

The Hummingbird



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The ECLAC Port of Spain Newsletter

Seasons Greetings!

ECLAC in the Caribbean

ECLAC Releases Overview of Region's Economy in 2014 ... and Projections for 2015

ON 2 December 2014, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) headquarters in Santiago, Chile, will launch its flagship document, the *Preliminary Overview of the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean 2014*.

Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC's Executive Secretary, will present the main regional trends of the economies of Latin America and Caribbean countries, highlights of macroeconomic policy reforms and domestic and external performance, as well as an analysis of 2014 and projections for 2015.

Following her presenta-

tion, which will be broadcast online from Santiago, Chile, Michael Hendrickson – Economic Affairs Officer in the Economic Development Unit – will make a brief presentation on the Caribbean situation in the ECLAC Port of Spain subregional headquarters. He will also provide official data from countries in the region.

The Latin America and Caribbean region Preliminary Overview 2013, recorded GDP growth of 2.6%, down from 3.1% in 2012, testifying to the continuation of the economic slowdown apparent in the region since 2011.

For 2014, it was predicted that the global economy would present opportunities and threats for Latin America and the Caribbean.

It stated that the currency depreciation seen in several countries in the region, possibly strengthened by a shift in future financial flows towards developed countries, could, if sustained, increase incentives for investment in tradable sectors other than the region's traditional exports (commodities), while redirecting expenditure to ease pressure on the current account.

Sneak preview

Regional Seminar on Time Use Surveys

AS part of its ongoing work in the Caribbean, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is gearing-up to respond to requests from member and associate member states for statistical capacity training in the core elements of Time Use Surveys.

On 10 – 11 December 2014, a *Regional Seminar on Time Use Surveys* will be held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. To be convened by ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, with support from the ECLAC Division of Gender Affairs (Santiago, Chile), the seminar will target technical staff and practitio-

ners from gender bureaus and national statistical offices.

The event will offer a forum for sensitizing participants on the value of Time Use Surveys, in addition to facilitating the promotion of the use of Times Use Surveys for measuring all forms of work – especially women's activities. The initiative will complement ECLAC's ongoing efforts to build greater capacity in the compilation of gender statistics and in the development of gender indicators for the formulation of sound policies that promote gender equality.

Time Use Surveys are recog-

nized as one of the most comprehensive tools for measuring all forms of work, particularly unremunerated work. They provide insight on the nature, duration and context of the activities that both men and women engage in, during a specific period.

Compared to traditional statistical methods, such as household surveys and censuses, Time Use Surveys are better suited to capture and identify differences in how women and men spend time on their daily activities (paid and unpaid work), and therefore allow for a better understanding of gender dynamics.

On-the-move: ECLAC's Development Account project briefing seminar

ECLAC'S Development Account project 'Strengthening technical capacity of public finance managers in select Caribbean SIDS' received further impetus on 25 November 2014, when the ECLAC sub-regional headquarters for the Caribbean hosted a project briefing seminar at its office in Port of Spain.

The objective of the project is to deepen the expertise of policymakers and finance managers in the application of methods and procedures for better planning and forecasting of public expenditure and revenue. It began on 1 August 2014 and will end in October 2017. Although six Caribbean countries are targeted for this initial pilot study, ECLAC is hoping to raise additional funds to extend the project to all Caribbean countries.

Convened using Webex conferencing technology, the seminar brought together the project's national focal points and consultants, representatives of ECLAC Santiago, ILPES (Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning) and staff of the ECLAC Port of Spain office. The



Staff of the Economic Development Unit (EDU) listen attentively as Dillon Alleyne (at right) makes his presentation.

seminar included an overview of the project delivered by the Project Manager Dillon Alleyne, ECLAC Port of Spain Deputy Director a.i., and an informative presentation on the preparation of Public Expenditure Review (PERs) for Caribbean countries, delivered by Vanus James, Adjunct Professor of The University of Technology at the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies.

During his presentation, Alleyne highlighted the primary objective of the project - to strengthen the technical capacity of public finance managers in selected Caribbean SIDS to manage their public finances. He explained that

this objective forms part of broader UN effort to promote a global post-2015 agenda, consistent with the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 and its mandate to foster an inclusive intergovernmental process to build sustainable development goals.

For this project, the expected country-level outcomes include greater capacity to conduct transparent PERs in areas of need; strengthened mechanisms and procedures for revenue and expenditure planning and forecasting; and an enhanced understanding of the challenges of the budgetary process to fiscal transparency.

James, who will begin work as international consultant for the project in February 2015, explained the purpose, rationale and methods for developing a PER Manual for Caribbean countries. He informed that a training and reference manual will be developed within the context of the project, outlining methods of bringing value to government and society as they seek to maximize gains from the use of public resources.

Climate change impacts Caribbean transportation sector

THE Conference on the impact of climate change on the transportation sector in Caribbean islands garnered notable attention at UNCTAD's Third Session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation held in Geneva, Switzerland on 24 – 26 November, 2014.

Joining in via video-conference facility, Willard Phillips – ECLAC Port of Spain's Economic Affairs Officer – outlined some of the challenges being faced in the region. In particular, attention was drawn to issues such as the extreme weather conditions which have caused the flooding of runways at airports located near the coasts – which is the case in most Caribbean countries –; the vulnerability of port infrastructure (such as jetties and marinas) to rising sea levels; and the increased risk of overtopping during storm surges.

Phillips maintains that cost effective and efficient transportation is critical for development, and that this is

especially true for the highly trade and tourism dependent small island states of the Caribbean, where transportation is necessary for the movement of goods into and out of the region.

Equally important, he argues, is that many states require an efficient transport sector to bring tourists to the region, and to facilitate the intra-regional movement of people in order to forge an

integrated regional economy. Moreover, while on the one hand the region benefits from a notable share of global cruise passenger traffic and stop-over tourism trade, on the other hand the high incentive cost of having international airlines operating in the region, coupled with the high cost for intra-regional passenger travel (in terms of time and money), hamper the region's further economic growth.

Climate change has added yet another layer of difficulty in terms of its threats to existing systems, as well as new costs for adaptation, repair and replacement of critical transportation infrastructure after increasingly frequent natural events.

Looking towards the future, enhanced policy frameworks, risk assessment, financing and capacity building remain but a few of the necessary actions to be taken if the region is to overcome these challenges in the medium to long term.



Economic Affairs Officer Willard Phillips

Beijing +20 review ... and appraisal of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995



Participants at the recent meeting in Santiago, with (second from left) Social Development Unit Coordinator Sheila Stuart.

THE Caribbean technical meeting on the Beijing +20 review and appraisal of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action took place in Santiago Chile, on 14 - 15 November 2014. The meeting focused attention on the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, and provided a forum for reflection on the ongoing gender concerns facing the Caribbean subregion during the past two decades.

Participants from 10 member and two associate member states of

the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), including four Ministers, took part in the meeting.

Discussions addressed gender and development issues in

the Caribbean over the past two decades, and reviewed the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women.

The meeting considered a subregional report on the implementation of the Platform for Action in the Caribbean. It indicates that while there has been noticeable progress and achievements in the subregion, such advancement has been uneven and a number of challenges remain in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Discussions also focussed on the opportunities for strengthening

gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda, through the integration of a gender perspective.

In support of this, and in preparation for the 2015 session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which will review the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years following its adoption, the meeting adopted a Caribbean Statement outlining the ongoing challenges facing the subregion with respect to gender and development issues, and proposed actions to address these issues.

The meeting was co-sponsored by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality, the Multi-country Office for the Caribbean and the Subregional Office for the Caribbean of the United Nations Population Fund, and was supported by the Division of Gender Affairs of ECLAC in Santiago, Chile.

ECLAC supports Orange Day 2014



THE ECLAC office showed their support for the UNiTE Campaign to End Violence Against Women 2014, which invites everyone to **Orange Your Neighbourhood** during the international 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

The 16 Days run from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to 10 December (Human Rights Day). The campaign encourages concerned citizens to organise "Orange Events" in to demonstrate support for ending violence against women and girls.



Some staff members of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean staff wear orange to show support for the Orange Your Neighbourhood campaign 2014.

"Let's stop all violence against women."

Focus on the ECLAC Family

The spirit of Christmas ... helping those in need

AS Christmas rapidly approaches, the ECLAC staff are getting into the seasonal spirit by generously donating to great causes.

This year, ECLAC staff has launched donation drives to benefit not one, but two charities - the Project Faith Foundation, which assists families in need in rural areas of Trinidad and Tobago; and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which routinely provides support to organisations whose services are dedicated to helping some of the poorest families in the country.

To this end, staff are donating foodstuff, as well as clothes and toys, to make the less fortunate happy. Christmas is the season for giving!

Brawta: Something extra!

Celebrating Christmas... Caribbean style



CHRISTMAS in the Caribbean begins as early as November, as friends and family start making plans for their perfect celebration.

The media and businesses join in, and it is now commonplace to hear Christmas carols and folk songs playing on the radios and in stores weeks before, as shelves are stocked with Christmas goodies. Shopping is a major pre-Christmas activity in the Caribbean, with some folks enjoying the hustle and bustle of the crowded stores and "flea markets", as they search for that elusive bargain on new goods.

The Christmas

setting is important, so the house must be cleaned thoroughly, the tree put up and decorated in good time, and Christmas greeting cards hung up or collected in a prominent place. Houses are painted, even if only on the outside, and new curtains, furnishings and appliances are added, as far as the pocket will allow.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the parang season starts early, with adult and school festivals and competitions being held in the weeks before the holiday. (You don't feel like its Christmas until you hear the popular "Ah Want Ah Piece Ah Pork" by Scrunter).

ECLAC staff member tops graduating class



Vera Deokiesingh-Fraser with her three awards on graduation day.

Congratulations to Public Information Assistant Vera Deokiesingh-Fraser, who has upheld ECLAC's high standards of excellence in research.

Deokiesingh-Fraser received her Associate of Science Degree in Environmental Management from Cipriani College of Labour Studies in Trinidad and Tobago in November.

She graduated at the top of her class, which placed her on the Director's Honours List, and for which she also received the prizes for Best Research Paper and Most Outstanding Student in her discipline. Well done Vera!

This is the time of year people come together with their cuatros, box-base, bottle and spoon, maracas (shac-shacs) and tambourine, going from house-to-house in their neighbourhoods, singing and playing music.

People visit friends and family during the season, and you have to sample every auntie's black cake and taste every granny's sorrel, not to mention the lady-next-door's ponche de creme and pastelle.

Pastelles, a gift from Trinidad's Amerindian and Spanish heritage, are a cornmeal pie stuffed with minced beef, highly seasoned, with capers and olives among the essential ingredients.

Baked bread and ham, ginger beer, macaroni pie, and imported apples and grapes — are not to be left out of everyone's menu, and it doesn't matter how many people come to visit, there are always left-overs.

What's Up ... upcoming events in the Caribbean

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
2 December	Launch of the Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean	Trinidad & Tobago/Chile
3 December	Expert group meeting on digital currencies	Trinidad & Tobago
5 December	Saint Nicholas Day	Curacao
10-11 December	Regional seminar on time-use surveys	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines