implication for the ECLA Caribbean Office is that
an official must undertake the task of continuing consultations with
the concerned bodies, supported by the mechanism at ECLA headquarters
that has responsibility for inter-agency relationships. Where already
an office of the agency exists at Caribbean sub-regional level, the

---

2/ The section on Coastal Area Development was written and
inserted on request from the related secretariat body at UN Headquarters.
The sections affecting FAO, PAHO/WHO, UNESCO, ILO were drafted by the
representatives of those agencies at the Havana meeting.

task is not too difficult, for example ILO, especially if the
geographical scope of the agency office roughly corresponds to the
CDCC group. Problems arise, however, with agencies that are not
organized to deal with the CDCC group. UNESCO for example serves
the English-speaking countries from Caracas, and the other CDCC
countries from Havana. UNICEF operates from Bogotá. The Caribbean
sub-region FAO office at Port-of-Spain is non-operative; but there
is also the complication of jurisdictions of the ECLA/FAO joint
division, the FAO Regional Office and the FAO headquarters at Rome
(to which its Caribbean office reported directly on most matters
when it operated some years ago). Undoubtedly some rethinking will
need to be done by some of the specialized agencies on the question
of how they will perform within the CDCC framework. What is very
clear, is ECLA's catalytic role.

As regards joint ECLA/Other Agency activities, where there is
already implicit commitment, and there is not a sub-office in the
Caribbean, there is the possibility of the other body assigning a
project officer to the Caribbean, as in the case of Coastal Area
Development. While the details for this particular item have not
been finalized, there seems to have been the understanding that the
technical inputs would be provided from UN Headquarters. There is
no staff provision within the Caribbean Office to undertake work on
this subject.

The second possibility is that the other body would provide
substantive support for a project where ECLA has to carry the major
responsibility. This approach is spelled out in the CDCC work
programme as the technique for dealing with the Law of the Sea. It
is not yet clear how this support will be provided, but it most
certainly involves, ultimately, assignment of an area of responsibility
to a staff member of the Law of the Sea Secretariat. Both these
possibilities involve someone at the Caribbean Office in co-ordinational
activities.

At the next level, joint activity means collaboration with the
agency in carrying out the task. Preliminary discussions with UNESCO
revealed that their initial reaction was to look at the list of

existing and proposed UNESCO projects, to compare them with the CDCC tasks, and to consider the extent of feasible readjustments, re-orientation, re-casting, or whatever other tactic is necessary. There is not yet a clear view on the inter-agency arrangement or the allocation of responsibility, primarily because the ECLA/UNESCO exchanges so far have been informal and at the level of sub-regional offices. The discussions with ILO have tended to be broadly in the same direction. A reasonable assumption would be that the agencies would wish to preserve some minimal identification of their projects and their contributions to the CDCC (including the submission of reports to the annual sessions). If this assumption is valid, then the Caribbean Office's role would be mainly liaison and the monitoring of progress, combined with logistical support where specialist meetings, seminars, workshops or courses are involved.

There will however be situations in which implementation will demand technical inputs from both ECLA and from an agency; and where this occurs it has to be assumed that the Caribbean Office will need to provide the overall guidance and orientation. In such cases the agency concerned would most probably wish its project officer to work in closest proximity to the ECLA counterpart - that is, at Port-of-Spain. It is not possible to predict how formalized such arrangements might be, and whether there would be a regular need to prepare some kind of "operation plan" (using the term widely); but it would be most desirable if the formal aspects could be kept to the minimum, which would be an exchange of letters between the Heads of the two (or three) institutions.

Group (iii) approach

There can be no sharp dividing line between the Group (ii) and Group (iii) approaches. Experience has already shown in arriving at preliminary arrangements for the meeting of Rectors of Universities, that the sharing of responsibility between ECLA and another institution can vary from equal involvement, to the other institution doing the implementation, with ECLA only providing logistic support while co-sponsoring the activity.

This approach has the inherent danger of a clash in orientation, as between what ECLA must conform to within the mandates of the CDCC, and the orientation seen by the other agency in terms of its mandate from its governing body. It is difficult to find justification for ECLA absolving itself from the responsibility of providing the orientation required by the CDCC. A primary condition in any of these "sub-contracting" arrangements must be that ECLA provide the orientation.