June 2000

...in this issue...

A look at the Caribbean orientation toward the contemporary international political reality, as the region pursues its sustainable development objectives.

Caribbean information specialists move to create a Caribbean digital library on the Internet.

Why regional governments must try to foster a science and technology culture, among Caribbean people.

Abstracts and listings of recently produced publications and documents from ECLAC/CDCC.
Orientations for the Future: the CDCC, Globalisation and Sustainable Development

Our feature article provides a look at the Caribbean orientation toward the contemporary international political and economic reality, as the region pursues its sustainable development objectives in that environment. This element is explored in the context of the wider Third World approach to that same environment.

The sustainable development paradigm centred on the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS/POA), is incorporated into the analysis, with the suggestion that both major themes treated in the paper might need to be revisited, if maximum benefits are to be derived from them.

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Introduction

The establishment of the CDCC took place during what was undoubtedly the high point of Third World activism on the international scene of late, reflecting, inter alia, the momentum of decolonisation and the consequent incorporation of new areas of interest and concern into the international agenda. Within the United Nations, particularly in the General Assembly, the Specialised Agencies and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the CDCC provided the historical context for the strain articulation by developing countries, the G-77, of the profound changes they desired to bring about in the international economic system which was characterised by them as being unjust and inequitable, favouring the interests of the developed countries to the detriment of the economies of the Third World.

This was the era of the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), whose call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), numerous giant caucuses of developing countries in the UN, the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China, the first ever South Summit!, and the International Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) at which the developing countries, represented by the G-77, for the first time in history, made an inscription in the UN Register and declared their determination to engage the United Nations, its organs and agencies to address the problems and challenges of globalisation and sustainable development.

Significantly, merely a fortnight after the Eighteenth Session of the CDCC convened, and against the backdrop of the ever intensifying globalisation of economic relations, at the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China, the first ever South Summit!, there was nothing less than a comprehensive reaffirmation of the principles, goals, and aspirations that had guided the developing countries on their path of action, particularly the call for a New International Economic Order. Significantly, the substantive points made in this Declaration were, in the end, harmonised with the recommendations made by the Group of 77 and China at the Eighth Session of the CDCC.

Yet, on the basis of the foregoing, it is difficult to avoid the perception that the orientations articulated by the countries of the Caribbean in such debates were shaped, not only by the special problems and interests of the Caribbean, but also by the general development concerns of Third World countries in North and South. The emergence of the G-77 and its evident drive for a New International Economic Order and other structural changes to the international economic system, reflected the increasing awareness of the developing countries at that time of the causes of their economic handicaps and the need to address them. For example, the Declaration of the Fourth Summit of the G-77, held in 1976, declared that the policies of the developed countries had contributed to the multinationalisation and internationalisation of the world economy to such an extent that the small and medium-sized developing countries were at a disadvantage in the international economic environment. The Declaration of the Fourth Summit of the G-77 declared that the developed countries had failed to observe the principles of reciprocity, equal treatment for national and foreign investment and enterprise, and the end of discrimination in the trade and investment relationships with the developing countries. The Declaration of the Fourth Summit of the G-77, in line with the recommendations of the Group of 77 and China at the Eighth Session of the CDCC, called for the implementation of international agreements, conventions and programmes to provide the developing countries with the necessary means to achieve their development goals and objectives.

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Another interesting dimension in this discussion, is the clear disenchantment that has been manifested in a number of the developed country capitals with respect to the liberalisation/globalisation paradigm. This is in contrast to the debate on the NIEO of the 1970s which gave clear evidence of a polarisation between developing and developing countries. Even more significant, is the fact that the concerns articulated by the protesters in these countries, namely, fear of the loss of jobs and of increasing socio-economic inequalities within and among countries; as well as increasing competition from imports in a liberalized international market place, among others, exactly coincide with those articulated by the G-77 and China.

This disenchantment has manifested itself in the effective disruption of the negotiations convened under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation in Seattle, USA, in December, 1999 and of meetings convened by the IMF and the World Bank in Washington, USA, in early 2000. A similar phenomenon is apparent in some Western European capitals which were also the scene of vigorous demonstrations by anti-free trade protesters on May Day, 2000.

In June, 2000, these protests by the same group of anti-free traders, environmentalists and other activists that disrupted the meetings of the WTO, IMF and the World Bank continued in an effort by the "OAS Shutdown Coalition" to disrupt the General Assembly of the Organisation of American States (OAS) which opened in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, on 4 June, 2000. The OAS is closely involved in the process aimed at the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) by 2005. In the event, the protests in Windsor were mirrored by another across the US river border in Detroit. It remains to be seen whether these protests have served to signal the existence, even in developed countries, of viewpoints that are strongly opposed to the ideas and policies advocated by the range of multilateral trade and financial organisations in this new and still evolving international political and economic system.

Fundamentally, however, what these protests have served to demonstrate, is that the debate on the globalisation issue constitutes an interaction between losers and beneficiaries in the process, that is to say, between those who benefit from global integration and those whose interests are hurt by that process, irrespective of their location whether in developing or developed countries. It is nevertheless recognised that the major losers will be in the developing countries.

What is evident from the foregoing is that, while there exists a common interpretation of the evolving structure, as well as of the dynamics, of the contemporary international liberalized, globalised environment, there is nothing resembling consensus on the approach that is to be adopted, as between the countries of the Caribbean, on the one hand, and the wider group of developing countries of the G-77 and China, on the other, as they pursue their fundamental goal, namely, the sustainable development of their countries, incorporating the sustainable human development of their respective populations, within that same environment. Accommodation and adjustment, confrontation and manipulation and even pragmatism, appear to represent the major alternative options that have been adopted and, to varying degrees, pursued, in this regard.
Against the backdrop of the foregoing, the goal being pursued by the developing countries, that of sustainable development, is also an area in respect of which a fundamental question might be asked. When the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was adopted in 1994, it was recognized to have elaborated principles and to have set out strategies for development that will protect the fragile environments of small island States. Not surprisingly, since the agreements enshrined in that Programme of Action sought to build on the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, “the blueprint for global sustainable development that was approved at the Earth Summit”, the document had a focus that was comprehensively environmental. The substantive Chapters of the Programme of Action are devoted to such issues as Climate Change and Sea Level Rise; Natural and Environmental Disasters; Management of Waste; Coastal and Marine Resources; and so on. Nevertheless, from the perspective of Caribbean SIDS, among others, a major shortcoming of the Plan of Action was the absence of the holistic policy-making approach that is required in the sustainable development context. For, even as these SIDS pursued their sustainable development, fully aware of the prescriptions of the SIDS POA, they nevertheless saw their efforts largely frustrated by the need to allocate significant amounts of attention and resources to such pressing socio-economic issues as increasing levels of poverty and unemployment, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the diminution of trade preferences hitherto enjoyed in critical markets, among others.

At the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly which convened in September 1999, to review and appraise the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action, this shortcoming was addressed. “Poverty” was identified as a major problem affecting the capacity of many small island developing States to achieve sustainable development. Poverty was also recognised to be exacerbated by unemployment. In the area of commerce, the General Assembly recognised the urgency of addressing such issues as trade, investment, commodities and capital markets from the perspective of SIDS, recognising also, that the pace of globalization and trade liberalization had affected the economies of small island developing States by presenting new problems and opportunities for them and increasing the need for focussed implementation of the Programme of Action. The basic observation on the Special Session -- and this was perhaps its major outcome -- is the incorporation, in operational terms, of the socio-economic issues into the process of implementation of the Programme of Action. The General Assembly had finally recognised, in explicit terms, the need to integrate economic, environmental and social components of action to achieve sustainable development.

It is at this point that the question alluded to above will be raised. As has been noted, a major deficiency in the SIDS Programme of Action, as perceived by some, has been remedied, through the incorporation of socio-economic aspects into a process that was almost exclusively environmental in focus. Can it therefore now be said, that the SIDS of the Caribbean and of the other geographical regions now have a comprehensive “blueprint” for sustainable development? What is the effective contribution of the amplified scope of implementation informed by the SIDS POA as originally drafted and as supplemented by other international decisions, such as those adopted at the Special Session of the General Assembly? What is the scope for the effective coordination of activities in the economic, environmental and social spheres at the international level in the context of the SIDS POA? Or, has the international community, albeit with the support of SIDS, succeeded in merely restating the sustainable development problematique of the small island developing States? What are the precise contours of the “blueprint” that is required in this context? And what will be done to ensure the availability of the required financial and other resources that present major constraints to the quest for sustainable development within SIDS?

Given the contingent nature of the sustainable development process in this region, among others, it may be surmised that the several dimensions of this inquiry, reaching back to the approach to be adopted by developing countries in the international arena, might well become clearer, even before the full and comprehensive review of the above mentioned decisions adopted by the Special Session of the General Assembly, when it convenes for that purpose in 2004.
The Caribbean Digital Library on the Web

...a new initiative by Caribbean information specialists

Caribbean librarians and information specialists are looking to the Internet, as well as to each other, for ways to increase access to information available on subjects of key importance to the development of the region. Time, and the region’s response, will tell whether they have found their answer.

A joint meeting of delegates recently convened by ECLAC to discuss models for cooperation to better serve the needs of the region culminated in the decision to establish a Caribbean Digital Library (CDL). The decision followed a series of initiatives aimed at creating an information infrastructure which would enable Caribbean countries to share bibliographic information with each other and (through the periodic publication of Carisplan Abstracts) with clients in the Caribbean and in other parts of the world. The objective of the Carisplan project was to achieve full bibliographic coverage of both published and unpublished literature of relevance to the social and economic development of the region. The system was targeted at senior policy makers and planners in both the public and private sectors. The idea was to cooperatively catalog this information.

The decision to establish the library was also premised on the assumption that to make information available to these readers and users, a comprehensive system capable of achieving these goals would be needed.

The Consortium agreed to adopt the definition of a digital library which guided the activities of the American Library Association on this matter. The definition stated: “A digital library is a collection of information in a digital form (text, graphics, audio, video, or graphics), which is provided, with user interface and online documentation, to a computer network of users.”

Material to be included must be of a substantive nature and not ephemeral or self-promotional.

There is much to be done, and the Caribbean Digital Library is at the embryonic stage. However, the Consortium decided to identify areas which would be added from time to time. The emphasis would be on current information which unrestricted circulation is a desired objective.

It would be useful to place these developments in context. At that time, (the late 1980s) the strategy was articulated in a landmark document entitled “Caribbean information systems to the year 2000,” prepared by the Caribbean Documentation Centre, had been at the forefront of these efforts to develop and encourage the use of information systems in the region. Using the Caricom information system as a point of departure for these efforts was the need for research information to be circulated more widely, to policy makers and planners, rather than only to libraries. The Caribbean Documentation Centre, had been at the forefront of these efforts to develop and encourage the use of information systems in the region.

Funding eventually dried up and with it, much of the enthusiasm for continuing to develop the Caribbean Documentation Centre Bulletin Board System (CBBS). This had served as an experimental bulletin board, an early regional experiment in computer based information exchange.

The Consortium moved ahead with the establishment of the Caribbean Digital Library and the Caribbean Digital Library Consortium to carry the project forward. Along with hosts, ECLAC, 13 Caribbean countries, 4 territories and 4 regional organizations joined the Consortium.

Participants were selected from a variety of backgrounds and experiences: national information systems coordinators, information specialists from regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, universities and research institutions.

Funded by the United Nations ECLAC, the project received a commitment of support from the governments of the participating States.

The Caribbean Digital Library, still a project in its infancy, can be accessed on the world wide web at:

http://searcher.eclacpos.org/focus/docs/FOCUS%20June%202000/digitallib.htm

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Caribbean Digital Library

...a new initiative by Caribbean information specialists

Web-Site Info on Selected Caribbean Islands / Countries using MSN Search Engine (May 2000)

According to a recent survey conducted by the MSN Search Engine, over 70% of the Caribbean countries are found on the site. Hard copies of the report are also available on request from the Caribbean Documentation Centre at ECLAC.

Table: Caribbean Islands/Countries

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Internet Access</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Internet Access:

- Yes: Website exists
- No: No website exists

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Introduction

The formulation of a Science and Technology (S&T) policy and the development of S&T plans and programmes for the promotion of sustainable development and innovation require up-to-date, reliable and comprehensive data on a country’s scientific and technological potential as well as its resource base. Unfortunately, for the region, no reliable sources of information relating to the use or the contribution of S&T to development efforts have been available, with which to inform decisions, develop programmes or advise policy.

In 1983, the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology, under the aegis of UNECLAC and UNESCO, undertook a survey of S&T in the Caribbean. However, the information proved to be very static and did not provide the basis for comparison or policy making. Efforts at incorporating information from the Caribbean States into the publication of the Regional Programme for Science and Technology Indicators in Latin America (RICYT) highlighted the paucity of information and data from these States, and it was decided that the development of a programme to incorporate these States into the RICYT Programme was of utmost importance.

In 1997 and 1998, two RICYT-funded resource persons conducted seminars throughout the Caribbean, on the role of indicators in policy making and the problems associated in the development of an indicators programme. Participants were introduced to the various manuals available on indicators, and to the nomenclature, approaches and interpretation of indicators as used in Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States. While these documents provided background information, it was recognised that they would be of very limited use as the focus of the developed nations was on research and development, which was outside of the scope of small Caribbean States. It was agreed that efforts should be made to develop a programme that would be more meaningful to small states, while at the same time provide some basis for compatibility with other states for analysis. In November 1999, a meeting was held in Trinidad and Tobago to identify the indicators of S&T that would be of importance to very small states, in the context of their participation in the regional programme managed by RICYT.

NEXT PAGE: Why S&T Indicators...?

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Why S&T Indicators of Innovation...?

Over the past two years there has been a growing need in Caribbean countries for an information system and database on S&T statistics. Policy makers, particularly those concerned about planning, implementation and management of technology issues, felt the need for comprehensive information.

Such information should not only be in respect of the use of input resources -- which comprise mainly the financial and human resources deployed and infrastructure available for S&T -- but also in respect of the output of such activities, measured in terms of increased productivity and economic growth, as well as the use of new technologies and their impact on society. Such information is considered useful for undertaking cost-benefit analyses and other economic studies, as well as for efficient programming, planning and budgeting. It would be relevant also when comparing the national efforts of countries in the region, with those of other developing and developed countries.

S&T indicators fulfill several functions inter alia:

1. Signaling or monitoring - giving insight and calling attention to developments and trends in the S&T system and its environment;
2. Accountability, evaluation and allocation – setting and justifying S&T budgets and giving insight into the performance of the S&T system against the goals established by policy makers and planners;
3. Legitimization – support for existing policies; and
4. Awareness – providing information to set aside prejudices and incorrect perceptions of the S&T system.

In the public sector, statistics on S&T inputs and outputs, and the consequent S&T budget should support the following activities:

1. Formulation of S&T policy, in support of economic and social objectives including analysis of the national system of innovation;
2. Provision of advice to ministers and other senior officials;
3. Support for and justification of S&T programme expenditures; and
4. Information on scientific activities for elected officials, journalists and other stakeholders.

S&T indicators “help society to understand S&T development and the integration of S&T variables with other measures of economic and social development. The resulting information becomes a public good and a necessary input for the development of society.”

The mandate of S&T ministers, ministries and institutions everywhere is to harness S&T to support social and economic development of the nation. In practice this means that the over-riding question to be addressed by quantitative studies of S&T activities is "What is the state of S&T in the nation?" In practice, this means looking at changes in the levels of human and financial resources devoted to S&T (as inputs) and in the change in the level of national development (as the desired output.) Human resources, therefore, for S&T are the common denominator among all nations. In the Caribbean context, the allocation of human resources is more indicative of the distribution of S&T assets than actual expenditure.
S&T Indicators in the Caribbean

At the series of workshops sponsored by RICYT to identify indicators that may be applicable within the Caribbean and small State context, a number of indicators were identified divided under two broad categories:

1. Economic and social data relevant to S&T activities -
   1. Population
   2. Labour force
   3. % of population with post-secondary education
   4. GDP
   5. GDP/ capita
   6. Exports as % of GDP
   7. Imports as % of GDP
   8. Foreign Direct Investment
   9. KwH/ capita
   10. Telephone lines per 1000 population
   11. Internet hosts per 1000 population
   12. Computers per 1000 population

2. S&T Indicators
   1. Public sector personnel performing S&T (including R&D) as a percent of total public sector employment
   2. Public sector S&T expenditure (incl. R&D) as a percent of government budgetary allocations
   3. Persons working in S&T (HRST) as a percent of employed labour force
   4. HRST-trained workers as a percent of employed labour force
   5. Percent of total labour force without a post-secondary education
   6. GERD as a percent of GDP
   7. Distribution of HRST by sector

Subsequent to the identification of the above indicators that are deemed applicable to the Caribbean, data collection will begin in five countries, namely Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Saint Lucia, Guyana and Jamaica. The results from these countries will be published in a document and presented to other countries at a workshop scheduled for November 2000 in Grenada. At this workshop participants will be introduced to the programme and the collection of data. Innovation indicators will also be considered and included into the programme for 2001.
Implementation of the ECLAC/CDCC work programme for the 1998-1999 biennium

LC/GAR.606 - 37 p
Port of Spain : ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 2000
CDCC, Session 18, Chaguaramas, 30 March - 1 April 2000.

This paper reports on the ECLAC/CDCC work programme and includes a report on the implementation of CDCC resolutions. Six areas of activity are identified: linkages with the global economy and competitiveness of the Caribbean countries; integration and regional cooperation; development of production and technology; economic development and information for development; human and social development; and environmental sustainability.

Draft proposed programme of work of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean.

Subprogramme 12: Subregional activities in the Caribbean.
Proposed work programme biennium 2002-2003 (by subject area)

LC/GAR.602 - 16 p.
Port of Spain : ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 2000

The work programme is presented under the following headings: economic policies and economic development; regional cooperation and integration into the international economy; statistics and information management for development; sustainable development in the Caribbean; application of science and technology to Caribbean development; and social development in the Caribbean. Planned meetings, documents and publications and operational activities are detailed in the document.

Caribbean in the decade of the 1990s

LC/GAR.600- 39 p.

Caribbean States display a number of characteristics which put them at a disadvantage in their economic and social development efforts. Among these are: resource limitations, high dependence on trade, small markets, and fragile ecosystems. This summary looks at the Caribbean in the context of the global economy and discusses the achievements of the region in the areas of governance, economic reforms, changes in social structure, environmental management, sustainable development and developments in information and communications technology.

Vulnerability of the small island developing states of the Caribbean


The paper begins with a discussion of the sustainable development capacity of small island developing states, then examines the characteristics of these states which make them vulnerable: natural hazards, limited land resources, geographic isolation, limited diversification, weak institutional capacity and special social vulnerabilities. The question of vulnerability is then examined from an international perspective. The globalisation of the economy, and the Caribbean's position vis-à-vis the European Union, the proposed FTA, the WTO and the Lome convention are discussed in this context. A way forward towards overcoming vulnerability is proposed by way of conclusion.

ECLAC/CDCC through the years: twenty five years of Caribbean research.


This document represents a record of the research prepared by or on behalf of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean between 1975 and 1999. One thousand, five hundred and eighty documents (1580) are listed in this bibliography. It is available in two volumes – Volume 1 the main bibliography and volume 2 the indexes. A ranged in “30” broad subject areas, and further sub-divided into narrower sub-topics. Each entry has a full bibliographic citation including a list of subject keywords. For most titles, there is also a brief abstract or summary of the content. Country, conference, subject and symbol indexes are included.

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