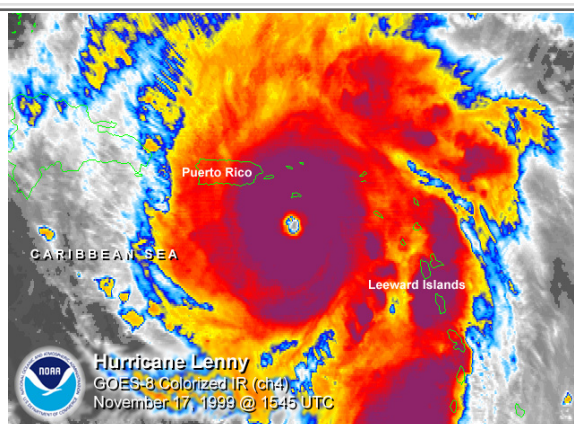


# September 2000

## ...in this issue...

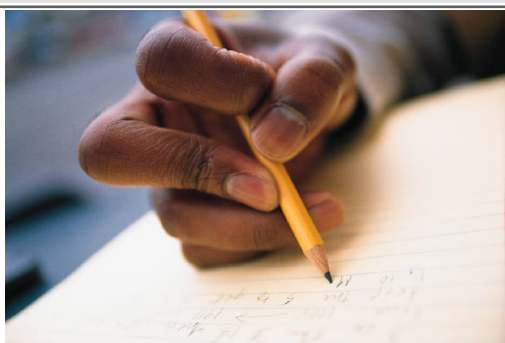
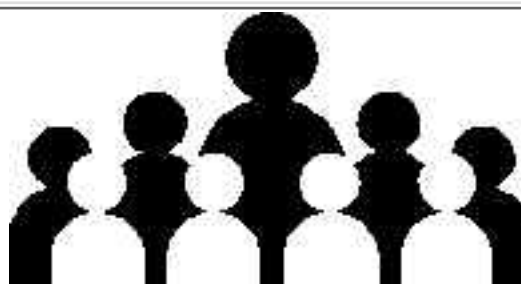


ECLAC hosts workshops on its methodology for assessing the impacts of natural disasters, from the perspective of the environment, social issues, and the economy.

[GO >](#)

An update on the efforts of regional governments to carry out a census of their populations... successes, obstacles and difficulties.

[GO >](#)



Highlights from a research paper examining the poor and their relationship with the education system in the Caribbean.

[GO >](#)

ECLAC offices in Santiago and Port-of-Spain jointly host an experts' meeting examining maritime trade and transport in the Caribbean.

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# Assessing the impact of natural disasters

***ECLAC conducts training workshops on its methodology for assessing the macroeconomic, social and environmental impacts of natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean***

During the month of July, the Subregional Headquarters of ECLAC for the Caribbean, in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, hosted special training workshops on the *ECLAC Methodology for Assessing the Macro-economic, Social and Environmental Impacts of Natural Disasters*.

The first of these workshops was conducted at ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Port-of-Spain, with the second held in the British Virgin Islands (BVI), in collaboration with the territory's Development Planning Unit (DPU).

**Click on the following links to read the rest of this article.**

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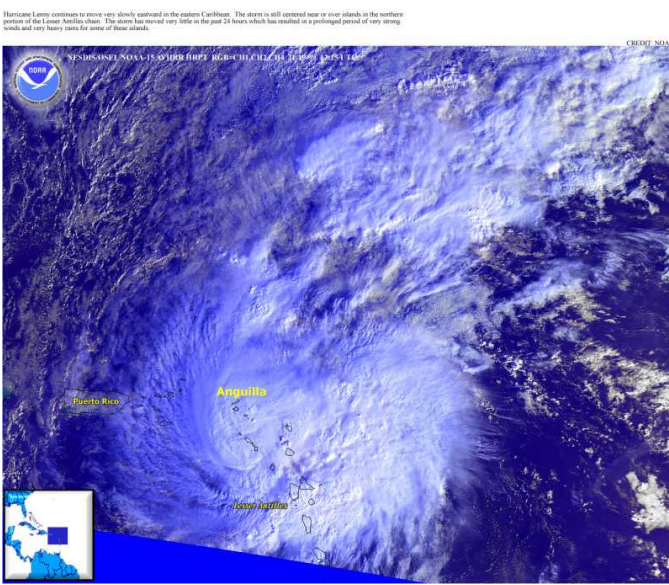
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# ECLAC workshops on assessing impacts of natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean ...cont'd

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Satellite image of Hurricane Lenny, which battered the Lesser Antilles at the end of 1999.

Natural disasters cost the global economy as much as 50 billion U.S. Dollars, both in lost human potential and damage to the productive sectors of the economy. For the Caribbean, which is the region hardest hit during the annual hurricane season, disasters recur with such frequency that it often seems that even before the region recovers from one disaster, another is upon it.

With meteorological predictions for the year 2000's hurricane season forecasting above-average tropical cyclone activity, Caribbean governments have moved to ensure that they are more prepared to deal with the inevitable destruction.

To this end, the Subregional Headquarters of ECLAC for the Caribbean, in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, hosted special training workshops on the *ECLAC Methodology for Assessing the Macro-economic, Social and Environmental Impacts of Natural Disasters*. The first of these workshops was conducted at ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Port-of-Spain, while the second was held in the British Virgin Islands (BVI), in collaboration with the territory's Development Planning Unit (DPU).

Important to the recovery process is the need for countries to understand the short, medium and longer-term impacts of natural disasters on their macro-economic performance, and on the wellbeing of their populations. The workshops sought to equip Caribbean experts with the analytical and conceptual tools to evaluate the environmental and socio-economic impact of natural disasters, given the difficulty of accessing reliable and up-to-date quantitative data, in the aftermath of these events.

These experts were drawn from government and non-governmental organisations working in the area of engineering and infrastructure, economics, physical planning, social development and environmental management. The workshops also sought to develop post-disaster assessment capacity at the national level to understand these effects, to facilitate the initiation of the evaluation process, even before assistance arrives from the outside.

The Port-of-Spain workshop signalled the start of a process aimed at developing a core of experts with multidisciplinary skills, in various parts of the subregion, to enable deployment at short notice, of assessment teams comprising personnel within or in close proximity to affected countries. These teams will also be part of a nucleus whose assistance might be enlisted by ECLAC for undertaking assessments in different countries of the region.

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# ECLAC workshops on assessing the impacts of natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean ...cont'd

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## Background

The geographical location and natural characteristics of Latin America and the Caribbean expose the region to frequent natural disasters, compounding its economic vulnerability. In the latter half of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Caribbean was repeatedly bombarded by hurricanes causing major damage to the productive and social sectors, general infrastructure and the natural resources of these islands.

Consistent with the incidence of natural disasters is the significant decrease in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the affected countries. Islands such as Antigua and Barbuda, which have survived nine hurricanes in the last 10 years, seem to exist permanently in a state where national efforts are directed towards rebuilding, thus taxing resources which could otherwise have been devoted to productive enterprise. In 1999 alone, the Caribbean was subject to 12 cyclones, including eight hurricanes, five of which attained Category-4 status on the Saffir-Simpson scale, which measures the intensity of hurricanes and tropical storms.



*Remnants of a pier damaged by 1999's Hurricane Lenny.  
Image : BBC World News Online.*



*Montserratian capital, Plymouth, remains deserted and covered in ash, in the aftermath of the eruptions of the Soufriere Hills volcano. Image : BBC World News Online.*

Hurricanes are not the only natural disaster to which the Caribbean is vulnerable, as was demonstrated by the volcanic eruptions on the island of Montserrat at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These volcanic eruptions in the Soufriere Hills ruined roughly 64 per cent of the island, and forced an almost total exodus of the Montserratian population. In 1995, when the Soufriere Hills volcano erupted, the island's population stood at 11,500. At present, fewer than 3,000 Montserratians remain, attempting to rebuild their lives.

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# ECLAC workshops on assessing the impacts of natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean ...cont'd

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## The Methodology

Based on statistics and additional estimates made by the ECLAC Secretariat over the past 20 years, natural disasters can be said to have cost the Latin American and Caribbean region, in an average year, more than 6,000 lives, and over 1.5 billion U.S. dollars in economic losses. This loss of life amounts to a large proportion of the population -- generally the lower-income population -- and is a major setback for the development efforts of regional governments.

ECLAC has developed a methodology for assessing the impact of natural disasters and responding to these scenarios. It is an evaluation tool that helps authorities determine both the sectoral and overall effects of a disaster, serving as a guide for post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction programming and processes, and the identification of international co-operation required to undertake such programming.

While other energies are devoted to the delivery of emergency responses, the ECLAC methodology is unique in that it assesses the sum total of all damages -- in the short, medium and long term -- on the overall macro-economic performance of the country, its effects on government revenues, on GDP and so on.

The methodology has three components. The initial assessment and analysis involves examining the direct costs, which include the initial loss of property, infrastructure and livestock. Secondly, indirect or induced damages, representing the consequences a given disaster has on other sectors stemming from the direct losses, are measured. These take the form of the temporary closure of hotels, the interruption of Government services and utilities, among others. The third element, referred to as "secondary impacts", indicates the effect on macro-economic variables such as the gross domestic product, imports and exports, employment and Government revenue and expenditure.

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# ECLAC workshops on assessing the impacts of natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean ...cont'd

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## The Workshops

During the three-day Port-of-Spain Workshop, participants were introduced to the methodology and exposed to the experiences of various ECLAC staff members, who have had experience in the field undertaking post-disaster assessments in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

The first two days of the Port-of-Spain workshop were spent reviewing the special aspects of disasters in the context of small island states in the Caribbean, with presenters identifying the most critical effects and issues to be considered in the wake of natural disasters. Insights were also given into the methodological and conceptual aspects of assessment, sector evaluation (social, infrastructure, economic and the environment), the effects of damages, institutional capacity, and the definition of the reconstruction strategy. On the third day of the workshop, the experts were invited to review the methodology. They did this bearing in mind that since the inception of the methodology some 30 years ago, social and environmental issues are now considered crucial, mostly because it is increasingly realised that social inequities and environmental degradation reinforce vulnerability and may extend a country's recovery period.

The workshops in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) were facilitated by that territory's Development Planning Unit (DPU). This type of training had never been conducted in the BVI. Officials of the DPU described the training as a timely intervention, given the fact that at the time of the seminar, the region was experiencing its annual "hurricane season".

Among the topics covered during the sessions were: natural disaster impacts on the economy, public finances, population, infrastructure, housing, health and education; effects on tourism and the environment; sources of information on natural disasters; application of the ECLAC formula, and the concept of task-forces. The experiences of the BVI, Anguilla, St Kitts & Nevis, and St Maarten within the last five years were considered during some of the sessions. Indeed, the intention is that similar disaster management training will be carried out in Montserrat, before year's end.

The 18 trainees who benefited from the BVI sessions will be enlisted to complement the work of a committee previously set up by the Office of Disaster Preparedness (ODP) of that country, to monitor physical damages caused by hurricanes and other natural disasters. Their activities will be coordinated by the BVI's DPU.

The participants at the BVI seminar were selected from a combination of private and public sector agencies including the Ministry of Communications and Works, the Ministry & Finance, the Conservation and Fisheries Department, the Development Planning Unit, the Town & Country Planning Department, the BVI Chamber of Commerce & Hotel Association, and several insurance companies.

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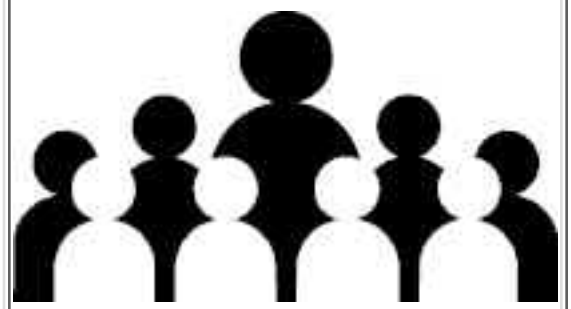
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# The Y2K Caribbean Census

## *Countries expand questionnaires to include Internet access and general public opinion on the environment*

Initial reports from some countries in the region on the conduct of the Caribbean's first Census Exercise for the millennium, indicate that it has been executed successfully in these territories, with few setbacks experienced.



The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize and Trinidad & Tobago, who began their census taking by the second quarter of this year, indicated that the exercise has been carried out with few difficulties. Among the difficulties outlined were: the quality of the enumerators (which in some instances impacted negatively on the exercise); and exogenous forces, such as adverse weather conditions.

The numbers of field staff required for the census differed for each territory. In Belize, approximately seven hundred officers were involved; one thousand eight hundred worked in The Bahamas; and three thousand persons were employed to conduct the census in Trinidad and Tobago.

As a result of extensive advertising and public awareness campaigns, which involved the use of local celebrities, special events, and promotions on radio and television and in the newspapers, countries reported very little resistance on the part of the public to the idea of the census.

Sylvan Roberts, a Statistician from Belize notes that although there were persons who did not wish to be part of the exercise, there were others who actually called the Central Statistical Office (CSO) to find out when the census officers would visit their area. He reports that on 12 May 2000, designated "Census Day" in Belize, the homeless were among the first to be enumerated.

In a few countries, post census events were conducted to thank the public for its co-operation with the enumerators, and to invite those persons who were not enumerated to meet with the staff of the various CSOs. In addition, field staff were sent out to capture those few persons who, for whatever reason, had missed out on participating in the exercise.

This census marks the first time that questions pertaining to access to computers and the Internet were included. In addition, the section dealing with disabilities issues was expanded. In Belize, opinion questions about the environment were also featured for the first time, since both the government and private enterprise have an interest in this area. A section on emigration was added to the Bahamas questionnaire, because that country does not have exit cards to capture emigration data. However, certain flaws were discovered while using this method, among them, the fact that should an entire family migrate, the information still would not be captured.

For Trinidad and Tobago, new questions examined the issues of Health, Crime, and time spent on Unpaid Household and Other Activities. This year, Barbados opted to capture information on its labour force by taking a sample of the population, and then elicited information on economic activities from everyone for the whole year.

Most countries will be using the Optical Mark Reader for scanning the information gathered from the census exercise, which will then be processed and analysed using the IMPS statistical software, which has been updated for Microsoft Windows. Countries report that a staggered approach was used in processing the incoming information, in that scanning began once sufficient information was obtained. Kelsie Dorsett, Deputy Director of the Department of Statistics of the Bahamas, expects that editing and coding of the information for that country would be complete by January 2001, with data entry complete by March 2001.

"Within 18 months, processing of the information will be concluded, after which, with assistance from CARICOM, analysis of the information will take place, followed by publication of the results," states Mrs. Hunt, of the Central Statistical Office of Barbados.

Mr. Sylvan Roberts is optimistic that the interim results for Belize would be published and provisional data made available for districts by the end of September 2000. For research purposes, he also expects to produce a report which would consist mainly of tables, by year's end.

Countries also report that publication of the census results via hard copy would be minimal. Instead, the information would be disseminated using the Internet, floppy diskettes and CD-ROM.

Lauchland Lake, of Antigua & Barbuda's CSO, reports that like its OECS partners, his country is still in the planning stages of executing its census for the year 2001.

"The CARICOM mechanism, the Regional Census Office, which was in place for the last census," he explains, "is in the process of being re-established. Mr. Osmond Gordon of CARICOM, is working on that initiative which has already been approved by the CARICOM Council of Ministers, but it is not in operation at this time."

Mr. Lake also points out that the OECS Member States would be focusing on gender statistics in their census, having attended the United Nations Statistics Division's (UNSD) Conference on Social and Gender Statistics in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, which took place from 23 August to 1 September, 2000.

While countries in the OECS grouping will still collaborate with CARICOM on the census, at present they are being guided by the OECS Secretariat. In that regard, the Secretariat held a meeting in early July of this year to assess the status of its member States' planning activities for the 2001 Census and to discern any difficulties they might be experiencing. An *Activity Roster* has since been formulated, and the *OECS Census Questionnaire & Manual* is now in the final stages of completion. Three member states have been given a timeframe within which to do their pre-testing of the manual, and by year's end, it is hoped that sources of funding for printing would have been identified.

Jamaica will be undertaking its census in 2001.

Interviews on the status of the Census conducted with Ms. Kelsie Dorsett, Deputy Director of the Department of Statistics, Bahamas; Mrs. Hunt, CSO, Barbados; Mr. Sylvan Roberts, CSO, Belize; Mr. Lauchland Lake, CSO, Antigua and Barbuda; and Mr. Adhar Beepath, CSO, Trinidad and Tobago.

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# EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON POVERTY: Equity or Exclusion?

*An ECLAC / UNESCO Study examines the poor and their relationship with the education system in the Caribbean*

"If regional governments do not continue to pursue development goals based on social equity, the stratification between rich and poor now found in the education system may reinforce, rather than correct, income inequalities, and perpetuate the cycle of poverty..."

That is the conclusion of a recent ECLAC study, commissioned by UNESCO, which sought to examine the relationship between the poor and the current education system in the Caribbean. The study, titled "Education and its impact on Poverty: Equity or Exclusion" was prepared for the UNESCO Forum on Education for all in the Caribbean Assessment 2000, held earlier this year.

The study posits that the education system is failing one group of children more than others – namely, those that are poor – and thus denying them the opportunity to become contributing members of the society and achieving the goal of sustainable human development.

It concludes that two distinct segments of society are becoming more apparent – one highly educated, with the other relatively uneducated; one wealthy, the other poor.

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## Poverty in the Caribbean

A 1996 World Bank Report, [1] based on Caribbean census data for 1990 and using a population sample of 35.1 million, estimated that at that point in time, approximately seven million people or more could be classified as poor.

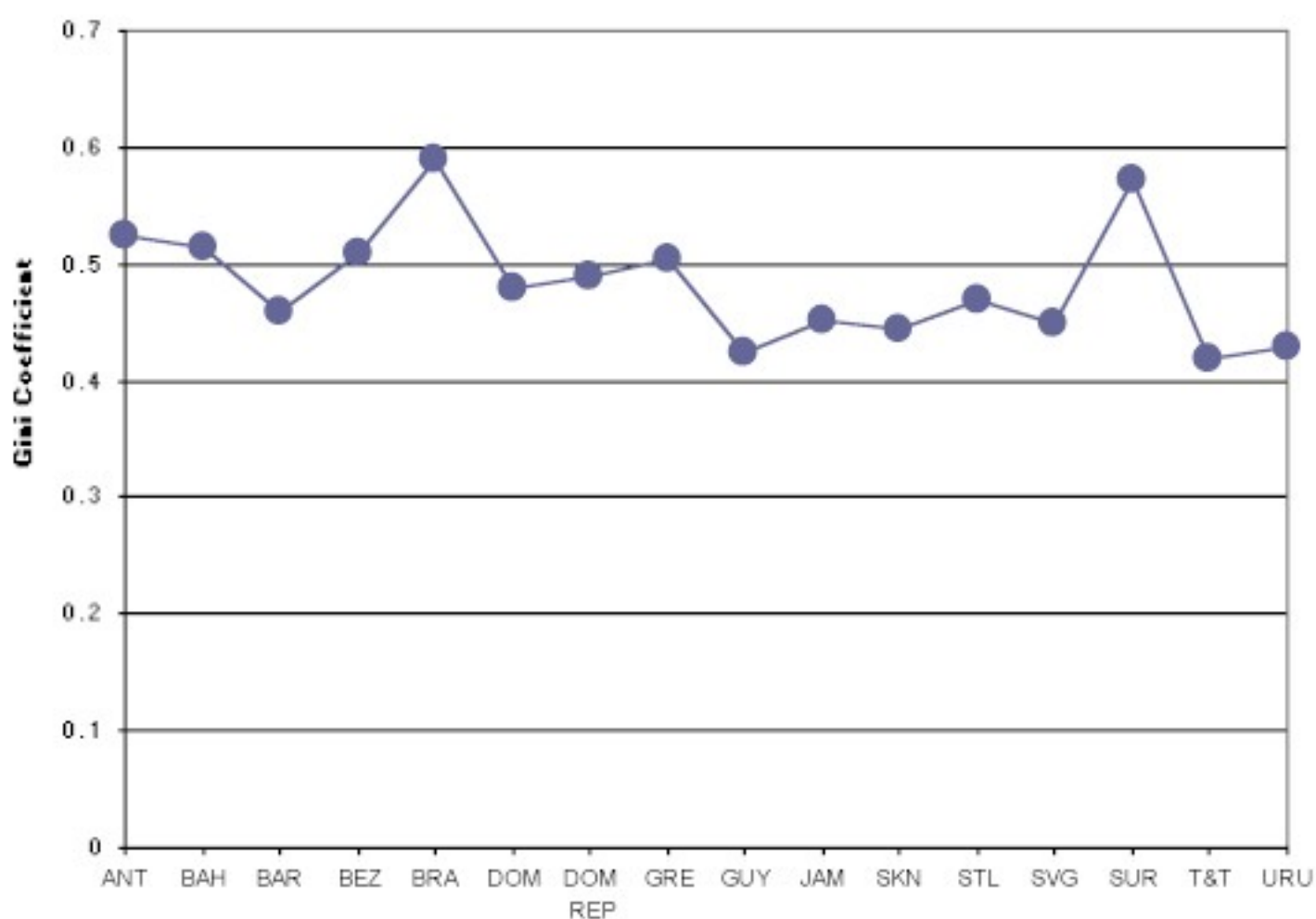
When a comparative survey of selected countries in the region was made, the findings indicated poverty rates from as low as 5 per cent in the Bahamas, to a high of 65 per cent in Haiti. Eight of the 15 countries listed had over 30 per cent of their population estimated as poor. Only in the Bahamas, Barbados, Antigua & Barbuda, and St. Kitts & Nevis, did 15 per cent or less of their population fall below the poverty line.

However, regardless of which tool is used to measure the extent of poverty – whether the Poverty Head Count Index is applied, or the Human Development Index, or the Human Poverty Index – there is general agreement that the poor in the subregion include the following groups:

- The elderly
- Children
- The disabled
- Small-scale farmers
- Unskilled workers
- The indigenous population
- Female-headed households (in some countries)
- The under-employed and the unemployed

The ECLAC/UNESCO report states that both the creation of employment opportunities, and the preparation of these groups for participation in the labour force, are critical to improving the status and well-being of those persons living in poverty.

### INCOME DISTRIBUTION FOR SELECTED CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES



It has been estimated that during the 1990s, the wealthiest 10 per cent of families in the Caribbean improved their position in relative and absolute terms, and received 15 to 20 times the income of the poorest 10 per cent. The following figure illustrates the degree of income inequality among selected countries in the region. It also provides a comparative view, positioning the Caribbean next to its Latin American neighbours.

The Gini Index measures how far real distribution is from a hypothetical reference point. If incomes were distributed in a fully equitable manner, each person would be represented by zero. Complete concentration of income in a single person, or complete inequality, would be represented by one. In theory, the Gini Coefficient can vary between zero and one. In practice, however, Gini coefficients of per capita income vary between 0.25 and 0.60. The document, "Facing up to Inequality in Latin America", indicates that inequality indices in Latin America, which are considered the highest among all regions of the world, are on average 0.52, with a minimum of 0.43 for Uruguay, and a maximum of 0.59 for Brazil.

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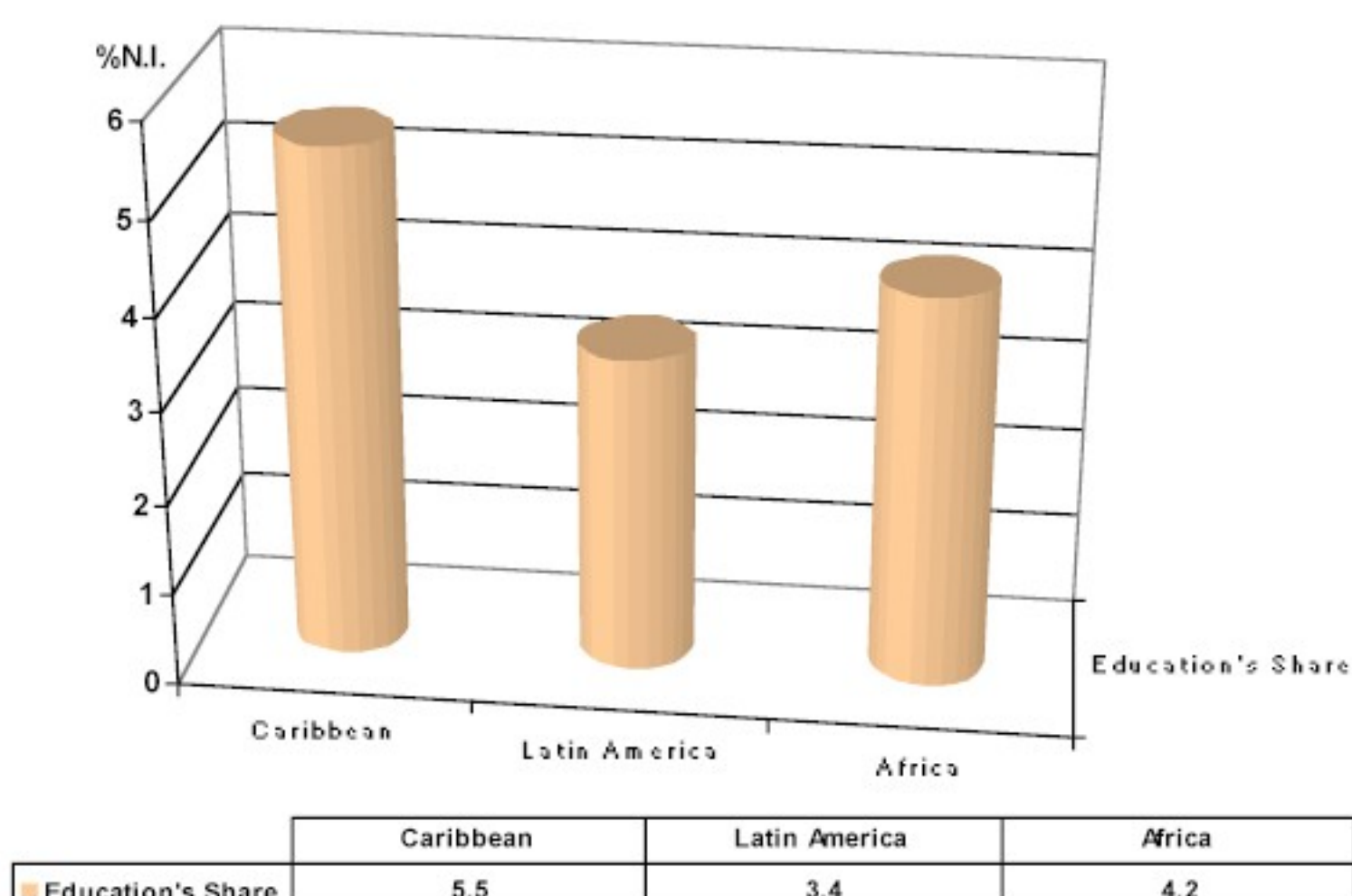
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## Accessing Quality Education

According to the report, Caribbean governments have shown a strong commitment to human resource development, particularly in the English speaking countries, which allot a larger share of national income to the education, than any other region of the developing world.

While the share of education has remained virtually the same, real expenditure on education in many countries has fallen due to inflation, fluctuations in the value of some countries' currency and to increasing enrolment levels. The figure below illustrates.

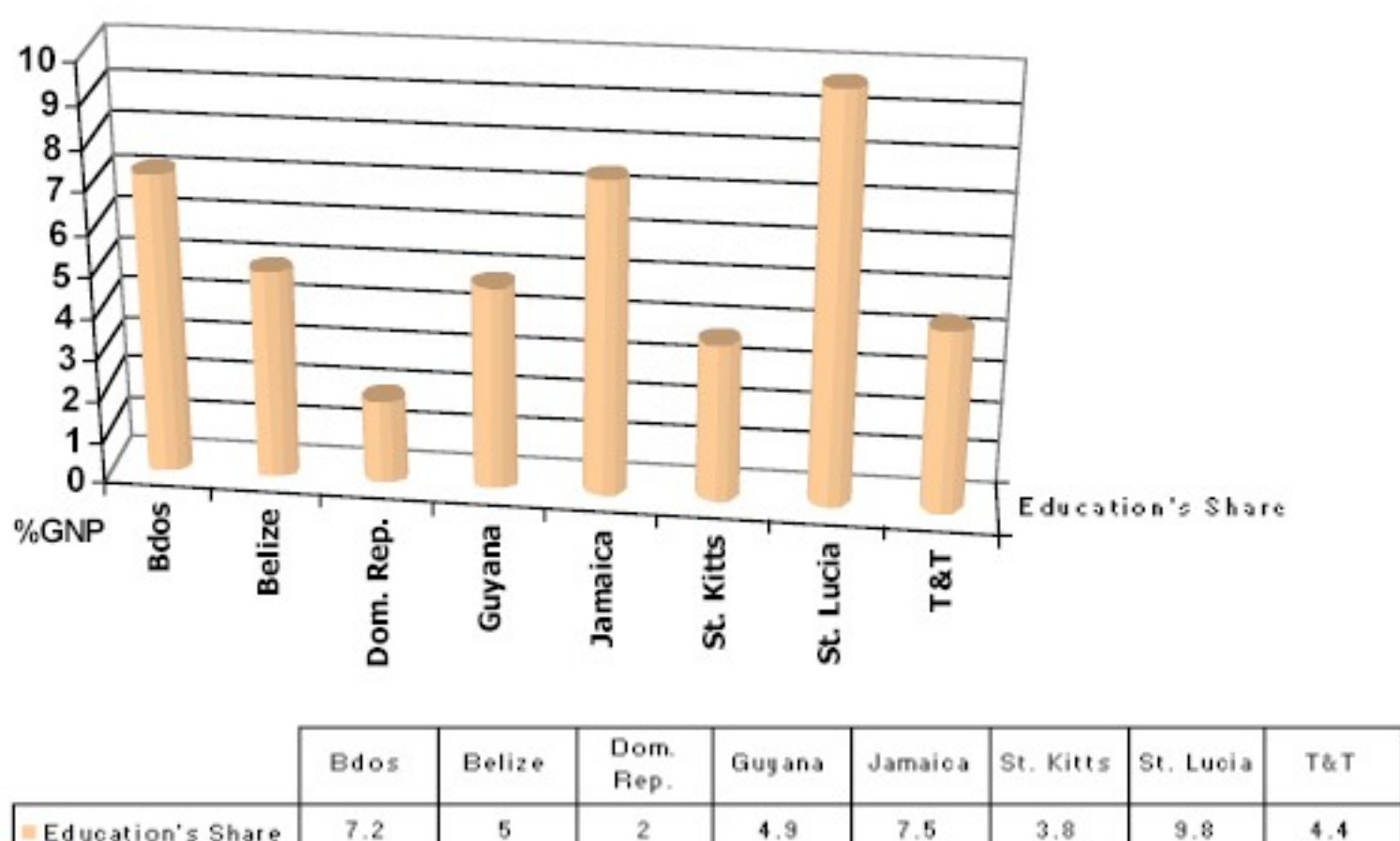
**EDUCATION'S SHARE OF NATIONAL INCOME (%)**



*SOURCE: IDB – "Facing up to inequality in Latin America: Economic and Social Progress in Latin America 1998-1999".*

In addition, the report notes, there are variations in government expenditure across the region. Data suggests that the expenditure as a percentage of Gross National Product for St. Lucia, Jamaica, and Barbados is significantly higher than the average for the region. Trinidad & Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis and the Dominican Republic spend significantly less.

**EDUCATION EXPENDITURE IN SELECTED CDCC COUNTRIES, 1993-1996**



*SOURCE: UNDP Human Development Report, 1999*

Government expenditure is not the only expenditure on education; private expenditures by individuals to attend government schools exceed government outlays in all types of primary and secondary schools and in selected kinds of tertiary education. This relatively high expenditure on education in the Caribbean has meant nearly universal access to primary and secondary schools.

However, high access levels do not necessarily translate into high quality of schooling. According to the report, there is a perception that the quality of schooling provided to the majority of primary and secondary schools students in the region is poor. Data tracking the performance of Jamaican secondary school students at their CXC examinations revealed that only 1.1 per cent of the students attending the New Secondary schools received distinctions in their CXC examinations, while 10.8 per cent of the students in the traditional schools received distinctions.

The ECLAC/UNESCO study also notes that gender inequality in the education system is becoming a growing cause for concern. Data indicate that females have a slight quantitative advantage over males in the education systems in the Caribbean, that is, there are more female students in the school system than male students. However, qualitatively females may be at a disadvantage, because of a tendency to encourage girls into the soft sciences, the low end of technical vocational training, or the arts and humanities at the university level – which ultimately impacts on income earning possibilities.

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## The Impact of Education on Poverty

An examination of unemployment data reveals that unemployment for both sexes is lowest for persons with the highest education (that is, tertiary level), and highest for persons with the least education (that is, primary level).

A 1997 survey of unemployment rates in four selected Caribbean countries [2] found that at each level of educational attainment, women had a higher rate of unemployment than men who had achieved the same level of education.

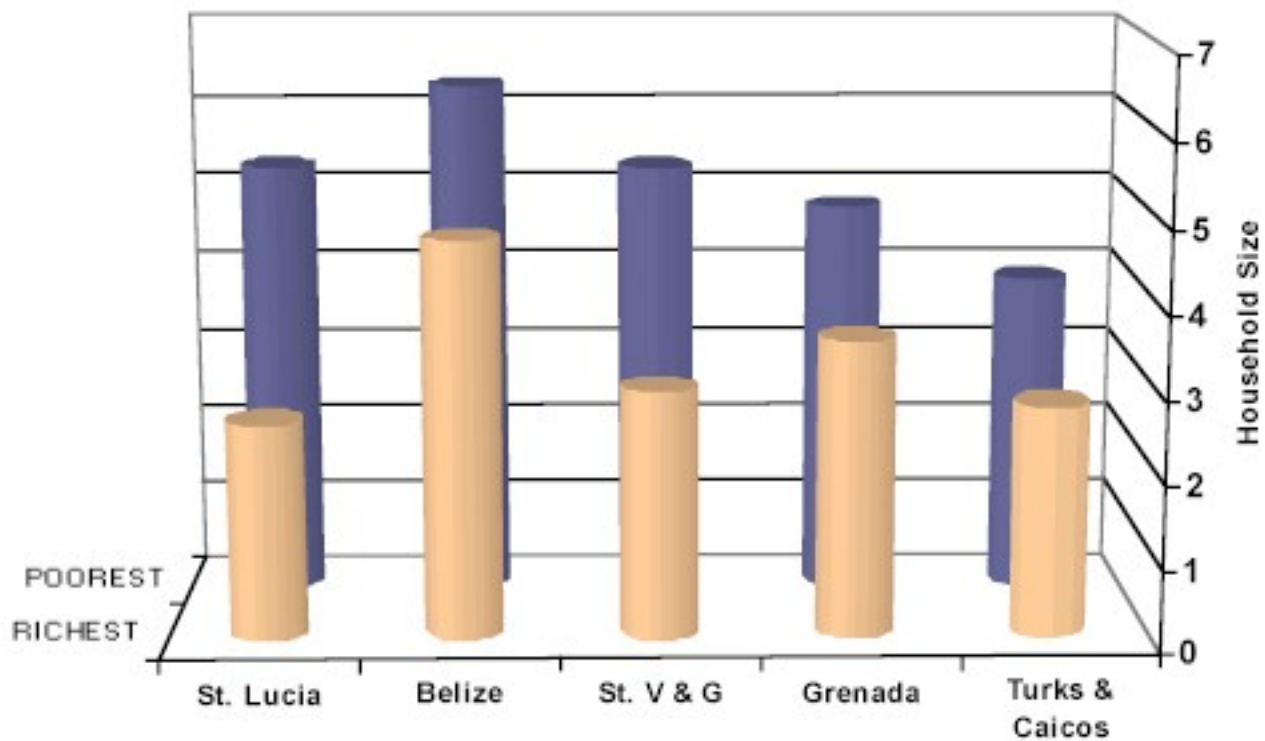
According to the ECLAC/UNESCO document, there was not much difference between unemployment levels for those who had attained primary level schooling, against those who had attained secondary level schooling. Indeed, returns on secondary level education were typically lower than at the university level and not much higher than returns on primary education.

In terms of income levels, the more qualified tend to receive higher incomes than those with the lowest qualifications. According to the ECLAC/UNESCO study, not only is there a differential between those with 'better passes', there is also a differential in incomes according to gender. Data from a review of labour market trends in Trinidad & Tobago revealed that, with the exception of the lowest wage scale of less than TT\$1,000, in no single category or wage scale did women receive equal or more wages than men.

Overall, the study observes, globalisation and the introduction of new labour saving technologies have widened wage and income gaps in both industrial and developing countries. Trends in income disparity in the region suggest that the effects of globalisation are already widening income gaps in the region. [3]

Upon examination of how education impacts upon family structure, the ECLAC/UNESCO document cites the IDB report – "Facing up to inequality in Latin America: Economic and Social Progress in Latin America 1998-1999" – which revealed that children of working mothers actually attain higher educational levels than those of mothers who do not work outside the home. The following chart shows how family size is influenced by returns to income.

**SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD BY QUINTILE (Selected Countries)**



*SOURCE: Kairi Poverty Assessment Study (St. Lucia, 1995; Belize, 1996; St. Vincent & the Grenadines, 1995; Grenada, 1999; Turks & Caicos, 1999.)*

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## The Way Forward

"... the seeds of tomorrow's income inequality are being sown today..."

The ECLAC/UNESCO document concludes that "wealth alone is not enough" to prevent the ever-widening gap between the education 'haves' and the education 'have-nots'. It states that a committed policy towards growth and equity might be the key.

One step forward is a macroeconomic policy framework that has employment creation as its central focus, along with long term development strategies that will push the economic structure of the societies into the knowledge-based segment of the global market, which would ensure higher income levels generally.

The other option is to transform the current education product so that it truly develops persons to their fullest potential. Of paramount importance is to ensure that today's children benefit from such a transformation today. It is also critical that a culture of continuing education throughout life is properly engendered among the population, as a whole.

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## End Notes

1. *Caribbean Countries, Poverty Reduction and Human Resource Development in the Caribbean*. World Bank, May 1996.
2. *Caribbean Subregional Review of WSSD+5 and the Status of the Older Person: Globalisation and Employment in the Caribbean*. Prepared by the ILO Caribbean Office, Port-of-Spain, August 1999.
3. In *The Socioeconomic and Political Context* by Dr. Karl Theodore and Dr. Edward Greene, it was reported that in Trinidad & Tobago households in the top quintile earned 49 per cent of the income in 1988 and 50 per cent in 1992. In Guyana, the highest quintile earned 43 per cent of the income in both 1988 and 1993, while the lowest quintile slipped from earning 7.5 per cent to 5 per cent in 1993.

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# ECLAC hosts Experts' Meeting on regional maritime transport

Officials of ECLAC's Transport Division in Santiago, Chile, and at the Subregional Headquarters in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, are confident that following a recent meeting of experts on Caribbean maritime transport, the region has moved one step closer to resolving some of its problems in this area.

The two-day Experts' Meeting on Maritime Transport in the Caribbean was held in mid-September, at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

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# ECLAC hosts Experts' Meeting on regional maritime transport ...cont'd

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## Introduction

Officials of ECLAC's Transport Division in Santiago, Chile, and at the Subregional Headquarters in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, are confident that following a recent meeting of experts on Caribbean maritime transport, the region has moved one step closer to resolving some of its problems in this area.

The two-day Experts' Meeting on Maritime Transport in the Caribbean was held in mid-September, at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

Initiated by the Transport Unit at ECLAC Headquarters in Santiago, Chile and facilitated by the ECLAC Subregional Office, the Experts' Meeting drew several professionals from the private sector working in maritime transport in the region. Participants also included representatives from several of the regional and international agencies including the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the Organisation of American States (OAS), UNCTAD-TRAINMAR Inter-regional Programme, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In addition to experts from the private sector and from international agencies, several experts from international universities in the United States and Mexico, also participated in the Meeting.

Dr. Jan Hoffmann, Port & Shipping Specialist at ECLAC Santiago's Transport Division, who spearheaded the meeting, expressed the view that the Experts' Meeting was an overall success, and is very optimistic about the future, in terms of further strengthening, the ties of co-operation forged at the meeting.

In particular, Dr. Hoffmann lauded the strong spirit of co-operation which existed between both the Santiago and Port-of-Spain ECLAC offices and contributed to the meeting's success.

Dr. Hoffmann noted that many of the participants attended the Experts' Meeting at their own expense, primarily because of their interest in the subject matter of the meeting.



"Many of the participants have been conducting their own research and capacity-building projects in the area of maritime trade and transport," he stated, "and as a result of bringing these people together, we were able to discover many synergies which could now be exploited."

In terms of the outcome of the meeting itself, Dr. Hoffmann reported that the experts present agreed on specific future joint activities concerning the creation of trade databases, and further capacity-building and research in the area of regional maritime transport. Indeed, he is confident that several research projects and studies in Caribbean maritime trade and transport will follow as a direct result of the meeting.

"It was very heartening to see the way different regional and international organisations came together at the meeting," he observed, "actively participating and showing a keen interest in the topic of maritime transport in the Caribbean. This type of active co-operation," he pointed out, "would only redound to the benefit of the region."

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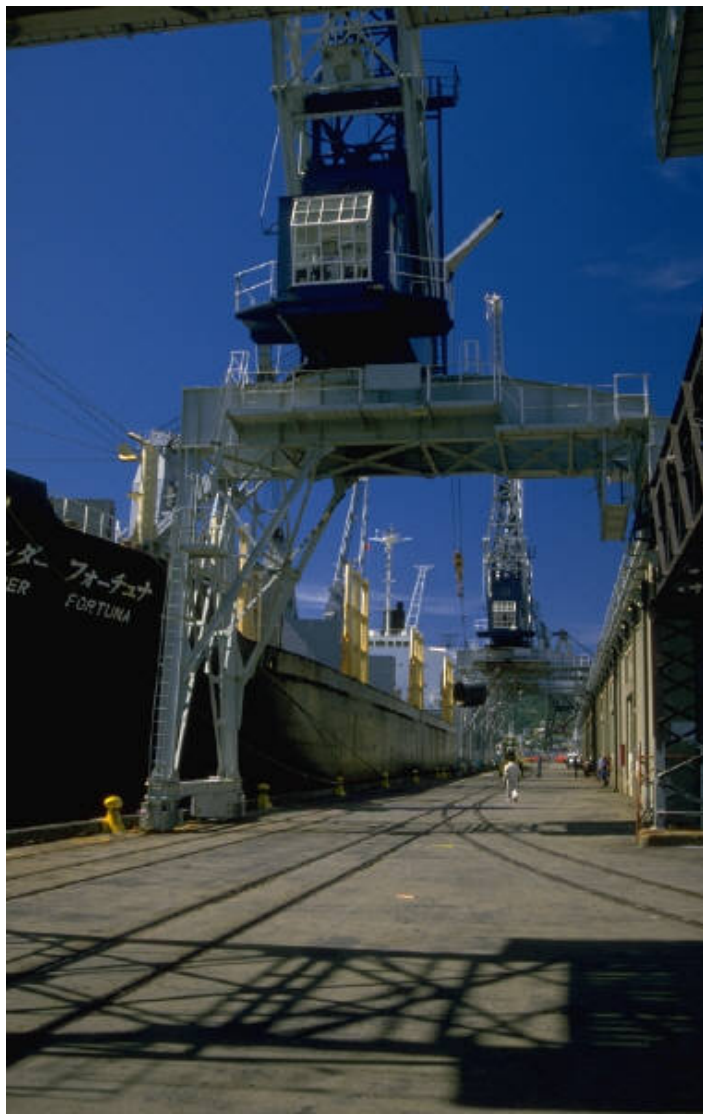
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## Rationale for the Meeting



Maritime transport is more critical to the development of Caribbean economies, than for many other regions. In terms of the percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the Caribbean subregion conducts significantly more trade in goods than most other countries of the world. Nevertheless, maritime transport costs are higher in the Caribbean than in other regions.

Among the challenges facing the wider Caribbean as it embarked on a trend of promoting trade are:

1. Increasing private sector participation in port development;
2. Reducing restrictions in maritime transport and encouraging competition;
3. Establishing national "hub ports" – through global networks, mergers and alliances and private sector participation – as a way of increasing transshipment;
4. Other critical issues such as telematics (which would result in increased productivity and becomes more important in the context of globalisation, and also leads to fewer intermediaries and reduced transaction costs); standardisation of procedures; and international negotiations.

The Experts' Meeting on Caribbean Maritime Transport in the Caribbean sought to analyse the determinants of high Caribbean transport costs, and discuss and co-ordinate ongoing and possible future activities by Caribbean Governments, port and maritime authorities, and regional and international organisations, with a view to improving maritime transport and port services in the Caribbean.

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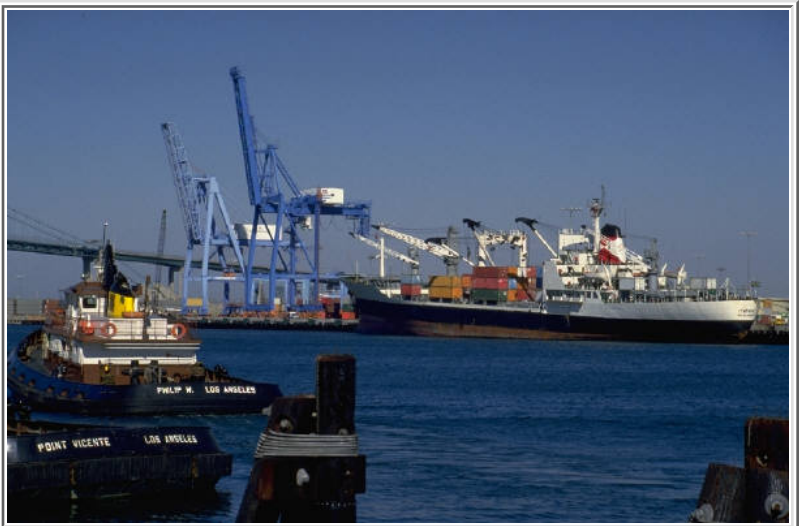
## Highlights of the Experts' Meeting

Participants at the meeting were organised into small working groups, in their respective areas of interest, with a view to discovering synergies and also to define and co-ordinate future projects. Following these working sessions, the findings of each working group was presented at a roundtable discussion.

Among the discussion topics of the working groups were:

1. The creation of an International Trade Database, similar to the "BTI" which is maintained by ECLAC's Transport Unit for Latin American countries.
2. The creation of a port database on port costs and productivity, to enhance inter-port competition and to facilitate decision making by shippers.
3. The creation of a Commodity and Shipper Trade Database, sourcing information from the ports.
4. Engaging in Joint studies, to produce information available to all member countries as a public good, for example transshipment trends, or impact of the widening of the Panama Canal.
5. The execution of a Training Needs Assessment and capacity-building (the development of course materials, training of trainers, etc.); seminars on port facilitation; and the IMO's FAL convention, environment protection in ports and the Caribbean Sea, exchange of internships, among others.

The primary outcome of deliberations by the Working Group examining possible activities for research and other collaborative projects in the future, included a comparative case study of five very small islands, each having only one common-user non-transshipment port (that is, a study of monopolistic ports).



Other possible research projects agreed upon by the participants were: examining the location of potential transshipment centres or "hub-ports" in the Caribbean; inter-island transport of cargo and people; and the implications of the widening of the Panama Canal for shipping and transshipment patterns in the wider Caribbean.

The Working Group concerned with the creation of an international trade databases were informed that although this was not carried out in as systematic a manner as CARICOM collected its trade data, the ECLAC Subregional Office had been collecting data on trade volumes for many Caribbean States. Among the various recommendations put forward by the Working Group on this issue, among the most significant were ensuring standardisation (as far as possible) of data collection and analysis; and possible co-operation among all regional and international agencies involved in this type of activity, to reduce duplication of efforts and capitalise on synergies present.

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## The Way Forward



The two-day Experts' Meeting on Maritime Transport in the Caribbean provided an opportunity for key actors in the regional maritime transport arena to come together and openly discuss their vision for the future of the industry, identifying obstacles to progress, and actively seek to create mechanisms to overcome these.

As a result of the meeting, the region has moved one step closer to resolving some of its problems in the area of Maritime Transport. Several recommendations made by participants point to future activities involving collaboration and co-operation, building on the ties which were forged at the Experts' Meeting.

Indeed, added impetus might well have been given to existing projects concerning the creation of trade databases, further capacity-building, and general research projects and studies in the area of Caribbean maritime trade and transport, as a direct result of the meeting.

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# Abstracts of documents recently published by ECLAC/CDCC

## **Renewable energy in the Caribbean, where we are, where we should be** 16 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.565 CCST/99/1

This paper looks at the link between energy, development and the environment and examines the status of energy sources in the Caribbean. The potential of wind, solar, hydroelectric, biomass and ocean thermal energy conversion is assessed and alternative sources of energy such as geothermal and natural gas is also looked at. The paper suggests that there is no clear policy on energy use in the Caribbean and policy recommendations are made in respect of the various energy sources.

## **Impact of trade liberalization on Government finances in Jamaica** 67 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.574

This study examines the effects of trade liberalization and the fluctuations of commodity prices and income from services on public finance in Jamaica. The assessment is divided into two main periods - 1980 to 1990, the phase leading up to the liberalization programmes; and 1991 to 1999, the period which saw the implementation of the Common External Tariff, the elimination of the Jamaica Commodity Trading Company, the implementation of the General Consumption Tax and the revision of the motor vehicle import policy.

## **Competitiveness of the manufacturing and agro-industrial sector in the Caribbean with a focus on Dominica, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago** 43 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.576

This study, with its focus on four Caribbean countries thought to be fairly representative of the Caribbean Community, revisits the foundations of competitiveness theory and defines competitiveness. The structure of the regional manufacturing sector and the factors which influence the competitiveness of the sector are analysed. Policy recommendations for strengthening the competitiveness of the sector are included.

## **Summary of Caribbean economic performance - 1998** 42 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.578

Structural reforms and other economic policies; economic activity, inflation and employment; monetary developments and changes in public finance; international trade and payments – These are some of the areas examined in this review of the performance of Caribbean economies in 1998. A statistical annex is included.

## **Review of Caribbean economic and social performance in the 1980s and 1990s** 39 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.579

Beginning with a description of the global and regional context, this study reviews trade reforms and trade performance; macroeconomic performance, including savings, investment and economic growth, foreign direct investment, fiscal deficits, inflation and external debt; exchange rates; production structures and changes in social structures. Statistical annex is included.

## **Report of the ECLAC/CDCC Third Caribbean Ministerial conference on women: Review and Appraisal of the FWCW platform or action** 42 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.584

Included in this report are the results of the Election of the Bureau of Presiding Officers; a summary of the working draft of the subregional report and amendments recommended by the meeting; a summary of three panel discussions on: poverty and the economy; women in power and decision-making; and human rights, peace and violence. Reports from regional and international agencies and NGOs are also summarized in the report. Other presentations focused on the study on gender mainstreaming, gender management systems and the perspectives of the CARICOM triennial awardees.

## **Impact of trade liberalization and fluctuations of commodity prices on Government finances: The case of St. Lucia** 35 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.586

This paper provides an assessment of the effects of trade liberalization and fluctuations in banana prices on government finances in Saint Lucia. Trade liberalization has been pursued within the context of the Common External Tariff (CET) of CARICOM. Fiscal reforms were implemented at each stage of implementation of the CET. This strategy has been highly successful and, as a result, revenue losses from import duties have been neutralised by revenue gains from consumption taxes. The paper also highlights the importance of banana exports to the economy. The over-dependence on banana exports renders the Saint Lucia economy highly exposed to changes in export markets.

## **Trade policy in CARICOM: overview of the main trade policy measures** 31 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.591

This paper reviews trade policy regimes in CARICOM countries during the 1980s and 1990s. CARICOM trade policy regimes have undergone substantial changes in the 1990s reflecting the desire of the group's member countries to move away from inward-looking to more outward-oriented growth and development. The growing recognition of the importance of export promotion policies led to the adoption of a programme for the Harmonization of Fiscal Incentives to Industry in 1993. All the CARICOM countries have introduced a series of export promotion measures, including fiscal incentive regimes and export financing schemes. Despite the policy of trade liberalization adopted by many countries and which, in general, has resulted in the reduction of tariffs, many CARICOM countries continue to apply additional trade charges, such as customs surcharges, stamp duty and discriminatory rates of consumption taxes. These taxes affect imports of non-CARICOM and CARICOM countries.

## **Recent trade performance of Caribbean countries** 42 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.592

The paper analyzes the evolution of trade patterns of the countries comprising the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) with the following integration groupings: Andean Community, the Central American Common Market (CACM), the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Union (EU) in the 1990s. The comparison of CDCC trade is determined by its production structure, while preferential trading arrangements and historical links influenced its direction of trade. Despite repeated attempts at diversifying their economies, both in terms of products and markets, CDCC exports remain highly concentrated on a narrow range of relatively low value added primary products and manufactured goods, which are principally exported to North America and the EU. The United States remain, by far, the dominant partner for these countries.

## **Recent global economic developments** 28 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.596

This paper highlights salient economic developments which have influenced the global context in which small open island economies, such as those in the Caribbean, must operate. Output and inflation, trade developments, international finance with special reference to the Asian crisis, savings and investment and developments in capital flows are among the areas reviewed.

## **Report of the meeting of experts to discuss the establishment of a Caribbean Digital Library on the Web** 31 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.610

The meeting was held to discuss modalities for collaborating in the establishment of a digital library for the Caribbean. The meeting discussed the organization and proposed administrative structure of the digital library; the subject matter, technical web management issues and other areas such as copyright, financing and suggested target audience. All decisions taken at the meeting, including the decision to form a Caribbean Digital Library Consortium, are recorded in the report. The ECLAC Director's remarks to the opening session, as well as the discussion note prepared to give focus to the deliberations are annexed to the report.

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