CDCC REVIEW OF WSSD
Within the subregion, the eradication of poverty has been given policy and programmatic priority in the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) has contributed to the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action (POA) through its activities in: (a) providing technical assistance to the CDCC governments; (b) the facilitation of Ad Hoc Expert Group Meetings, National Consultations and subregional meetings; and (c) research activities.

In the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration since 1996 the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat has provided technical assistance to its member countries, both in the collection of data for country reporting as well as in support of governmental initiatives to develop national action plans for poverty eradication.

In 1996, prior to the Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication held in Port of Spain, 28 October – 1 November 1996, ECLAC/CDCC provided technical assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis, in the preparation of country reports on poverty.

In these countries, national consultations on poverty eradication were hosted by ECLAC/CDCC in collaboration with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). Representatives of governmental and non-governmental agencies, engaged in social development projects and programmes, attended the national consultations. The consultations identified major social development issues and current and planned initiatives designed to alleviate or reduce poverty.

Apart from substantive issues raised, institutional mechanisms for the adequate implementation of poverty eradication strategies were discussed, in light of the widespread acknowledgement of inadequacies in overall coordination of social development policies and limited articulation between national and sectoral planning.

The preliminary assessment of social development policies and programmes in the region and, in particular, of poverty eradication policies arising from this round of national consultations informed the background paper for the above-mentioned Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication in 1996. Arising from the discussions and work sessions of this meeting was the "Directional Plan of Action for Poverty Eradication in the Caribbean" which was adopted by the meeting.

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1 ECLAC document, Actions for Poverty Eradication in the Caribbean: Arriving at a Consensus, POV/96/1, Port of Spain, 1996.
The Directional Plan of Action identified issues and actions in relation to:

(a) Factors contributing to poverty and social inequity;
(b) Strategies for sustained economic growth and promotion of productive employment for poverty eradication;
(c) Basic human needs;
(d) Empowering communities and promoting strategies for sustainable livelihoods;
(e) Formulate integrated social and economic strategies for poverty eradication; and
(f) Structural and institutional mechanisms for effective poverty eradication.

Following the Ministerial Meeting, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat continued to provide technical assistance as its member countries sought to implement the Directional Plan of Action. In this regard, the secretariat participated in advisory missions to Aruba, Belize, CuraHao, Grenada and Suriname providing assistance to governmental departments in the development of social policy, needs assessment and planning for poverty eradication and the development of national plans of action. Technical assistance to Aruba, CuraHao and Suriname were part of a collaborative activity with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In Belize and Grenada the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat worked in close collaboration with CDB and UNDP.

**Review and appraisal of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development Programme of Action (WSSD/POA)**

Technical assistance was rendered by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat to the following member countries in the preparation of country reports on the review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, CuraHao, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Assistance included collection of national data and information on action taken on the implementation of the WSSD/POA.

Member countries were encouraged and assisted in preparing its National Reports on the implementation of the WSSD/POA.

The Caribbean Subregional Review of the WSSD was held from 2-3 September 1999 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. This meeting provided the opportunity for governments to share major policy and programme initiatives, best practices, constraints to social development and/or to the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action and to identify emerging trends and priority areas for further action.
To deepen the discussions and in response to the call for research on key thematic areas, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat facilitated the presentation of commissioned studies on the following:

- Poverty in the Caribbean
- Gender issues in poverty analysis
- Globalization and Employment in the Caribbean – A Review of Labour Market Policies in the Nineties in light of the Commitments of the World Summit for Social Development
- Progress on Social Integration in the Caribbean 1994-1999
- The Enabling Environment: Globalization and Governance

These papers provided the context for focused dialogue on the challenges of implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action as well as for the identification of the way forward in the areas of poverty eradication, employment generation and social integration.

**Research**

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat has placed particular emphasis on technical assistance to Haiti, which, according to UNDP indices, is the poorest country in the Caribbean region.

In 1996, the secretariat conducted a preliminary study on poverty and female-headed households. The study found that female heads typically have lesser access to productive resources and, therefore, to income than their male counterparts. The study recommended that an integrate approach to development in Haiti must not only integrate economic growth with social equity, but also integrate gender concerns in all stages of the development process.

The secretariat's research focus on Haiti was furthered in June 1999 when a team of consultants was contracted to travel to Haiti for the purpose of, inter alia:

(a) Providing technical assistance to the Haitian Government authorities who were charged with the responsibility of completing the follow-up country report to the WSSD.

(b) Meeting with authorities in the ministries of planning, foreign affairs, social affairs and finance for the purpose of identifying technical assistance needs.

(c) Gathering information, data and reference material on social development in Haiti.

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2 Paper prepared by Dr. Eddie Greene, Consultant, PAHO/WHO
3 Paper prepared by Alicia Mondesire for UNIFEM
4 Paper prepared by Reynold Simons, Senior Specialist, Employment and Labour Market Policies, ILO Caribbean Office, Port of Spain
5 Paper prepared by Dr. Neville Duncan, Reader in Caribbean Policy Issues, University of the West Indies
6 Paper prepared by ECLAC Consultant, Judith Wedderburn
7 ECLAC document, Poverty Eradication and Female-Headed Households in the Caribbean, POV/96/2. Presented at the ECLAC/CDCC Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Eradication of Poverty, Port of Spain, 28 October-1 November 1996.
The Consultants' Report has formed the basis for the preparation of a more detailed analysis of the needs of Haiti and the inputs which ECLAC/CDCC and other regional and international agencies may make in encouraging social development and the alleviation of poverty.

In a joint effort with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat embarked on a data collection enterprise in 11 CDCC member countries in order to fill the gap in data available in the field of social development. This data and the information collected from interviews and discussions with officials at national level have also been useful in the context of the review of implementation of the WSSD/POA in the subregion.

For an overview of good practices and policies in the Caribbean implementation of WSSD+5/POA, please refer to ECLAC/CDCC document LC/CAR/G.577 dated 29 October 1999.

**Development of social indicators**

In their attempts to address specific social issues and to formulate policy in the field of social development, generally, Caribbean governments have been seriously limited by a dearth of sound social data, research and analysis.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat is implementing a research project which should assist Caribbean governments to define, collect and present comparable data sets on social issues. These data sets will form the basis for the production of a "Social Panorama" document for the Caribbean which is analytical in its thrust.

In its initial phase, the secretariat's work has addressed a review of social indicators, which are presently used in the Caribbean, including an analysis of their relevance, strengths and limitations.

This research project is expected to stimulate discussions and further work on the development and construction of social indicators in the Caribbean, since the improvement of social data in the subregion requires the concerted effort of all agencies, institutions, individuals and organizations with relevant expertise.