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Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

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Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
26 June 2015
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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**REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE MONITORING
COMMITTEE OF THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND
COOPERATION COMMITTEE**

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A. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) adopted by acclamation the conclusions and recommendations below, which are based on the statement made by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as Rapporteur of the meeting (on behalf of Saint Lucia), and appended *ad verbatim* as annex III of this report.
2. The meeting acknowledged the excellent work of the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean over the past year, and expressed the hope that it would continue to receive adequate resources to conduct its work in the coming biennium.
3. The Monitoring Committee recognized the enhanced standing of the CDCC associate Members, who were invited to better engage with the efforts of ECLAC by sharing their areas of specific technical interests. This would facilitate better integration of those interests into the programme of work of the ECLAC subregional headquarters. The meeting also acknowledged the interest of Cuba in the work of the ECLAC subregional headquarters, and ECLAC committed to better integrate them into the work of the subregional headquarters.
4. ECLAC should undertake focused analysis with respect to the development of the maritime transportation sector in the subregion in order to strengthen the regional trade regime.
5. The meeting agreed to seek a suitable replacement for the Chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM).
6. The Monitoring Committee took note that in accordance with the established practice of rotation by country in English alphabetical order, Saint Kitts and Nevis is the next in line for the Chairmanship of the CDCC. The Committee therefore welcomed the announcement of the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis to assume the Chairmanship of the twenty-sixth session of the CDCC in 2016. The Secretariat would consult with the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis with a view to finalizing the date for the twenty-sixth session of the CDCC.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date of the meeting

7. The seventeenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC took place in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on 26 June 2015.

2. Attendance

8. Representatives of 13 member States of the CDCC attended the seventeenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.
9. Representatives of four associate Members were present at the meeting: Cayman Islands, Martinique, Montserrat and Sint Maarten.

10. The following United Nations bodies were represented: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

11. Representatives of the following specialized agencies of the United Nations attended the meeting: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

12. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended the meeting: the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) and the Organization of American States (OAS). A representative from the Institute of Marine Affairs also attended.

13. Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Germany, The Netherlands, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Republic of Korea and the United States of America attended in the capacity of Observers.

14. The full list of participants may be found in annex I.

3. Officers

15. In accordance with the elections at the twenty-fifth session of the CDCC, the officers of the Monitoring Committee were as follows:

Chairperson:	Jamaica
Vice-Chairpersons:	Cuba Saint Kitts and Nevis Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Rapporteur:	Saint Lucia

4. Documentation

16. A list of working documents submitted by the secretariat to the meeting is attached as annex II.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of the meeting

17. At the opening of the seventeenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC, remarks were made by the following speakers:

- Diane Quarless, Director, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean
- Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary, ECLAC
- The Honourable Winston Dookeran, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago
- The Honourable Arnaldo Brown, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica, and Chair of the CDCC

18. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean opened the seventeenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC. She welcomed participants and wished them a fruitful and engaging meeting. She then invited the Executive Secretary of ECLAC to address the meeting via video-conference.

19. The Executive Secretary greeted the participants and expressed her regret at not being able to attend the meeting. She thanked the Chair and the Government of Jamaica for continued leadership of the CDCC. She paid tribute to the Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, whom she noted had decided to pursue 'new pathways' on his journey. She expressed appreciation for his ardent support of ECLAC and ongoing debate on the region's future. She underlined the importance of the convergence model, championed by the Foreign Minister, which was based on a structuralist economic perspective. She noted that 2015 marked the 40th year since the establishment of the CDCC as a subsidiary body of the Commission, and challenged the CDCC to facilitate a deeper and more meaningful engagement with countries of the subregion. She expressed her pleasure that so many associate Members had attended the meeting. She also thanked the Director and the team in Port of Spain for supporting the Caribbean in facing its major development challenges.

20. She noted that the Monitoring Committee meeting and the Symposium on Sustainable Development Goals for the Caribbean within the post-2015 Development Agenda, which was held over the two days prior to the Monitoring Committee meeting, were essential in ensuring that the post-2015 development agenda worked for the Caribbean by integrating key proposals into the plans and budgetary processes of member States. She underscored the importance of addressing the data challenges confronting the Caribbean, which was essential to meeting the monitoring and reporting requirements of the post-2015 development agenda. She also highlighted the importance of strengthened governance to devolve decision-making at the community and other levels where they were more effective. She also enjoined the international community to develop a new dynamic development finance framework coming out of Addis to provide resources for structural change, growing exports, disaster risk mitigation and climate change adaptation, among other areas.

21. The Executive Secretary indicated that ECLAC planned to give specific attention to the indebtedness of Caribbean SIDS during the meeting, because debt levels in the subregion were among the highest in the world and posed a significant obstacle to sustained growth and development of these economies. She flagged natural disasters as an important contributor to growth in debt, their impact costing the region over US\$430.7 billion during the period 2000-2014. She advanced that ECLAC believed the case for debt relief for Caribbean middle-income countries was a compelling one, and that the region needed to present its case in global forums. She also noted that Latin American countries were aware of and supported the proposal, and signalled her intent to bring the proposal to the attention of CARICOM at the Heads of Government meeting in Barbados. In closing, she reaffirmed the continued commitment of ECLAC to the provision of technical support for the Caribbean.

22. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago greeted participants and lauded the Executive Secretary's concern for the Caribbean. He noted that the CDCC was an initiative of the Governments of Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago. Recalling that he began his career in international affairs at ECLAC many years ago, he embraced the opportunity to speak at the meeting with a certain degree of nostalgia as his career in representational politics drew to a close. He suggested that the agenda of the meeting was timely.

23. He raised four important issues for the region: i) The third conference on Financing for Development should demand new rules of engagement in global finance that are based on transparency, collaboration and partnership; ii) The Post-2015 Development Agenda should search for new models for the Caribbean, including the Caribbean convergence framework; iii) The meeting should consider

whether equity drives growth or vice versa, or the extent to which they work together; and iv) Sustainability of the planet means that climate change issues should be prioritized, and the region should leverage the Paris meeting to push for a global initiative that considers the needs of developing countries.

24. Finally, he challenged the region to move forward with a sense of confidence and strong advocacy for the issues that had been agreed upon. He also thanked delegates for supporting Trinidad and Tobago's bid to host the Secretariat of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

25. The Minister of State of Jamaica and Chair of the CDCC expressed gratitude to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago for his work in advancing Caribbean development and regional integration. He noted that, although the Caribbean had weathered the global crisis, there were still important challenges to resilient development in the region. The region posted low growth of 0.6 per cent since the crisis of 2008. In addition, unemployment averaged over 12 per cent for countries with data since the crisis, and youth unemployment was as high as 25 per cent in some countries. Compounding these challenges was the severe debt crisis that resulted in significant debt servicing costs. He reiterated the view that debt relief must be a part of the strategic approach to reducing debt levels in the Caribbean.

26. He challenged the region to implement a bold export strategy by diversifying into competitive non-traditional activities. He also urged the region to focus on reducing the over US\$ 5.0 billion food import bill, which was a major drain on foreign exchange earnings. He indicated that upgrading the skills and capacity of workers in the region to enable them to improve the quality of goods and services must support the export strategy. Finally, he underscored the critical need to address gaps in social development. Important among these were the need for creative initiatives to tackle narco-trafficking, crime and social deviance.

2. Adoption of the agenda

27. The meeting adopted the agenda of the meeting without any changes (LC/L.4013 (MCCDCC.17/1)).

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. A coordinated strategy to address debt reduction for sustainable development in the Caribbean.
3. Financing for Caribbean development.
4. Sustainable development goals for the Caribbean within the post-2015 development agenda.
5. Progress in implementation of the 2014-2015 programme of work for the Caribbean.
6. Other matters.
7. Date and venue of the twenty-sixth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee.
8. Conclusions and recommendations.

3. A coordinated strategy to address debt reduction for sustainable development in the Caribbean

28. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC presented the ECLAC proposal for debt relief among Caribbean SIDS. He noted that growth was not an end in itself, but was rather a means to finance social and other programmes and to build resilience. However, high debt had been an important constraint to decent growth in the Caribbean. Nevertheless, the level and composition of public debt was highly heterogeneous among Caribbean SIDS. For the region as a whole, aggregate multilateral and bilateral debt represented, respectively, 40 per cent and 14 per cent of total external debt.

29. He outlined a number of reasons why the Caribbean should receive debt relief. Important among those was that, given the magnitude of the debt burden, the fiscal adjustment needed to achieve sustainability would be too great. He pointed out that the debt problem resulted largely from economic and environmental shocks and not fiscal profligacy; going forward, the debt problem would make it difficult for the region to address the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

30. He presented the elements of the proposal, which comprised of two axes: forgiveness of multilateral concessional debt and creation of a resilience fund. With respect to the first, ECLAC proposed that the multilateral institutions gradually write-off 100 per cent of the region's multilateral debt stock. Bilateral donors should also be asked to participate. An institution such as the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) would manage the Caribbean Resilience Fund. Caribbean small States would be able to access the Fund to finance projects and activities that are deemed to be growth-promoting, poverty reducing or environmental-protecting. Financing would also be provided for education, health and public safety among other crucial social development activities. The Fund would provide more certain resources for disaster relief and risk reduction projects, and a tranche would also be dedicated to infrastructure projects aimed at climate change adaptation and mitigation.

31. Regarding the second axis of the proposal, the Deputy Executive Secretary indicated that the macroeconomic and stabilization fund would be a countercyclical fund to address the fall-out from external economic shocks. Like its counterparts, a prestigious institution such as the CDB would manage it. Finally, he suggested that the proposal arose from the recognition of shared but differential responsibility, and noted that the relatively small size of regional debt in the international context meant that relief posed no systemic risk to the global financial system.

32. A dialogue followed the presentation of the debt relief proposal for Caribbean SIDS, during which a number of participants expressed support for the proposal.

33. The Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago stated that he was very pleased with the proposal, in particular the suggested resilience fund. He noted that funding should be sourced to close critical structural gaps in the region, and highlighted the absence of robust buffers at the international level to address long-term shocks. He then challenged the region to link domestic policy with the types of international financial support that are sought to ensure consistency. He thanked the Deputy Executive Secretary and ECLAC for the presentation and challenged the region to devise a strong advocacy strategy to realize the proposal. The representative of the Bahamas raised the question of the complementarity of the resilience fund and Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF). ECLAC noted that the resilience fund would complement the CCRIF, but would also cover disaster risk reduction. The representative of the ILO queried whether there were any criteria for contributing to the Resilience Fund, and was informed by the Chair that the proposal had not yet reached that stage.

34. The representative of the University of the West Indies noted that the linking of the debt relief to the Resilience Fund would provide donors a level of confidence that the fiscal space provided would be

used properly. He felt that the arrangement could be used to promote global public goods such as climate change, noting that a portion of the debt relief provided could be earmarked for the Caribbean Macroeconomic Stabilization Fund and augmented by contributions. He noted that the idea of using the CDB or another well-established institution to administer the funds was a good one. The stabilization fund also mirrored other work by the CDB on other funds and could minimize start-up costs, since the region would not have to go with a brand new venture.

35. The representative of the Dominican Republic noted that debt write-off must respect the culture and beliefs of indebted countries, with both debtor and creditor countries committing to this in writing. He questioned to what extent the region was responsible for the debt problem, pointing out that the IMF also contributed to the problem. He underscored a number of challenges facing the region, including limited economic integration, weak trade and exchange and the lack of a real Caribbean capital market. He urged countries to press on with the debt initiative and noted that the Dominican Republic fully supported it. The representative from Suriname noted that a debt-for-nature and debt-for-energy swap was proposed for the meeting in Addis Ababa. However, those did not state where the multilateral institutions stood and what the region had proposed. The representative requested information in this regard.

36. The Deputy Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean noted that the proposal included aspects of a debt-for-environmental swap. He indicated that the important question was what the Caribbean countries were prepared to give up. Countries were already undertaking fiscal consolidation programmes and were in a difficult position; they needed to create fiscal space to address issues of poverty and equality as well as to stimulate growth, and any relief would help with this. The representative of the University of the West Indies noted that the proposal was an important one, since debt relief was critical to fiscal sustainability in the region. He suggested that fiscal space provided by external debt relief could be important in easing government borrowing from domestic institutions, and allow better domestic debt management. He strongly endorsed the inclusion of multilateral institutions and noted that an arrangement such as the HIPC for low-income countries should be designed for highly vulnerable upper middle-income Caribbean countries.

37. The representative of Jamaica noted that the Ministry of Finance of Jamaica would want to look at the proposal more closely. He also flagged two issues of importance. The first is that the region must look at the possible conditionalities that might be imposed by creditors for debt relief. Second, he asked what would be the incentive for multilaterals to write-off the debt of Caribbean SIDS. The Deputy Chief noted that the region needed more resources, which would eliminate the need to have to source funds following each disaster. In response to the Jamaica representative, he noted that Caribbean countries were already facing a number of conditionalities as part of their fiscal consolidation programmes, and it will be difficult for them to bear additional ones. He indicated that there was an underlying notion that the growth in debt was due solely to fiscal mismanagement. This was a dangerous notion, he opined, since external and disaster shocks had been major contributors to the growth in debt in the region. The Deputy Executive Secretary also pointed out that there would need to be negotiation with the multilateral institutions with respect to the proposal. In this regard, he noted that ECLAC had already had informal consultations with key institutions on this.

4. Financing for Caribbean Development

38. The Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations provided a synopsis of the findings of the third panel of the Symposium held over the previous two days, entitled “Financing the implementation of the sustainable development goals”. He noted that the issues considered by the panel were key to making progress in the Caribbean. He pointed out that a well thought-out and articulated plan could only succeed if there were funds available for its implementation.

39. He highlighted some of the key constraints to financing development in the region, which included low growth, high vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change impacts and unsustainable debt levels. He suggested that their middle-income status had been a major obstacle to Caribbean countries financing their development, since it graduated them from international concessional finance. As a result, domestic finance now had to play a more pivotal role in growth and development the region, and would need to be bolstered by strengthened tax systems, restrained expansion of the informal economy and improved expenditure management.

40. The Permanent Representative noted that measures were needed to mobilize an optimal mix of public and private finance by promoting macroeconomic stability, improving the incentive framework to raise rates of return on savings and to reduce capital flight. He suggested that, among other measures, the region should i) Strengthen tax calculation, collection and enforcement; ii) Invest in expert management of finance institutions; iii) Improve public procurement systems and make them more transparent; and iv) Better leverage resources from credit unions and from national and regional development banks.

41. Importantly, he recommended that the region strengthen its capacity to make the best use of available funds. Countries should also give more attention to developing the implementation capacity to execute funded projects in a timely manner. Rather than tailoring projects to match funding opportunities, policy makers should first decide what programmes are needed for their countries, which ones they had the expertise to execute, and then seek funding based on the strength of their proposals. He noted that if all developed economies honoured the commitment to dedicate 0.7 per cent of their GNI to supporting the developing world, this would mobilize US\$ 350 billion annually for investment. However, the World Bank estimated that closer to US\$ 600-US\$ 800 billion per year was necessary to achieve global energy efficiency and renewable energy goals. He suggested that the region needed to find innovative financing mechanisms such as credit enhancements, green and thematic bonds, social impact bonds, the carbon market, results-based financing, and incentives for voluntary contributions. Debt-for-nature swaps could be further explored alongside diaspora financing. However, he emphasized that no innovation could entirely compensate for the Caribbean's "elephant in the room" – its debt burden. The region needed a major multilateral debt relief package, similar to the HIPC, for which only two countries in the Caribbean, Guyana and Haiti, were presently eligible. The programme therefore needed broader criteria for eligibility, which took account of Caribbean economies' unique vulnerabilities. The United Nations could lead the promotion and development of the debt relief programme, and should be actively involved in advocating for financial solutions for countries that need it. He also noted that the region needed to better leverage regional frameworks and institutions for development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. The United Nations draft Addis Ababa accord provided a basic framework, but should be translated into actionable, resource-specific outcomes that could tangibly advance the sustainable development process in the region.

42. Following the presentation, the representative of Cuba noted that over one billion people currently lived in extreme poverty. Moreover, he pointed out that those above the poverty line were at risk of falling into poverty due to adverse shocks. Women and youth were especially vulnerable, and funds were needed for sustainable development. In addition, funding was also needed for global public goods.

43. The representative of Suriname observed that there were a number of challenges to investment in agriculture in rural communities. A key problem was that people in those communities usually did not have formal titles to the land that they occupied, which made it difficult to access credit.

44. The representative of the Dominican Republic suggested that it was necessary to integrate municipal governments into the development process in order to achieve development goals. He noted that municipal governments were the most democratic government agencies; they allowed the population to more easily participate in the development framework and meaningfully discuss policy actions.

5. Sustainable development goals for the Caribbean within the post-2015 development agenda

45. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Business of Grenada presented the report of the symposium on sustainable development goals for the Caribbean within the post-2015 development agenda, which was convened over the previous two days. In the presentation she noted that, unlike the MDGs, the SDG process offered an opportunity for Caribbean member States to articulate and tailor their development priorities within the defined SDGs. She indicated that deliberations during the symposium had led to a number of critical issues, challenges and suggestions that the region must address to advance its development. For instance, most Caribbean countries' debt burden exceeded the 60 per cent sustainability threshold. The region was also affected by vulnerabilities related to gender, youth, people with disabilities, and its geographic location. Moreover, while the region aspired to become a knowledge-based society, the pass-through rate from secondary to tertiary education was low. In addition, investment in training in information and communications technology as a basis for stimulating innovation had been inadequate to the needs of the region.

46. The Minister also indicated that poverty in the region was closely linked to vulnerability and the economic and social exclusion of women, youth, the aged and other marginalized groups. She noted that with respect to the SDGs, the following priorities were most relevant to the region: i) End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; ii) Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; iii) Ensure inclusion and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning; iv) Ensure gender equality and empower all women and girls; v) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; vi) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; vii) Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization (and services development) and foster innovation; viii) Reduce inequality within and among nations; ix) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact; x) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development; xi) Build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, provide access to justice for all, promote peaceful and inclusive societies; and xii) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

47. In order to achieve these priorities, the discussion in the Symposium identified the following concrete actions: i) Develop and report reliable and valid data; ii) Strengthen institutions; iii) Build multi-lateral, public-private and institutional partnerships; iv) Secure political commitment or buy-in; v) Employ a multi-pronged approach to sustainable development; vi) Adopt a multi-stakeholder and multi-governance framework (including youth); vii) Secure substantial financial and technical support; viii) Mobilize domestic resources; and ix) Articulate a clear participatory governance framework.

48. The Minister then highlighted Grenada's efforts to ensure multi-stakeholder involvement. She noted that the Government had engaged trade unions, the churches and other groups to provide feedback on a monthly basis. They offered useful inputs and also served as a monitoring body which assessed the Government's progress in achieving development goals. In addition, the Ministry of Youth had ensured youth representation in important forums and government events. She concluded by noting that the priorities outlined provided a clear path to advancing the region's development over the medium-term.

49. Following the presentation, the representative from St. Kitts and Nevis highlighted the need for the meeting to address high crime and deviance among young males. She noted that gang violence in particular – attributed in part to low educational achievement among young males - was a major scourge in the region. She questioned whether the region was promoting the kinds of social programmes that could really make a difference for those youth. In response, the chair indicated that States had the option of including those issues in their national agenda, noting that the SDG priorities for the region have not

been finalized. He also pointed out that the underperformance of boys in education was an important gender issue in the region. The representative from Jamaica also emphasized that population ageing was an important concern in the region and should be highlighted.

50. The representative of Grenada, in addressing the way forward, inquired whether the meeting would be considering the twelve priorities at the regional level or addressing strategies to incorporate the priorities in the national development agenda. In response, the Chair suggested that the goals identified at the meeting did not prevent national governments from tailoring the priorities to their national agendas. He noted that there was no final decision on the number of priorities, but countries must ensure that an institutional mechanism is established at the national level to manage the implementation of the development goals. He also pointed out that the region would need to arrive at a consensus on the goals at some point. The representative of Guyana noted that for more effective implementation of the SDGs, it would be important to focus on linkages across goals as was done by the Pacific SIDS. He noted, for example, that enhanced institutional infrastructure was a goal that was relevant across the spectrum of issues. Poverty also had an impact on other dimensions of development. The challenge remained how integrate the goals into a coherent framework at the national level.

51. With respect to global financial governance, the representative of Barbados inquired whether the Addis Ababa conference envisioned a greater role for the High Level Political Forum and, by extension, a more inclusive approach in the international financial architecture. He recommended that the goals considered as priorities for the Caribbean also include water, biodiversity, land management, food security and infrastructure development. With respect to the latter two issues, building regional infrastructure was essential to regional agriculture development and food security. As such, the representative of Barbados recommended that ECLAC consider producing a Caribbean SIDS infrastructure gap report every 2 to 3 years that outlined progress in achieving articulated goals in the SDG framework and associated gaps. In response, the Chair indicated that the Addis Ababa meeting represented an important forum for continuation of the financing for development conversation. He underscored that that dialogue must be accompanied by the appropriate follow through if progress was to be achieved. In addition, strong emphasis should be placed on the means of implementation. The representative of Guyana noted that there was increasing acknowledgement of the need for international tax cooperation. In addition, there was emerging consensus that there would be a strong follow-up on the financing for development issue, including on systemic issues. He noted that small states had an opportunity to have their views heard and to influence the decisions in Addis Ababa.

52. The representative of Grenada challenged participants to be advocates in their own countries and also at the regional level. She indicated that the region should use its collective voice as several states to push for change at the international level. The Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean signalled that ECLAC's intent in organizing the symposium was to instigate reform at this opportune time. She highlighted the need to organize a national and regional mechanism to get countries ready for the important discussions on the SDGs. She pointed out that the international community would be evaluating the region's implementation once the goals were adopted in September and urged the region to get ready to contribute to the discussion on the SDGs.

53. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago suggested that regional governments should finance a public awareness programme on the MDGs and SDGs. She also suggested that the knowledge and input of the public should be integrated into planning for the SDG implementation. The Chair reiterated that countries should quickly identify a national institution that would be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the goals.

6. Progress in implementation of the 2014-2015 programme of work for the Caribbean

54. The Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters presented an account of the progress made in the implementation of the 2014-2015 programme of work of the organization for the Caribbean. She highlighted ECLAC's attention to making research and analysis more relevant to the member States and associate Members by focusing on addressing their needs and providing the basis for evidence-based policy-making, and strengthening States' capacity for analysis and advocacy by providing good data. She also highlighted the office's efforts to work collaboratively with other parts of the United Nations system and regional organizations.

55. The Director informed the meeting that, as part of the Secretariat and as a regional commission, the office was responsible for conducting subregional assessments of important global processes, and gave examples of the office's facilitation of the Caribbean participation and strengthening of their advocacy in those global negotiations. Those examples included support for: i) The 20-year review of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, in which the office facilitated the issuance of a statement outlining the priority issues and concerns facing the subregion; ii) The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, in which the key priorities and issues of the Caribbean were included in the draft outcome document and, by extension, at the SIDS conference; iii) The identification of key Sustainable Development Goals necessary to address the sustainable development needs of the Caribbean; and iv) The CELAC delegations in their review of the text of the Financing for Development document, which helped to shape the regional position to be advanced at the upcoming Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa.

56. In describing the response of the ECLAC subregional headquarters to regional priorities, she touched briefly on the increased focus on trade issues, regional integration and disaster risk management, and noted that upcoming presentations from the substantive officers would provide greater detail. She addressed the technical and research work conducted by the office in the area of disabilities, and highlighted issues such as a common definition of "persons living with disabilities" and the design of policies and programmes to support such persons which were being addressed. She spoke of the need to make the Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism more operational to better support the implementation of the SDGs, and of the online reporting platform created by the office as a unifying mechanism to facilitate the monitoring and reporting of the countries' implementation progress. She spoke of the increased support and outreach being pursued by ECLAC to the Associated Members of the CDCC, highlighted recent engagements with Martinique, and raised the possibility of an associate Member summit to possibly identify a programme that would respond to the unique challenges faced by associate Members.

57. The Director informed the meeting that technical cooperation continued to be a fundamental part of the work of the office, and highlighted several initiatives undertaken by the subregional headquarters in support of development in the subregion during the reporting period. She shared that, with the support of the GIZ, a study was completed to assess mechanisms to improve energy efficiency in the transport sector, and another sought to address deficiencies and gaps in the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. She referenced an ongoing project on strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers to manage public finances by increasing their knowledge and skills in managing and forecasting public expenditure and revenue. She spoke of the capacity-building undertaken with member States on the use of REDATAM to make greater use of data and support more effective policy-making. She also reported research undertaken on the utility of time-use surveys to more accurately measure paid and unpaid work, to develop a greater understanding of the gender dynamics within the household and care economy and to assess women's contribution to national production. She addressed direct and specific requests made by countries, including developing 15-year population

projections for the Turks and Caicos Islands, conducting research on the issue of praedial larceny in Jamaica, and the development of a street-lighting policy for Saint Lucia.

58. On the issue of ongoing work for the remainder of the biennium, the Director addressed several important areas of research. She pointed out that more robust policies, programmes and strategies needed to be implemented to support the current and future generation of older persons, and ECLAC would conduct research to guide decision-makers in this area. She also spoke of research in the areas of leveraging big- and micro-data, opportunities for blended financing, the development impact of PetroCaribe and the ongoing effort to include the development experiences of associate Members in ECLAC flagship publications and statistical reports.

59. During her presentation, she noted with regret the passing of the Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (TAC-RCM), Mr. Navin Chandarpal, and highlighted his extraordinary passion and commitment to service in the interest of the subregion. She asked the meeting to consider a suitable replacement. She also spoke of a high-level event held as part of the 25th Session of the CDCC to celebrate 2014 as the International Year of SIDS. The event showcased the rich cultural, artistic and musical diversity of the Caribbean and helped to raise awareness and promote wider knowledge and understanding of the critical issues relevant to the sustainable development aspirations of Caribbean SIDS.

60. The Director identified several priority areas of research for the upcoming 2016-2017 biennium. Those included focus on financing for sustainable development, economic diversification through the creative industries, trade policy reform, inclusive social protection, the rights of persons with disabilities, the San Jose Charter on Ageing, preparation for the 2020 round of censuses, and diversification of the tourism product in non-traditional sectors.

61. The Coordinator of the Economic Development Unit provided an overview of the support provided to the subregion under the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), as part of the work of the subregional headquarters during the reporting period.

62. He noted that the EPA was a 25-year trade agreement signed between the CARIFORUM (CARICOM + Dominican Republic) Directorate and the European Union (EU) in 2008. Regarded as a deep and wide-ranging agreement, the leading objectives of the EPA included fostering the sustainable development of CARIFORUM economies and promoting regional integration. Enhanced development cooperation coupled with the anticipated expansion in bilateral trade and investment flows were thought to be necessary antecedents for achieving these objectives. Given that the Joint Declaration on the Signing of the EPA mandated the conduct a comprehensive review of the Agreement no later than five years after date of signature, and at subsequent five-yearly intervals, he recalled that the CARIFORUM Directorate approached the ECLAC subregional headquarters to conduct the first five-year review of the status of implementation of the EPA, and to assess its possible impact on CARIFORUM countries. The study detailing the results of ECLAC's review, completed in June 2014, highlighted possible areas for amendment of the agreement to make it more amenable to the sustainable development of CARIFORUM economies.

63. The Coordinator shared key findings of the assessment. He pointed to an expected loss of tariff revenues for the CARIFORUM countries examined as a result of tariff liberalization associated with the EPA as well as the diversion of imports from non-EU sources towards the EU market. He also noted that improvements in consumer welfare in CARICOM countries were likely to be small. He indicated that 96 per cent of the Dominican Republic's exports to the EU were in dynamic sectors and the majority (61 per cent) could be categorized as rising stars, meaning that these products were gaining market share in sectors where import demand in the EU was increasing. Further, he noted that the magnitude of

CARICOM's response to shocks from the EU was much lower than that of the Dominican Republic. In contrast, he noted that most of the exports from the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to the EU were classified as missed opportunities, suggesting that export shares were falling in commodities where demand in the EU was rising. He also indicated that the analyses undertaken by ECLAC suggested that variation in the GDP of the USA as well as commodity prices had a stronger impact on CARICOM countries than on the Dominican Republic. He stated that the findings demonstrated that the EU had a spillover impact on the Dominican Republic which was greater than that on CARICOM countries, which suggested that the Dominican Republic was likely to benefit more from any growth in the EU, particularly growth which could be linked to the EPA.

64. He also highlighted key findings which had distinct policy implications. Firstly, he indicated that there had been an uneven implementation of commitments across CARIFORUM countries. Secondly, the agreement had generated asymmetric benefits thus far. In this regard, the Dominican Republic's comparative advantage and trade complementarity with the EU has improved in the presence of the EPA while CARICOM's comparative advantage and trade complementarity has been declining. Thirdly, he observed that structural rigidities and joint production issues had seemingly constrained the ability of smaller economies of CARIFORUM to take advantage of the market access opportunities provided by the Agreement. Fourthly, there had been no substantive increase in intra-regional trade during the first five years of implementation of the EPA. Finally, he reported that the results of the review conducted by ECLAC pointed to the need to establish a mechanism for region-wide monitoring of the progress and impact of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA.

65. On the basis of the assessment undertaken, he informed the meeting of a number of emerging development priorities which were identified for building production and trade capacity of CARICOM economies. As regards goods production, those included modernizing key economic infrastructure e.g. in the areas of maritime and air transport, ICT, energy; as well as standards, quality and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures. With respect to services, he pointed to the need for development cooperation in such areas as data collection, registry of service providers, conduct of market intelligence and data dissemination as crucial factors in harnessing the comparative advantages where they existed, with a view to increasing the subregion's services exports to the EU.

66. The Coordinator of the Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit made a brief presentation on ECLAC's work in disaster assessments and the recent establishment of a Disaster Unit in the subregional headquarters. He underscored that ECLAC had been a pioneer in the field of disaster assessment and in the development and dissemination of a disaster assessment methodology. He recalled that the region's history in assessing disasters started in 1972 following an earthquake that struck Managua, Nicaragua. He explained that the methodology was based on sectoral information, and that ECLAC had conducted more than 90 disaster assessments in the wider Latin America and the Caribbean region, 25 of which were in Caribbean countries; 23 climatic related and 2 of geophysical origin. Those disasters included 15 of the 20 most lethal disasters to hit Latin America and the Caribbean in the past 40 years. The disasters assessed by ECLAC were responsible for around 310,000 deaths, affected the lives of 30 million people and incurred an estimated cost of US\$ 213 billion (at 2000 prices). He emphasized that the methodology was used in over 40 countries on other continents, mainly Africa and Asia.

67. He traced the history of the development of the disaster assessment manual, and noted that the latest edition of the handbook, 2014, included strengthened procedures for estimating the effects and impacts of disasters. It also provided an integral accounting approach which brought all elements together to form a coherent picture, while addressing cross-cutting issues such as gender and the environment. He indicated that it clearly distinguished between losses and additional costs and gave due account of linkages between different sectors of the economy, including the social, infrastructure and productive sectors. He highlighted the importance of the Disaster and Loss Assessment (DaLA) as an input to

estimate the financial needs for recovery and reconstruction post-disaster, and noted that those needs had to be articulated in a disaggregated manner with breakdowns by sector of economic activity, geo-political divisions, and groupings of affected population.

68. He articulated the difference between damage and losses with examples, noting that damage was easier to quantify since it largely related to physical assets and materials, while losses were more challenging since they related more to the value of goods that go unproduced and services that go unprovided in a post-disaster period. Their impact was thus experienced long after a damage assessment was completed. He spoke of outlays which required producing goods and providing services as a result of the disaster. He noted that those represented a response by both the public and the private sectors, and indicated that they could take the form of additional spending and/or spending shifting.

69. The Coordinator pointed out that the current work of the office focused on the integration of disaster assessment to disaster risk reduction (DDR), and stated that there were three progressive stages for a country to achieve the successful integration of DDR into reconstruction: i) Integrating DRR into disaster assessments; ii) Incorporating DRR in the design and implementation of recovery programs; and iii) Translating the gains of resilient recovery into sustainable development. He informed the meeting that the Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit provided technical assistance in four areas: i) Disaster Assessment; ii) Quality control for Disaster Assessment done by national or local governments; iii) Training courses on Disaster Assessment methodology; and iv) Assessing disaster risk reduction institutions.

70. The representatives expressed keen interest in the report, and commended ECLAC for its work in supporting development in the subregion to date¹. A number of the representatives stated that particular ECLAC reports were very enriching and assisted with and informed their countries' development plans and perspectives. They also expressed their appreciation for the support that ECLAC provided during the IYS/Samoa Process, and expressed the hope that such support would continue in the future.

71. Specifically, the representative of Trinidad and Tobago complimented ECLAC for the Caribbean Development Report, noting that it provided his country with a good basis for the preparation of its National Development Strategy. He also expressed interest in ECLAC's proposed work on PetroCaribe, particularly since Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), was now giving consideration to the establishment of a Caribbean Energy Fund.

72. He joined in paying tribute to the late Chair of the TAC-RCM, and requested that the terms of reference of the Chair of the TAC be circulated to facilitate the election of a new Chair. He also encouraged further dialogue on the mobilization of mechanisms to strengthen SIDS cooperation in order to expedite the implementation of the Samoa pathway and SDG framework. Finally, he commended ECLAC for its work on trade and trade policy reforms, particularly because trade was the life blood of SIDS.

73. The representative of Cuba suggested that the work of the subregional headquarters should be better tailored to the subregion. He expressed hope that the work of the biennium 2016-2017 would respond to the actual needs of the Caribbean and that the subregional headquarters would be suitably financed to execute projects that would benefit the countries. He wished to see the MonCom structured in the CDCC format, and called for regular updating of the Secretariat's webpage with respect to such meetings, ensuring that the relevant documentation be prepared at least two weeks in advance. He noted that not much work was apparent to him, based on his comparison with the work programme of the previous session. He expressed the view that the participation of other stakeholders was essential to developing and designing a multi-destination strategy with regard to tourism, and that efforts should be

¹ Barbados, Cuba, Martinique, Montserrat, Trinidad and Tobago.

made to strengthen ongoing consultation and collaboration with CELAC. He suggested that countries should be given the opportunity to identify areas of interest so they could request assistance with specific projects, thereby strengthening the role of CDCC.

74. In responding to the comments made by the representative of Cuba, the Director reminded the meeting that while Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti were members of CDCC, support to those countries was provided through the work programme of the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico. She was therefore not in a position to speak comprehensively to the work that ECLAC had undertaken on behalf of those countries.

75. The representative of Jamaica commended ECLAC for its support, and hoped that the office would continue to support the region, particularly with respect to the implementing of the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. He also referenced the work of the office in the area of trade policy reform, noting that this was an important endeavour for Jamaica. He also reflected on the work with respect to the review of the EPA, and expressed the wish to receive further details on it.

76. The representative of Montserrat commented on the apparent difficulty encountered by all countries in arriving at a comprehensive and harmonized position on development. She observed that while forums such as the MonCom were engaging, there were a number of other events which had similar conversations throughout the region. She queried the seeming challenge for regional institutions to come together with one coordinated voice, and suggested that the pursuit of sustainable development in the region should be better coordinated.

77. The representative of Barbados recalled fond memories of the late Chair of the TAC-RCM, Mr. Navin Chandrapaul, as he articulated the interests of Caribbean SIDS in various international sustainable development fora. With respect to strengthening the TAC, he highlighted the ongoing need for enhanced support by ECLAC in keeping with the resolutions of the 25th Session of the CDCC. He further reflected on the role of ECLAC in supporting Member States in the SAMOA process, citing the 2014 Dialogue Session, “Caribbean Small Island Developing States Informal preparatory Meeting in preparation for the United Nations Small Island Developing States Third Preparatory Committee Meeting”, which was held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and convened by ECLAC. He further added that that forum provided the opportunity for the region’s technocrats to engage in examining the Draft Outcome of the Samoa Conference. He recommended that such engagements should be provided with greater regularity. Further, he expressed the need to ensure that the recommendations on the way forward agreed on in these meetings are implemented, underscoring the importance of resource mobilization and scaled up support from ECLAC towards advancing the subregion’s development agenda in the coming biennium.

78. The Director acknowledged that ECLAC was proud to be considered a regional think tank for its robust research, and noted that the reporting of the work programme this year was changed to signal the greater relevance of the research done, and to ensure greater responsiveness to the direct needs of the member States. Attention was also given to comprehensive analysis which could translate into meaningful decision-making. In this regard, she explained that the CDR, which was convened biennially, was a development forum conceived in response to the specific recommendations from the 2011 Miller report on enhancing the performance of the ECLAC subregional headquarters in the Caribbean. She promised to strive to make the office’s research a more dynamic and integrative process which engaged the member States more actively. The Director also pointed to the newly developed Caribbean Development Portal as one of the initiatives that ECLAC created to provide a central repository for data and research on the range of development issues in the region. She commended the subregional headquarters’ IT team for its development, and for their work on other related initiatives.

79. The representative of Martinique placed on record her Government’s interest in the work of ECLAC and congratulated the ECLAC team on the continuing development support being provided to

the countries. She described the work of ECLAC as being enriching and of a high standard, and looked forward to working with the subregional headquarters in the future. Referring to the proposals for the subregional headquarters' 2016-2017 biennial work programme, she noted that Martinique had projects of its own. One example was the Sustainable Island initiative, which would position Martinique as a model territory to make it an advanced base for developing in the subregion the capacity for spoken French, and for the expansion of European technology and businesses. She also noted that the country was focused on improving energy sufficiency and promoting local consumption habits so as to be eco-friendly, mitigate climate change effects, and reduce atmospheric pollution. She identified four areas of focus for Martinique's energy transition: Solar, bio-mass, geothermal, and wind energy. As regards the principles of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA, she noted that Martinique had placed emphasis on sustainable development, regional integration and development cooperation as key areas of opportunity for trade partnership in the Caribbean. She expressed the desire of Martinique to continue working within the framework of the CDCC.

80. Speaking of the ECLAC review of the EPA, the representative of Grenada acknowledged some of the specific recommendations and actions to be considered for the development of trade in goods. He also noted the performance of the Dominican Republic under the EPA, and its competitive advantage relative to the smaller CARICOM countries. He suggested that there was need for an assessment which identified possible options for addressing that disparity in competitiveness.

81. He pointed to the urgent need to address the reduction of the cost of inter-island trade and transportation within the Caribbean subregion. One of the challenges he highlighted was the fact that smaller island containers arrived full but departed empty. In this context, he suggested that it was far easier for such countries to market their products on the EU market than in other countries in the subregion. He also acknowledged the challenges posed by transportation availability and cost to the movement of goods and people between CARICOM States, and further noted the varied customs practices that created stumbling blocks in the trading process.

82. In responding to these issues, the Coordinator of the Economic Development Unit drew the meeting's attention to a larger study - condensed into a smaller paper and available on ECLAC's website - which elaborated on some of those issues, and offered specific recommendations. He further observed that there were structural gaps that limited trade in the region. As an example, he pointed out that in Grenada energy was more expensive than in Trinidad and Tobago. Grenada would therefore have to explore developing its services sector. He acknowledged the difficulty encountered by Grenada in generating economies of scale similar to larger States like the Dominican Republic under the EPA. He suggested that specialization could give hope to smaller States in achieving economies of scale. He promised that ECLAC would do additional work in exploring such alternatives. Finally, he expressed the view that the modernization of port infrastructure was critical to the further development of trade in the Caribbean. In this regard, he noted that there were only three regional or international ports in the subregion².

83. In concluding the discussion on the work programme, the Director thanked the representative from Martinique for her interventions and reiterated ECLAC's interest in engaging its associate Members. She further noted that she considered the meeting a good opportunity to advance future engagement and looked forward to the future consultations on associate Member development to be hosted by Martinique. She encouraged the associate Members to prepare a list of requests or interests, especially where there was commonality; ECLAC could then structure an appropriate programme for their consideration.

7. Other matters

² The Bahamas, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

84. There were no other matters raised in the meeting.

8. Date and venue of the twenty-sixth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee

85. The Chair noted that, in accordance with the principle of rotation among the member States in the English alphabetical order, Saint Kitts and Nevis was in line to be the next Chair of the CDCC. The representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis formally indicated the readiness of her Government to assume the Chairmanship of the twenty-sixth CDCC in 2016. Her statement was welcomed by acclamation. ECLAC will continue its consultation with the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis on the matter of the date of the twenty-sixth CDCC and notify Member States and associate Members in due course.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

86. The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, acting as Rapporteur of the meeting on behalf of Saint Lucia, presented an account of the proceedings. The statement can be found *ad verbatim* in annex III.

87. The statement was adopted by acclamation.

88. The Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC and the Chair of the CDCC made closing remarks.

89. The Director and the Deputy Executive Secretary thanked the Chair of the CDCC for his excellent stewardship of the meeting, and for Jamaica's leadership of the CDCC over the past two years. They also thanked the distinguished representatives, members of the diplomatic corps and other meeting participants for their engagement during the day's programme. The Director committed to delivering a programme of work that would address the continuing needs of the CDCC membership, and thanked the Port of Spain team for its continued support. The Deputy Executive Secretary hoped that the proposals in the debt initiative presented by ECLAC would be accomplished.

90. The Chair expressed his sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago for the warm hospitality extended and the excellent support provided for the meeting. He also thanked the distinguished representatives, members of the diplomatic corps and other meeting participants for their engagement during the day's programme. He thanked the Executive Secretary of ECLAC for her continued engagement and commitment to the Caribbean, and thanked the subregional headquarters for the sterling work it had done. He then closed the meeting.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. Member States

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Representative:

- Nadia Henry, Debt Manager, Ministry of Finance and Corporate Governance

BAHAMAS

Representative:

- Tishka Francis, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Bahamas to the United Nations

BARBADOS

Representative:

- Travis Sinckler, Senior Environmental Officer, Policy Research, Planning and Information Unit, Ministry of the Environment and Drainage

Delegation member:

- Corey Archer, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

BELIZE

Representative:

- Tasha Young-Cain, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Belize to the United Nations

CUBA

Representative:

- Ramiro de León Torras, Specialist, Directorate for Latin America and the Caribbean, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment

Delegation member:

- H.E. Guillermo Vasquez Moreno, Ambassador of Cuba in Trinidad and Tobago

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Representative:

- H.E. José A. Serulle Ramia, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic in Trinidad and Tobago

GRENADA

Representative:

- Hon. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Business

Delegation member:

- Fitzroy James, Director of Economic and Technical Cooperation, Ministry of Economic Development, Planning, Trade and Cooperatives

GUYANA

Representative:

- H.E. George Talbot, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations

JAMAICA

Representative:

- Hon. Arnaldo Brown, Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Delegation member:

- H.E. David Prendergast, High Commissioner for Jamaica in Trinidad and Tobago
- Nicole Johnson, First Secretary, High Commission for Jamaica in Trinidad and Tobago

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

Representative:

- Lorna Hunkins, Special Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Aviation

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Representative:

- Laura Anthony-Browne, Director of Planning, Central Planning Division, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

SURINAME

Representative:

- H.E. Fidelia Graand-Galon, Ambassador of Suriname in Trinidad and Tobago

Delegation member:

- Raymond Landveld*, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Suriname to the United Nations
- Oquemele Denz, First Secretary, Embassy of Suriname in Trinidad and Tobago

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Representative:

- Hon. Winston Dookeran, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Delegation member:

- Peter Mitchell, Assistant Director Socio-Economic Policy Planning Division, Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development
- Lavaughn Prichard, Senior International Relations Specialist, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

B. Associate members

CAYMAN ISLANDS

Representative:

- Aubrey Bodden, Policy Analyst, Cabinet Office

Delegation member:

- Jamaal Anderson, International Affairs Analyst, Cabinet Office

MARTINIQUE

Representative:

- Christiane Mage, President of the Cooperation Committee, Regional Council of Martinique

Delegation member:

- Catherine Aurore, Cabinet Associate, Office of the President of the Regional Council

MONTSERRAT

Representative:

- Angela Estwick, Director, Policy and Planning Department, Office of the Premier

SINT MAARTEN

Representative:

- Lucrecia Morales, Program Manager, Department of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

C. Observers

ARGENTINA

- Dolores Kunst, Secretary of the Embassy of the Argentine Republic in Trinidad and Tobago

AUSTRALIA

- Tracey Haines, Deputy High Commissioner

BRAZIL

- H.E. Paulo Sérgio Traballi Bozzi, Ambassador, Embassy of Brazil in Trinidad and Tobago

CANADA

- Marlon Thompson, Development Officer, Department of Foreign Trade and Development, High Commission of Canada to Trinidad and Tobago

CHILE

- H.E. Fernando Schmidt, Ambassador, Embassy of Chile in Trinidad and Tobago

COLOMBIA

- Paola Andrea Mosquera Arce, Second Secretary, Embassy of Colombia in Trinidad and Tobago

COSTA RICA

- Carmen Gil-Eraza, Chargée d'affaires, Embassy of Costa Rica in Trinidad and Tobago

EL SALVADOR

- Hector Enrique Celarie Landaverde, Minister Counsellor, *Embassy of El Salvador in Trinidad and Tobago*

GERMANY

- Michael Freudenberg, Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Trinidad and Tobago

THE NETHERLANDS

- Philip Bastiaenen Charge d'affaires (a.i.), Embassy of the Netherlands in Trinidad and Tobago

MEXICO

- H.E. Mario Arriola Woog, Ambassador of Mexico in Trinidad and Tobago

PANAMA

- H.E. Carmen Gabriela Menéndez, Ambassador of the Republic of Panama in Trinidad and Tobago
- Rosa Cerezo Portugal, Chargée d'affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Panama in Trinidad and Tobago

PERU

- Jorge Antonio Rosado La Torre, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of Peru in Trinidad and Tobago

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

- H.E. Dooyoung Lee, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Trinidad and Tobago
- Hyeyoung Kim, Senior Research Officer, Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Trinidad and Tobago

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- Dina Abaa-Ogley, Acting Political-Economic Chief, Security Policy and Assistance Coordinator, Political-Economic Section, Embassy of the United States of America in Trinidad and Tobago

D. United Nations Secretariat**United Nations Department of Public Information**

- Juan Miguel Diez, Director, United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean Area

E. United Nations Programmes and Funds**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

- Alison Drayton, Senior Advisor, UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations Headquarters
- Richard Blewitt, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Trinidad and Tobago
- Larry Lamartiniere, Intern, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Trinidad and Tobago
- Eugene Larsen-Hallock, Intern, UNDP Trinidad and Tobago

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

- Siti Batoul Ousseini, Deputy Director, UNFPA, Jamaica
- Aurora Noguera-Ramkissoon Assistant Representative, UNFPA Trinidad and Tobago

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

- Khin-Sandi Lwin, Representative, UNICEF Barbados
- Maya Faisal, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Trinidad and Tobago

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

- Christine Arab, Representative, UN-Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean

F. Specialized agencies**International Labour Organization (ILO)**

- Dagmar Walter, Officer-in-Charge, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean
- Kelvin Sergeant, Specialist, Sustainable Enterprise and Job Creation, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean
- Benita Rose, Intern, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

- Lystra Fletcher-Paul, FAO Representative for Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname

International Maritime Organization

- Anushka Alleng, Administrative Assistant/Office Manager

G. Other intergovernmental organizations**Organization of American States (OAS)**

- Riyad Insanally, Representative, OAS in Trinidad and Tobago

Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC)

- Kemberley Gittens, Senior Project Officer

Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

- Amanda Charles, Sustainable Tourism Adviser

H. Other institutions**Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA)**

- Anthony Mitchell, Research Coordinator

Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)

- Easton Williams, Director, Social Policy, Planning and Research Division, Planning Institute of Jamaica

University of the West Indies (UWI)

- Compton Bourne, Professor Emeritus, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

I. Other participants

- Christine Norton, Consultant
- Elizabeth Thompson, Former Executive Coordinator of Rio+20 and High-Level Consultant for the post-2015 development agenda

J. Secretariat**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

- Antonio Prado, Deputy Executive Secretary

ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

- Diane Quarless, Director
- Dillon Alleyne, Deputy Director (a.i.)
- Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Statistician, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Omar Bello, Coordinator, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit
- Sheldon McLean, Coordinator, Economic Development Unit

- Jeanette Song'e, Administrative Officer, Administration Section
- Sheila Stuart, Social Development Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Michael Hendrickson, Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Development Unit
- Francis Jones, Population Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Peter Nicholls, Chief, Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre
- Willard Phillips, Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit
- Alexander Voccia, Public Information Officer, Strategic Planning and Outreach Unit
- Johann Brathwaite, Coordinator (a.i.), Programme Support Unit
- Michael Milligan, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Development Unit
- Robert Williams, Associate Information Management Officer, Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre
- Dale Alexander, Computer Information Assistant, Programme Support Unit
- Denise Balgobin, Public Information Assistant, Strategic Planning and Outreach Unit
- Tricia Blackman, Library Assistant, Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre
- Candice Gonzales, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Machel Pantin, Research Assistant, Economic Development Unit
- Aurélie Quiatol, Meetings Services Assistant, Programme Support Unit
- Luanne Serieux-Lubin, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Nyasha Skerrette, Research Assistant, Economic Development Unit
- Rossano Thompson, Computer Information Systems Assistant, Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre
- Elizabeth Thorne, Research Assistant, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit
- Veera Deokiesingh-Fraser, Public Information Assistant, Strategic Planning and Outreach Unit
- Lindy-Ann Edwards-Alleyne, Staff Assistant, Economic Development Unit
- Ana Fernández, Staff Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Juda Francis, Security Assistant, Administration Unit
- Angela Martin-Forbes, Staff Assistant, Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre
- Shawn Campbell, Team Assistant, Administration Unit
- Jeniffer Sankar-Sooknarine, Team Assistant, Programme Support Unit
- Roberta Doorgadeen, Research Assistant (*on-the-job training*), Economic Development Unit
- Runako Henry, Computer Information System Assistant (*on-the-job training*), Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre
- Esther Kissoon, Research Assistant (*on-the-job training*), Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit
- Blaine Marcano, Programme Assistant (*on-the-job training*), Strategic Planning and Outreach Unit

Annex II**LIST OF DOCUMENTS****Agenda item 1**

LC/L.4013 (MCCDCC.17/1)

Provisional agenda

LC/L.4014 (MCCDCC.17/2)

Annotated provisional agenda

Reference document

Preliminary programme

Agenda item 2

DDR/1

Debt reduction proposal for sustainable development in the Caribbean

Agenda item 3

DDR/2

Financing for sustainable development in the Caribbean

Agenda item 4

DDR/3

The outcome of the symposium on sustainable development goals for the Caribbean within the post-2015 development agenda

Agenda item 5

LC/L.4017 (MCCDCC.17/3)

Progress report on the implementation of the 2014-2015 programme of work for the Caribbean

Annex III**STATEMENT OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES AS RAPPOREUR OF THE MEETING (ON BEHALF OF SAINT LUCIA)
(AD VERBATIM)**

Minister Arnaldo Brown, Chair of the CDCC, other distinguished Ministers and Senior Representatives of Government, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Representatives of the United Nations system, regional and international organizations, Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf of the current Rapporteur of the CDCC, Saint Lucia, it is my pleasure to provide you with a summary of today's proceedings. The Director of the subregional headquarters for ECLAC opened the meeting and introduced the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Alicia Bárcena.

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC greeted participants and paid tribute to Minister Dookeran for his illustrious service to Trinidad and Tobago and for his contributions to promoting integration in the region. She challenged the CDCC to facilitate more meaningful engagement with the region, and urged the governments to be prepared to make the Post-2015 Development Agenda work for the region by adequately integrating key proposals into their plans and budgetary processes. She encouraged the strengthening of community participation in development by including the views of rural communities and indigenous groups, and encouraged the delegates to carefully consider the debt relief proposal and how it might be used to increase fiscal space and opportunities for building resilience in the region.

The Honourable Winston Dookeran, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago greeted participants and highlighted four important issues for consideration during the meeting: i) Transparency in the rule-making process of international finance leading up to the third conference on Financing for Development; ii) The Post-2015 Development Agenda should search for new development models for the Caribbean that extend beyond integration; iii) Whether equity drives growth or vice-versa, the extent to which they work together, and what does this mean for public policy; and, iv) Sustainability of the planet means that climate change issues should be prioritized, and the region should leverage the Paris meeting to push for a global initiative that considers the needs of developing countries.

The Honourable Arnaldo Brown, Minister of State for Jamaica and Chair of the CDCC, noted that the Caribbean faces major challenges, including low growth, high unemployment and particularly unsustainable public debt. He challenged the meeting to think of new strategies to resuscitate growth and create decent work for a larger number of citizens, and called for a platform of restructuring and diversification, including high value-added tourism and ICTs and value-added niches in agro-processing, including gourmet foods. He felt that the debt challenge should be tackled through fiscal reform, including better expenditure management, but must be complemented by a major international debt relief programme that would create fiscal space and open room for improved growth in the region. He signalled that social development issues, including crime and inequality, needed to be tackled, and pointed out that big data offered a key avenue for sharing information on criminal networks. He also noted that social protection should be improved by better-targeted programmes.

Mr. Antonio Prado, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC, presented a proposal for debt relief among Caribbean SIDS, in which he highlighted that sustainable growth was not an end in itself, but a means to finance social and other programmes and to build resilience, and that high debt service costs absorbed a substantial portion of scarce foreign exchange in the region. He also noted that the international community should use multidimensional vulnerability criteria beyond per capita income to determine which countries receive concessional financing.

The relief proposal was framed around forgiveness of multilateral concessional debt and creation of a resilience fund. In this regard, debt was a regional problem, which adversely affected trade and socio-economic resilience, and debt relief was necessary because the Caribbean might not be able to grow out of debt. The resilience fund would finance projects that promote growth, reduced poverty and protected the environment. A component of the resilience would deal with disaster recovery, reconstruction and infrastructure and climate change to complement the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF).

Given its established experience and credibility, the Caribbean Development Bank could administer the funds. While the meeting was generally supportive of the debt relief proposal, it was noted that the region has to consider if there might be further conditionalities if relief is approved and what incentives there might be for creditors to agree to relief.

Ambassador George Talbot, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations, presented on the issue of financing for development. He noted that a major obstacle confronting the region was the classification of middle income status which disqualified it from accessing concessional global finance, making domestic financing even more critical for financing the region's development. Several measures were proposed to mobilize an optimal mix of finance, including strengthening tax collection systems through improved administration, investment in expert management of finance institutions, improving public procurement systems and making them more transparent, and leveraging of resources from credit unions, national and regional development banks. The region should also seek to obtain a larger pool of official development aid, and actively pursue innovative financing including debt-for-nature swaps, diaspora financing and debt relief and green funds among others. Debt relief similar to the HIPC should be included as an element for increasing financial space.

The Honourable Clarice Modeste-Curwen, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Business of Grenada, presented the report of the symposium on sustainable development goals for the Caribbean within the post-2015 development agenda, which was convened over the previous two days. In the presentation she noted that, unlike the MDGs, which were imposed from above, the SDGs incorporate more participation from participating states. The region has vulnerabilities related to gender, youth, people with disabilities. The region has limited institutional capacity and governance needs to be strengthened. There is inadequate development of skills and education. The pass-through rate from secondary to tertiary education is low. The stimulation for innovative industries has not been sufficient for these industries to make significant contributions to economic development. Poor data and information sources, lack of access to financial resources, debt, and lack of human resources were also identified as issues which constrained the Caribbean's development relative to other regions.

Moving forward, it was agreed that regional governments must work to ensure proper education, gender education, access to affordable and sustainable energy, economic growth and productive employment. Resilient and sustainable infrastructure is necessary. We must take urgent action to combat climate change and sustainably use marine resources. We must strengthen the means of implementation and revise the lines of global partnership are necessary. We must build institutions and provide a multi-pronged approach to sustainable development and include other stakeholders. SDGs must be integrated into national development plans.

The Minister offered the experience of Grenada on multi-stakeholder involvement. In particular, these efforts have engaged unions, churches and other groups into monthly meetings to give feedback to Government, which provided useful inputs and served as a monitoring body to assess the Government's progress in achieving development goals. Also, the Ministry of Youth now has youth representation in important forums and government events.

A number of questions and observations followed the presentations. Among these were the absence of crime and gang violence among youth, and having social programmes for boys to prevent them from falling behind in education or from turning to crime. Greater attention should be given to water, biodiversity, land management, cost of food and building infrastructure to support increased agricultural output. It was noted that high-level political dialogue is critical to facilitate buy-in and implementation. The meeting sought to clarify whether the implementation of the SDGs would be at the regional or national level was raised. It was also proposed that ECLAC consider preparing a Caribbean gap report every two to three years. It was suggested that governments develop and finance an active public awareness programme to inform citizens of major global initiatives, including the SDGs and financing for development. Population ageing was also highlighted as an important issue to be addressed in the Caribbean.

The meeting responded that SDGs are phrased broadly to encompass many issues, and did not preclude States from setting their own national agendas. Caribbean governments should determine how to best prioritize the sustainable development goals, and there is no final decision yet on the number of priorities. There is a need for national and regional mechanisms to achieve and monitor the SDGs. It is thought that the Addis Ababa framework should include a stronger emphasis on financing for development.

Ms. Diane Quarless, Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean presented an account of progress in implementation of the 2014-2015 programme of work for the organization in the Caribbean.

She highlighted ECLAC's attention to making research and analysis more relevant to the member States and associate Members by focusing on addressing their needs and providing the basis for evidence-based policy, and strengthening States' capacity for analysis by providing good data. Areas of ICT and advocacy will also be considered since these are important to the region's development.

She flagged the importance of making the work of ECLAC known and relevant i.e. "making it real to the persons who do not attend UN meetings", and assured the meeting that they would be seeing more of ECLAC in the coming years. She touched briefly on Trade Issues and the DaLA methodology, and spoke to ECLAC collaboration with other organizations, including CARICOM and UNDP. She also discussed looking at inter-governmental and inter-organizational mechanisms for implementing the SDGs and the Samoa pathways/strategies in the region. She spoke to the value of REDATAM and time use surveys.

The meeting concluded by agreeing on the venue of the 26th meeting of the CDCC, which will be held in Saint Kitts and Nevis in 2016.

The meeting acknowledged the excellent work of ECLAC's sub regional office for the Caribbean over the past year; and expressed the hope that it would continue to receive adequate resources to conduct its work programme over the coming biennium. Specific interest was expressed with respect to the work on trade, noting the importance of this work to the development of Caribbean SIDS. Related to this, ECLAC was encouraged to undertake focused analysis with respect to the development of the maritime transportation sector in the subregion in order to strengthen the regional trade regime. The meeting also recognized the enhanced standing of the subregion's associate Member Countries, who were invited to better engage with ECLAC's efforts by sharing their areas of specific technical interests so that ECLAC's work programme could be better fashioned to support them. The interest of Cuba in the work of the sub-regional office was acknowledged, and the commitment of ECLAC was offered in order to better integrate them into the work of ECLAC. Mr. Chairman, this is the report for the meeting.