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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

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CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SEMINAR

ON

CENTRAL SERVICES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

AN AIDE MEMOIRE

Convened jointly by the United Nations (ECLA and the Public Administration Division, New York) and the International Union of Local Authorities, and supported by the Netherlands Government.

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Introduction

The role of local government in the national effort for overall advancement is a most important element in the socio-economic restructuring now engaging the attention of the various territories in the Caribbean. Local government institutions of some kind are in existence in most countries of the region, and they are generally charged with "traditional" local government functions such as civic affairs, maintenance work and the like. However, the awareness is developing that there is need for closer involvement of peoples' representative institutions at the local level in decision-making and implementation essential to the process of development. Interest has also been generated in local area planning and bringing about a greater fusion between community development and area development.

The regional workshops held in 1968 and 1969 ^{1/} strongly emphasized the importance of strengthening local government bodies as an institutional means of widening and increasing the scope of popular participation in the development process. The 1968 workshop underscored the importance of revitalising and reorienting local government institutions in the process of national development and endeavour. The 1969 workshop specifically identified "decentralization of political and administrative structures to enable concrete participation of rural communities in the decision-making processes affecting local and national development" as one of the 'sub-objectives' of integrated rural development.

In the light of these factors, it is considered timely to hold a regional seminar on the new role of local government in accelerating overall development, the measures to equip local government authorities

^{1/} The Caribbean Regional Training Workshop on Community Development and Local Government held in Port of Spain in March 1968 (See Report of the Workshop: E/CN.12/847) and the Caribbean Regional Workshop on Integrated Rural Development convened in Kingston in October 1969 (See Report of the Workshop: E/CN.12/846).

with the necessary competence and expertise to perform with efficiency and despatch the varied developmental functions they will be called upon to undertake, and the role of central services in improving the functional capability of local government for a larger and expanding role in economic and social development. These aspects assume particular significance in the context of the currently prevalent impatience and fervour on the part of large sections of communities in the Caribbean countries to have a greater say in moulding their and the nation's destiny.

Timing and Venue

It is proposed to hold the Seminar between 8 and 18 March 1971 in Georgetown, Guyana.

Objectives

The objectives of the proposed Seminar will be:

- i. To acquaint the participants with contemporary trends in the theory and practice of local government;
- ii. to improve the appreciation of the senior officers of central government and agencies concerned with local government and rural development of the roles and functions of local government institutions in the planning and implementation of various local and national development programmes, and of the inter-relationship between local authority and central government responsibility in overall development effort;
- iii. to exchange information on the methods of improving local government for the purpose of accelerating the development process, both economic and social, and alternative approaches to organizing centrally for the provision of services to local authorities; and
- iv. to identify particular lines of action appropriate for application to the circumstances in the countries in the area.

Participation

The governments in the Caribbean ^{2/} (Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, St. Kitts-Nevis-

^{2/} Barbados and British Virgin Islands have been excluded since there are no local government institutions in those territories.

Anguilla, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Surinam and Trinidad & Tobago) will be requested to nominate not more than three senior officers at the policy-making level, one of whom would be from the ministry responsible for the supervision of local authorities and the others belonging to ministries/agencies concerned with rural development or with central planning.

Consultants from United Nations Headquarters, the Economic Commission for Latin America, the Universities of the West Indies and Guyana, the International Union of Local Authorities at the Hague, and the German Foundation for Developing Countries will assist the Seminar in its deliberations.

Subjects of Study

The following are the major areas of study proposed for the Seminar:

- i. General aspects of local government in relation to overall development including elements of local planning;
- ii. Approaches to the provision of central services to local authorities;
- iii. Central agencies and institutions for the improvement of local government;
- iv. Personnel administration in local government;
- v. Local government training;
- vi. Local government finance and financial administration.

Method of Work

The participants will divide themselves into working groups each of which will consider specified areas of study in depth. The conclusions reached in group discussions will be reported back to the plenary for further discussion and adoption.

Participants will be required to prepare country statements on the various aspects of local government and central services to local authorities on a suggested outline. Discussions will be based on these, a basic working paper prepared by the United Nations and on a brief introduction of the subjects of study by consultants and resource persons.

Documentation

Besides the country papers and the basic discussion paper, the following background documents will be made available to the participants:

- i. Decentralization for National and Local Development
(United Nations publication, Sales No: 62.II.H.2)
- ii. Report on Local Government Study Tours of Yugoslavia and India by Senior Officials of African States
(United Nations publication, Sales No: 64.II.H.4)
- iii. Report of the Rio Seminar on Central Services to Local Authorities in Latin America.
- iv. Report of the Caribbean Regional Training Workshop on Community Development and Local Government
(United Nations publication, E/CN.12/847)
- v. Local Government Personnel Systems (United Nations publication, Sales No: 67:II.H.1)
- vi. Training in Local Authorities: A Conference Report
(London, Royal Institute of Public Administration, 1966)
- vii. Local Government Training (United Nations publication, Sales No: E.68.II.H.2)
- viii. Report on the activities of the International Union of Local Authorities and on the Work and Development of Local Government Associations (To be prepared by the International Union of Local Authorities).
- ix. Draft Report on the Inter-Regional Study on Central Services to Local Authorities (Prepared by the International Union of Local Authorities).

Sponsorship and Financing

The Seminar will be convened jointly by the United Nations (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Public Administration Division, New York) and the International Union of Local Authorities and will be supported by the Governments of the Netherlands and Suriname. The host Government of Guyana has agreed to provide the necessary physical facilities for the Seminar.

The participants will be provided with round trip economy class air tickets and daily subsistence allowance for the duration of the Seminar, according to standard United Nations rates.

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