



# Hurricane Matthew

ASSESSMENT  
OF THE EFFECTS  
AND IMPACTS

# LEARN Workshop

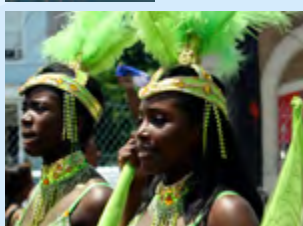
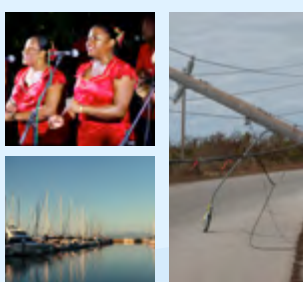
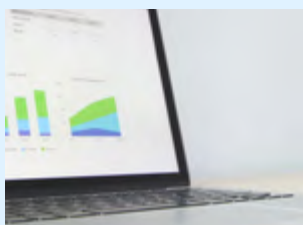
EXPERTS IDENTIFY AND  
DISCUSS COMMON  
RESEARCH DATA  
MANAGEMENT ISSUES

# Film Jamaica

AN EVENING OF  
JAMAICAN FILM  
- AND MORE



# CONTENTS



- 4 Article**  
LEARN workshop identifies research management issues
- 7 Article**  
Christmas in Trinidad and Tobago - Parang
- 10 Feature Article**  
ECLAC delivers report on Hurricane Matthew to Bahamas Government
- 14 Article**  
An Evening of Jamaican Film – and more
- 18 Article**  
Hurricane Earl causes extreme damage and loss to Belize
- 22 State of Affairs**  
Recent activity by Caribbean governments
- 23 Fast Facts**  
Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean
- 24 Around the Caribbean**  
Caribbean Christmas, with a Dutch twist
- 26 ECLAC Caribbean Family**  
ISPS International week

## EDITORIAL TEAM

Director: Diane Quarless, ECLAC  
Editor: Alexander Voccia, ECLAC  
Copy Editor: Denise Balgobin, ECLAC  
Publication Design: Blaine Marciano

# ECLAC CARIBBEAN



UNITED NATIONS



**ECLAC Caribbean**  
Non-profit Organisation

Liked

Following

Message



Timeline

About

Events

Photos

More



Like us on Facebook

## December Events

1

World Aids Day  
1 December 2016

2

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery  
2 December 2016

3

International Day of Persons with Disabilities  
3 December 2016

10

Human Rights Day  
10 December 2016

14

Launch of Publication: Preliminary overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean  
Live videofeed from Santiago, Chile.  
14 December 2016



**ECLAC Caribbean**

Posted Jun 24

Latin American and the Caribbean Will Resume Subdued Growth in 2017 Amid Uncertainty about Global Economy



Like · Comment · Share



**ECLAC Caribbean**

Posted Dec 6

Caribbean countries met to identify a set of core indicators, from among the global indicators for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Find out more: <http://vrb.al/caribbean-sdgs>



Like · Comment · Share



**ECLAC Caribbean**

Posted Dec 5

Diane Quarless, Director #ECLACCaribbean, and H.E. David Prendergast, High Commissioner for Jamaica, at the event 'An Evening of Jamaican Film', at the Digicel Imax theater.



Like · Comment · Share

# LEARN workshop identifies research management issues

Experts from the information and communication sectors recently participated in a workshop aimed at identifying and discussing common Research Data Management (RDM) issues that organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean are facing. Hosted at ECLAC Caribbean's office in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on Thursday 24 November 2016, the WebEx was part of a series of online workshops undertaken as part of the "LEaders Activating Research Networks" (LEARN) project.

The purpose of LEARN is to develop the League of European Research Universities (LERU) Roadmap for Research Data, in order to build a coordinated e-infrastructure across Europe and beyond.



The LEARN workshops seek to deliver a model RDM policy; a Toolkit to support implementation, and; an Executive Briefing in five core languages so as to ensure wide outreach. The workshops also sought to advocate the recommendations on RDM and open data made by the LERU Roadmap, and gain feedback from workshop attendees for a new Toolkit of best practice.

One of the reasons for creating a LEARN community in Latin America and the Caribbean is to provide a place in which people and organisations are able to share their knowledge and experiences, in order to find avenues for collaboration in the

development of RDM.

ECLAC's involvement in this project is coordinated by the Hernán Santa Cruz Library, at the organization's Santiago headquarters. The Hernán Santa Cruz Library has gained invaluable experience with data management through its Digital Repository, which boasts more than 35,000 official publications, dating as far back as 1948. With the work of more than 8,000 authors in five languages, this fully open access archive is accessible to all users interested in learning about the Commission's work, especially policy makers, researchers, scholars and students. In total,

the official documents on file exceed 2.5 million pages.


At the end of the workshops in Port of Spain, guidance to implement the LEARN Roadmap was provided along with identification of best practices evidenced from case studies identified through the workshops.

By producing an exemplar RDM policy, which could then be tailored by any university or research institution to meet their needs, LEARN aims to address the challenges of ECLAC's Work Programme concerning the fragmentation of e-infrastructures and the need to maximize on global research data. ■



# Christmas in Trinidad and Tobago - Parang





In Trinidad and Tobago by no means, Christmas traditions have become a blend of the many cultures that exist in the twin-island state.

Parang music is one of the many important parts of Christmas in Trinidad. Parang groups (traditionally, four to six singers accompanied by their musicians and indigenous instruments), go from house to house within communities playing and singing music passed down from their Hispanic American ancestors. Their Christmas offerings include lively folk carols heralding the birth of Jesus, and relating the story of the nativity.

According to one theory, parang was introduced into Trinidad by Spain's Capuchin monks of the Order of Saint Francis, somewhere between 1686 and 1689. Another theory is that Trinidad parang began in the 19th century, when Venezuelan workers were imported to serve on the cocoa estates during the cocoa boom of 1870-1920. The aguinaldos recount the angel Gabriel's prophecy to young Mary, while the manzanas are about the celebrations after the child is born.

Initially, the instruments used were the guitar, cuatro, mandolin, box base, and maracas. Over the years, however, other instruments were pressed into service - horns, guitars, steel drums, tambourines, even pots and pans, and "bottle and spoons". The paranderos (as parang performers are called) would traditionally show up at a house and sing and keep on singing until the household recognizes them. They started by singing songs for the 'opening of doors', such as Serenal or PasenPasen, at which point the household would generally invite them in for refreshments!

Over the years, parang was adapted to the social environment of the island, mainly by the native Amerindians and African slaves. Called La Parranda initially, it became parang. Significant numbers of parranderos are still found in Moruga, Santa Cruz, Paramin, Valencia, Caura, Lopinot, Sangre Grande, Maraval, Siparia and Rio Claro. Christmas music now also includes ParangSoca (introduced around 1978), a blend of soca music and parang.

Trinidad's Christmas cuisine include the traditional Caribbean favorites, as well as pastelles (cornmeal pasties filled with meat, olives, capers and raisins, steamed in banana leaves) and stewed pigeon peas. Ponche de creme (a kind of eggnog with added rum) is also very popular.



## FEATURE ARTICLE

# ECLAC delivers report on Hurricane Matthew to Bahamas

*E*CLAC has delivered a report on the “Assessment of the Effects and Impacts of Hurricane Matthew” to the Government of The Bahamas, following a damage and loss assessment (DaLA) mission to various islands of the country.

ECLAC Caribbean’s Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit Co-ordinator Dr. Omar Bello, led a team of experts to The Bahamas from 23-29 October 2016 to conduct a post-Matthew disaster assessment, which was funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

[READ ARTICLE](#)







# Q&A

## ECLAC delivers report on Hurricane Matthew to Bahamas Government

Upon his return from The Bahamas, Dr. Bello sat down for a one-on-one with The Hummingbird.



**Q: Who comprised the team of experts for this disaster assessment exercise?**

**A:** From ECLAC Caribbean, I was accompanied by Economic Affairs Officer, Mr. Michael Hendrickson, and Associate Information Management Officer, Mr. Robert Williams. The team also included six international consultants, along with representatives from the IDB, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). This assessment was financed by the IDB.



**Q: Which geographical areas did the team visit in The Bahamas?**

**A:** We visited the areas of North Andros, the Berry Islands, Grand Bahama and southern New Providence, which are some of the main areas hit by the Category 4 Hurricane Matthew. Damage in these areas was caused mostly by high winds and the associated storm surge.



**Q: How did you conduct this assessment?**

**A:** We focussed our evaluation on the various sectors – namely social, infrastructure, productive and environment sectors. We met with stakeholders from the public and private sector to gauge the effects and impacts on the ground.



**Q: Less than a year ago you led the team that carried out the disaster assessment following Hurricane Joaquin in The Bahamas. Did you find similarities between the impacts of Joaquin and Matthew?**

**A:** Compared to Joaquin, which was more erratic and developed very quickly, Hurricane Matthew's slow approach allowed more time for The Bahamas to prepare itself. The Government was able to alert the population and deliver timely notice of the emergency preparations necessary to face the storm, such as boarding up windows, evacuating people from vulnerable locations and sheltering them in schools and public buildings.



**Q: What are some of the recommendations of the report?**

**A:** Similar to all other disaster assessment reports, this exercise was conducted with the aim of guiding the reconstruction process of The Bahamas. Our recommendations are organized under the five pillars of action which were proposed by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), and which form the guiding principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. These pillars are risk identification, risk reduction, preparedness, financial protection and resilient recovery. The damage caused by Hurricane Matthew in some communities deserves significant attention and will likely require making some tough choices concerning the need to relocate coastal populations and to invest in infrastructure that will create resilience.



**Q: To what extent was the population affected?**

**A:** The effects of Matthew on the population were moderate. No deaths or injuries to anyone were reported. However, the population was temporarily affected by disruptions to services such as health, electricity, telecommunications and transport. Electrical outages also had an impact on the drinking water sector.

**Q: So now that the report has been delivered to the Government, what would you say is the next step?**

**A:** Well, we have done our part in preparing the report. The Government now faces the difficult task of enabling social and economic recovery to the communities that were hardest hit by the storm, and to the country as a whole. We await their feedback on our findings.

Hurricane Matthew also caused damage to infrastructure and properties, and resulted in electricity loss and flooding not only in the Bahamas, but also in Cuba and Haiti. ■

# Plans underway to strengthen Saints Kitts and Nevis' yachting sector

**K**ey stakeholders in the yachting industry recently met in Saint Kitts and Nevis (SKN) to discuss ideas to strengthen the sector, which according to SKN's Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Mrs. Carlene Henry Morton, will create many benefits for the country.

Some of these benefits include formalizing and incentivizing the sector, and will entail extensive and continuous discussions. ECLAC's Maritime Consultant, Ms. Nichola Stewart, noted that the proposed discussions "will allow for the identification of objectives and how they would be prioritized. We are interested to know from the different aspects of the maritime industry, how elements of the formalization plan will affect each aspect of each stakeholder's interest."

Held on 24 October 2016, the meeting was attended by ECLAC Caribbean's Economic Affairs Officer, Willard Phillips, who revealed that discussions also centered on the formulation of the Saint Kitts and Nevis Yachting Sector Strategic Plan 2016-2021.

Mr. Phillips explained that ECLAC Caribbean's role "is to facilitate the further development of the sector in Saint Kitts and Nevis. He further noted that ECLAC has been involved in specific, substantive work in the development of the yachting sector in the Caribbean for quite some time, and is pleased to work along with the Government to ensure the success of the sector." ■





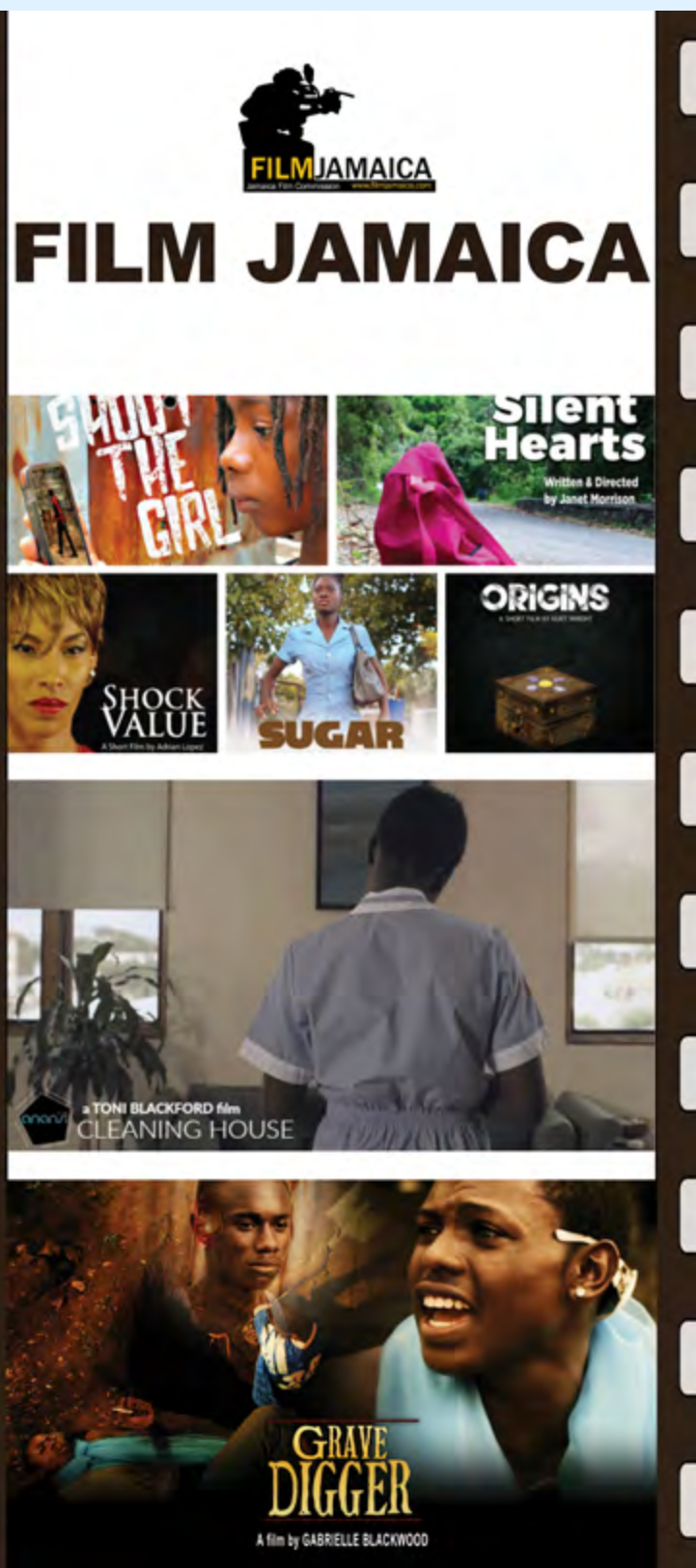
# Christmas in Saint Kitts and Nevis

Saint Kitts and Nevis has a carnival over the Christmas holidays - one huge party with music and dancing in the streets. It features calypso, steel bands, the big drum and fife corps, masquerade and children's dancing troupes, the Bull, Moko Jumbies, clowns and string bands. Festive foods include black pudding, goat water, conchs, Johnny cakes and roti. There are also competitions such as a queen show, the Calypso Monarch Competition and the Caribbean Talented Teen Competition.

If you're yearning for a homey more traditional atmosphere, you can visit Ottley's Plantation in Saint Kitts. The setting is properly Victorian, on a real sugar plantation with a Great House — complete with rickrack and porches looking out to the ocean — which traces its origins back to the late 18th century. Since 1998, the Kuesch-Lowell family has owned the plantation, and Christmas is a special time here.

There is always a real Christmas tree with traditional ornaments in the Great Room and another in the bar/dining area trimmed in festive colours. The highlight of the season is Christmas dinner where guests may choose a traditional roast turkey with guava-chipotle-glazed ham, or decide to go modern with ribeye steak, Chilean sea bass or shrimp and lobster in a ginger-coconut-tamarind sauce. ■

# An Evening of Jamaican Film – and more



On Saturday, 3 December 2016, ECLAC Caribbean joined forces with the High Commission for Jamaica in Trinidad and Tobago to co-host the event entitled 'An Evening of Jamaican Film'. The event, which was held at the Digicel IMAX in Port of Spain, provided a perfect opportunity to showcase the very latest work of young, talented and upcoming Jamaican film directors. A total of seven short films were featured, including 'Grave digger', 'Cleaning house', 'Shoot the girl', 'Silent hearts', 'Shock value', 'Origins', and 'Sugar'. The viewing of these films was preceded by the screening of the awareness raising video produced by ECLAC, 'Ageing in the Caribbean', as well as by opening remarks delivered by Diane Quarless (Director, ECLAC Caribbean) and His Excellency David Prendergast (High Commissioner for Jamaica).

The event was further enriched by a lively post-film Q&A session. The session, moderated by Nigel Campbell, featured on stage Gabrielle Blackwood (President Jamaica Film and Television Association) and Camille Selvon Abrahams (Chairman, FilmTT).

To find out more about ECLAC's role in the evening, and the rationale for its involvement in the event, The Hummingbird caught up with Alexander Voccia, Coordinator of ECLAC Caribbean's Strategic Planning and Outreach Unit, for a quick one-on-one. Here is what Alexander had to say.

**Q** What was ECLAC's role in this particular event?

Over the past month we have been working assiduously in partnership with the High Commission for Jamaica in Trinidad and Tobago to plan and execute the event. In particular, our role at ECLAC has focused mostly on the visibility and outreach aspects pertaining to the event – which culminated in the media tour de force that we had on the eve of the event itself.

---

with Mr Alexander Voccia



**Q** Media tour de force?

Yes, on Friday, 2 December we had three live interviews with local media. First, Gabrielle Blackwood and I were interviewed on CNC3's The Morning Brew. After that, Gabrielle and I were joined by H.E. David Prendergast for an interview on CCN TV6 with Fazeer Mohammed. To round things off, the three of us went live again in the afternoon, for an interview on i95.5FM. I guess that in the end it all paid off, as we were able to almost fill the Digicel IMAX, which means that there must have been somewhere in the region of 300 people in attendance Saturday evening!

Well, congratulations! Let's talk a little more about the rationale for ECLAC Caribbean's involvement in this event.

For ECLAC, the event was part of a broader framework of engagement, which focuses on promoting the creative industries across the Caribbean. This means the film industry, but also the music industry, the culinary arts, the fashion industry, painters and sculptors, among others.

**Q** So why has ECLAC Caribbean decided to focus on the creative industry?

The reason for the focus is that we are convinced that the creative industries have the potential to unlock great economic growth for countries across the Caribbean, in addition to propelling economic diversification, stimulating employment opportunities and galvanizing youth entrepreneurship. Just think, in 2011 alone the export of creative goods generated US \$400 million in export revenue across the Caribbean.

**Q** What are some of the challenges that the creative industry is facing, and on which ECLAC Caribbean might focus its attention?

The challenge for the creative industries is not so much in the production – we have a vast pool of extremely talented young artists across the region – but in the promotion, distribution, commercialization and marketing of the creative products. It's about allowing these up-and-coming artists to access international markets and to be competitive on them. We must work towards helping to ensure that artists are able to make a sustainable living out of their creative art. To do this, we need to focus on the best



# An Evening of Jamaican Film – and more

*(continued)*

ways to help our artists engage internationally and to take advantage of the global and digital economy, and existing trade agreements – all of which can be very advantageous if existing opportunities are understood and exploited to the fullest potential possible. This will be ECLAC's entry point.

**Q** Do you have any examples of these opportunities that could be seized?

At present, there is a trade deficit in the creative industries. This means that we are importing more creative goods (e.g., DVDs, CDs, books, etc.) than those that we are exporting. Why? The answer is simple: producers of creative goods are struggling to make the necessary transition to the digital economy. For example, it is no longer necessary to buy a DVD to watch a movie; you can simply pay for it and watch it on-line in streaming. Unfortunately, only a relatively small percentage of indigenous Caribbean movies are easily accessible through on-line streaming. The same discourse applies to other sectors of the creative industry. In addition, there are also opportunities waiting to be exploited in relation to trade agreements, such as the CARIFORUM-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement, which could facilitate preferential access for our artists to European markets.

**Q** In light of these opportunities, are there avenues for synergies between the creative industries and other sectors of the economy?

Yes, most certainly. Let's take the tourism sector. Creative industries have strong cross-promotional linkages with tourism, which is the largest global industry and the key driver of the Caribbean economy with the largest share of GDP, export earnings and employment. In this regard one of the key areas where countries have potential for growth is in exploiting the value of destination and intellectual property branding. An example of this is the video campaign where Rihanna promotes the natural and cultural heritage of Barbados as part of a three-year deal signed between the Barbados Tourism Authority and the global pop star in 2011. Further evidence of the value of the creative sector to the wider economy is exemplified through the ways that the region's major festivals impact on visitor arrivals and expenditure, hotel occupancy rates, car rentals, telecoms and so on. Cultural events also generate significant media impact and destination branding, as illustrated by the market appeal of festivals like the Trinidad and Tobago carnival. ■



Diane Quarless,  
Director and  
H.E. David  
Prendergast, High  
Commissioner for  
Jamaica,



# Sneak preview – Exploiting opportunities created by trade agreements for export growth in regional industries

**E**CLAC Caribbean has undertaken a study which focuses on the identification of the challenges and constraints faced by industries in the subregion in exploiting the opportunities provided by Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Partial Scope Agreements (PSAs), to which countries in the region are signatory. Part of the work will entail conducting a review of the main provisions of recently signed Bilateral FTAs and PSAs, and elaborating the projections with respect to export growth arising from these agreements.

Countries will benefit from the review in a number of ways. The study will identify strategies aimed at enhancing export growth, and in this context will address constraints to enterprise development, improved competitiveness, and enhanced capacity to enter and exploit export market opportunities, including entry into global value chains.

Exploitation of the many opportunities created through the various trade agreements is not automatic, as there are many pre-conditions for successful penetration and participation in available markets.

It is vital that potential exporters have the necessary market intelligence, meaning knowledge about their competition/competitors, market structure and niche market opportunities. This insight will assist them in making crucial decisions for their businesses, involving those related to the adoption of efficient production systems, and to the logistics necessary to ensure an efficient market supply chain.

This is not the subregion's first attempt in this regard. Twenty years after the adoption of the 1995 World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement that ushered an era of market liberalization globally and with the dismantling of trade restrictions, the Caribbean has seen very little trade expansion and indeed has witnessed the decline in exports for some of its key commodities such as sugar, rice and bananas.

A number of studies have commented on this situation, including studies by ECLAC as well as the Five Year Review of the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (CF-EU EPA).

This study hopes to complement and further build on these studies, including by developing a strategic framework to address the challenges which are being faced in the subregion. ■





# Hurricane Earl causes extreme damage and loss to Belize

From 3 to 4 August 2016, Belize faced the onslaught of Hurricane Earl, which is estimated to have caused extensive damage and loss to the country's public and private sectors. This according to a report presented to the Government of Belize, following a damage and loss assessment (DaLA) exercise carried out between 28 August to 3 September 2016.

ECLAC Caribbean led a team of experts from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), who supported the Government of Belize by providing a comprehensive assessment of Hurricane Earl's impact, and assisting in the formulation of recommendations for recovery and reconstruction.

The Hurricane's arrival had been anticipated for days, leaving ample time for preparations to be made. The National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) established preparedness committees throughout the country. Warning systems were activated in a timely manner and allowed people to evacuate or seek shelter in advance.

Hurricane Earl hit several towns, including San Pedro, Caye Caulker, Belize City, Ladyville, Belize River Valley, Orange Walk and Belmopan, causing infrastructure and building damage, while many roads and streets were blocked due to inland and coastal flooding. Members of the team visited some of these towns to assess the damage, and later held discussions with official representatives from various Government offices, including agencies and ministries of Agriculture, Housing, Transportation, Education and Telecommunications, non-governmental organizations, academia and local inhabitants.

The information presented in the report was obtained from these visits and discussions. Many people voluntarily evacuated Ambergris Caye and Caye Caulker before Hurricane Earl struck the country, and even more persons used the shelters opened by NEMO in the districts of Belize, Cayo, Orange Walk,

Stann Creek and Toledo. A relatively small number of families had to remain in the shelters for more than one night due to extensive damage to their homes. According to Belize's Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation, several families required assistance to leave the shelters and the displaced ones will continue to receive assistance over the next six months.

The Ministry of Human Development completed extensive assessments in the five key districts, and identified many vulnerable persons affected by the hurricane, with a large number of these showing signs of needing psychological assistance as a result of the disaster, and were referred to the Ministry of Health for relevant care.

It is estimated that thousands of people were affected due to damage to their homes. NEMO continues to provide support to all citizens who suffered extensive damage to their dwellings. This includes persons who were affected in terms of access to services, such as hospital patients who suffered reduced access to health services; domestic customers who suffered interruption in telecommunication services; and those facing power outages. Many farmers and fishermen were also directly affected by losses in crops and damage to their work infrastructure.

Most of the overall damage sustained resulted from excess rainfall, storm surge and flooding, and affected the private sector to a greater extent than the public sector.

These and many other details were included in the report that the ECLAC-led assessment team provided the Government. The report also included recommendations which are meant to provide a framework for a resilient reconstruction process that considers the most relevant findings in each sector. For 2017, ECLAC has proposed training in disaster assessment for Belize, as part of its continuing support to the Government in the reconstruction efforts. ■



## CHRISTMAS IN BELIZE

The damage caused by Hurricane Earl has certainly not dampened the Christmas spirit of people in Belize. Christmas in Belize is about spending quality time with family and friends. Government offices, banks, and most non-tourism-oriented businesses shut down for the week preceding Christmas Day. Festivities and family time continue through Boxing Day (December 26), a throwback to Belize's days as a British colony. One important Christmas tradition, practiced throughout Belize, is to spruce up the interior of your home. This is a Belizean's way of inviting the

Christmas spirit. It involves repainting walls, hanging new drapes, and even replacing the floors sometimes! This is the Belizean version of spring cleaning, and the entire family pitches in.

Many Belizeans put up Christmas trees. Those who can afford it also decorate the outsides of their homes with elaborate lights. Blow-up Santas, reindeer, lobsters, and manger scenes are especially popular.

More than 70% of Belizeans are Christian, so the majority of residents celebrate the birth of Christ. As

throughout Central America, the celebrations, though, are a mix of rituals from different cultures.

Local traditional foods like rice and beans, potato salad, white relleno (soup with pork-stuffed chicken and raisins), pebre (roast pork) or ham with pickled onions and jalapeños, and tamales are typically part of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day feasts. These dishes are usually modified for the holidays to include unusual meats or fowl. Rumpopo is the Belizean version of eggnog. ■





UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

ECLAC CARIBBEAN'S

# Recent Publications



1.

Evaluation report of the training course on disaster assessment methodology (Arequipa and Ica, Peru).



3.

Evaluation report of the training workshop on energy efficiency and renewable energy policy in the Caribbean

**AVAILABLE NOW!**

**CLICK ON COVER TO DOWNLOAD.**

**HARDCOPIES AVAILABLE AT ECLAC CARIBBEAN WHILE STOCKS LAST.**



Sustainable energy in the Caribbean: reducing the carbon footprint in the Caribbean through the promotion of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy technologies

2.

## DIANE'S CORNER

The Director's views and thoughts on the occasion of international observances:



**DIANE QUARLESS**  
Director of ECLAC Caribbean

2/12



### International Day for Abolition of Slavery

"Trafficking in persons; sexual exploitation; child labour; forced marriage; and the forced recruitment of children for armed conflict, these abrogations of fundamental human rights are not relics of the past. They exist today."

3/12



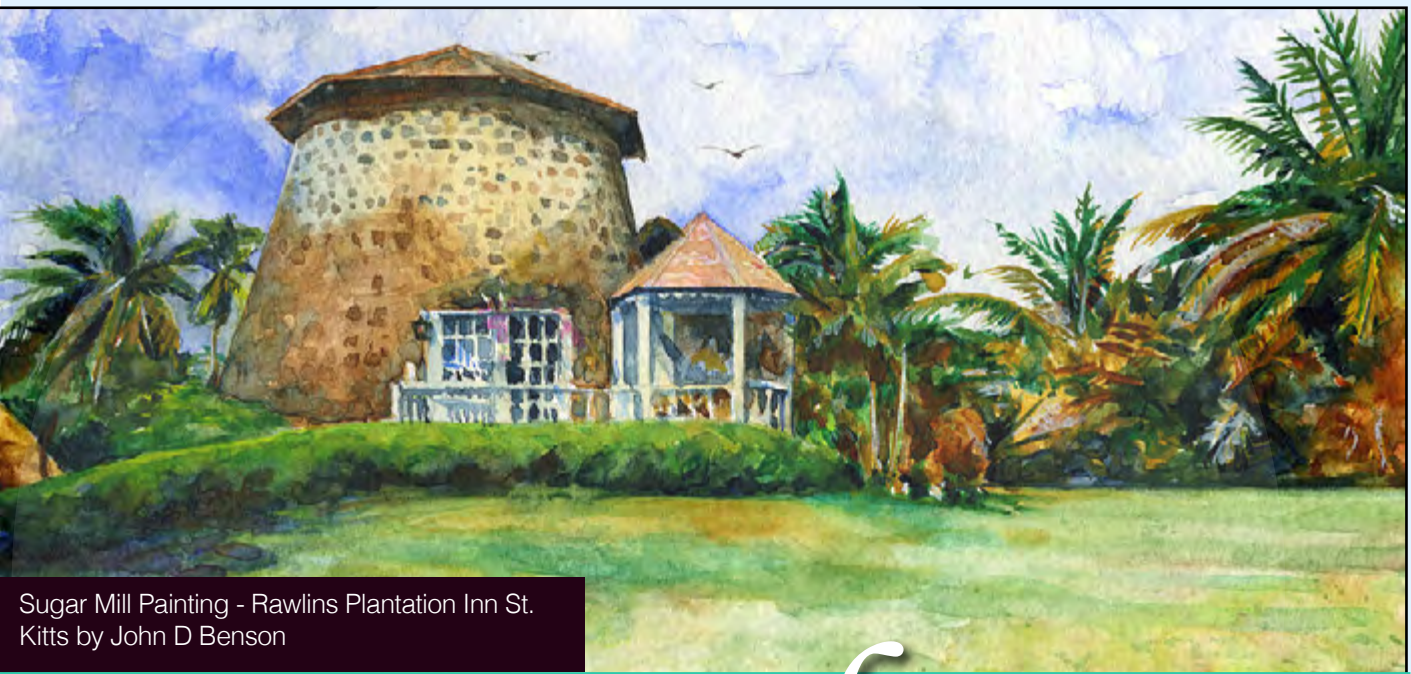
### International Day of Persons with Disabilities

"The impact of disability on the quality of people's lives will depend on their access to treatment; on the support of their families and the communities in which they live; and on their ability to embrace a positive approach to life and living."

**#DirectorsTake**

<http://vrb.al/directors-take>





Sugar Mill Painting - Rawlins Plantation Inn St. Kitts by John D Benson

# STATE *of* AFFAIRS

## Caribbean Community



### \$8M FOR REDUCING HEALTH RISKS

Nov 7th - The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has given US\$8 million to eight Caribbean territories to combat exposure to toxic chemicals found in household cleaning products, processed foods and even clothing, that can severely damage a person's health. The Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Caribbean (BCRC-Caribbean) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) will coordinate with the various states to strengthen their capacities for managing hazardous chemicals with a view to implementing environmentally sound mechanisms for the storage, abandonment of use, identification of alternatives to use and final disposal/destruction of these types of chemicals.



### PRINCE HARRY VISITS REGION

Dec 4th - His Royal Highness; Prince Henry of Wales paid an official visit to the Caribbean during November 20 – December 4, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of England. The 14-day visit, which included Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines, celebrated the 90th year of the Queen's birth. The visit also marked the occasion of the 35th Anniversary of Independence in Antigua and Barbuda, and the 50th Anniversary of Independence in Barbados and Guyana.

## Cuba



### DEATH OF FIDEL CASTRO

Nov 26th - On November 25, former President Fidel Castro, 90, passed away peacefully following a long illness. The country mourned the loss of the Father of the Revolution with nine days of official mourning. Several foreign leaders offered condolences, with both Russia and China acknowledging the loss of a "sincere friend." Cubans gathered at the funeral of Fidel Castro as the revolutionary leader's ashes were laid to rest in at the Santa Ifigenia Cemetery in Santiago.



### AGREEMENT WITH E.U.

Dec 12th - The Cuban government and the European Union (EU) signed a bilateral Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA). The agreement describes relations between the EU and Cuba in areas under Brussels' jurisdiction, such as trade and development. Officially signed in Brussels by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez and the EU's Chief Diplomat, Federica Mogherini, the accord will remain provisional, until it is ratified by the European Parliament, and by each of the member States of the Union

## Trinidad and Tobago



### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Nov 29th - Local government elections took place in Trinidad and Tobago on November 28. The People's National Movement (PNM) won 83 of the 137 seats in the local government elections, while the United National Congress' (UNC) won 54 seats.



### HISTORIC GAS DEAL WITH VENEZUELA

Dec 7th - A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed before ministerial and energy teams from Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago during a one-day trip to Caracas made by Prime Minister Keith Rowley. The MoU outlines an agreement by both governments to take reasonable steps to facilitate the development, construction, operation and maintenance of one or more pipelines from the Marisol Sucre region in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.



# FAST FACTS

## Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean

*T*he Preliminary Overview provides an analysis of the economic performance of selected Caribbean economies for 2016-2017. It provides a development overview of the region's economy in 2016 and growth projections for 2017.

*What*

Launch of the Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean report 2016-2017.

*When:*

14 December 2016.

*Where:*

ECLAC Headquarters - Santiago, Chile.

# CARIBBEAN CHRISTMAS, WITH A DUTCH TWIST

Each island in the Caribbean has its own unique way of celebrating Christmas, though many of the traditions are similar, having been influenced by the colonists of centuries gone by.

Grotesque masks, jigging Jonkonnu dancers and acrobats, ghost stories, Spanish music and pepperpot – these seem far away from carols, mistletoe and chestnuts roasting on an open fire (as sung in well-known Christmas carols). However, there are Christmas traditions in various islands in the Caribbean that still bear close ties with overseas celebrations.

European colonists brought Christianity to the Caribbean, originally to the native Arawak and Carib Indians, though not many of them survived to practise it. Today, European Christmas customs survive everywhere across the region: Christmas morning services in the established churches; feasting on Christmas Day; wassailing or serenading; dances; the giving of gifts and Christmas cards; Santa

Claus and Christmas trees.

The Hummingbird is pleased to offer its readers a quick run through of some of these festive traditions in Aruba, Curacao and Suriname, three countries with a heavy Dutch influence.

Aruba and Curacao celebrate Christmas no less than three times, especially for children, who are the most fortunate this time of year. Here is why. Sinterklaas, being the Dutch version of Santa Claus, will visit them on 5 December and give the good boys and girls presents and sweets. Then Santa Claus will visit their home on 25 December, to put presents under a Christmas tree. The third time is on 6 January, when the “three kings” will visit the good boys and girls, and leave them presents at the Nativity scene.

In addition, other celebrations such as the Jewish Festival of Lights (Hanukkah), which lasts eight days, often coincide with Christmas - this year in fact Hanukkah will overlap Christmas week. The reason for

this variety of celebrations is clear. These two islands have adopted many cultures from different parts of the world due to migratory processes. Aside from celebrating Sinterklaas and Santa Claus, people wholeheartedly celebrate the birth of Christ and there generally is a true Christmas spirit within communities.

On the night before Christmas, most families dress in their best clothes to go to church to attend Christmas Eve mass. After church – and after having giving each other a “Bon Pasco” – families go home to enjoy their traditional Christmas dinner. As for the Christmas morning, that is often times the moment that children cherish the most, insofar as it involves opening the long-awaited presents!

Before Sinterklaas, Santa Claus, the Christmas tree and Christmas lights came along, the celebration of Christmas was quite a lot simpler. Indigenous people who had been converted to Christianity had a tradition that is still exercised by many families to this day. In the lead





up to Christmas, the house is swept and mopped with special scents and the walls are newly painted. Three pieces of aloe bound with a bright red ribbon are hung above the windows and doors to welcome the spirits of peace and harmony into people's homes. The food was simpler, although perhaps the *ayaca* and *ponchede creme* were also known back then! On the night before Christmas, people would attend Christmas Eve mass dressed in their best clothes. Clearly, not all tradition has died out, although it may have evolved over the years.

In addition to the celebrations, food has also been greatly influenced by the many cultures that have come together in Curacao and Aruba. Christmas traditional dishes may sound familiar, such as ham, *ayaca*, *arros con pollo*, stuffed turkey or chicken and *zults* and *oliebollen*. Soups and salads like tuna salad, chicken and peas salad, egg salad, chicken *sancocho* and the famous pumpkin soup embellish the Christmas feasts, alongside an array of snacks and special cakes

are often prepared for any family guests. As for the drinks, these include *chuculatipinda* and *ponche crema*. And of course the delicious *stollen* cannot be forgotten, which is a loaf-shaped cake containing dried fruit, and covered with powdered sugar or icing sugar. A more recent addition to the Christmas traditional food is the Italian *panettone* and the *pan de jamon*.

Another island with a strong Dutch influence is Suriname, where Christmas begins early. Children put out cookies and milk for *Goedoe Pa* (or Dearest Daddy) and his servants who would be busy delivering gifts throughout the country. *Goedoe Pa* is a black man and his servants are also black. He and his servants leave the children's presents next to their shoes on the morning of December 6th, with poems attached to the gifts. It was not always so. Before 1975, when Suriname was a colony, Christmas traditions were the same as in the Netherlands. Then, it was *St. Nicholas* (also called *Sinterklaas*), an elderly white man, who arrived

by ship on December 5th, the eve of his birthday. He rode a white horse and had a retinue of Black servants. Children left hay and carrots in their shoes for *St. Nicholas'* horse.

Today, Surinamese celebrate Christmas Day and the following day, December 26th, called *Tweede Kerstdag* in festive fashion with parties, gifts, and ethnic Christmas dishes. During the two days, Suriname's offices, factories and schools are closed. Families attend church services on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning. After church, they enjoy opening gifts at home and there is a festive atmosphere during which friends visit and share the good things of the season throughout the day and into the next. ■

Photo of Willemstad - Curacao



PHOTO-SHOP



# ECLAC CARIBBEAN *Family*

## ISPS International week

Coordinator of ECLAC Caribbean's Programme Support Unit, Mr. Johann Brathwaite, recently had the honour of being the feature speaker at the opening ceremony for the International School of Port of Spain's annual International Week festivities in October 2016. His presentation focussed on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The opening ceremony featured a parade of nations, with students proudly carrying the flags of their native countries. Mr. Brathwaite's son, Jason (a Grade 5 student), carried the flag of their native Guyana. This was followed by dance and song performances from the students based on the varying cultures present in Trinidad and Tobago.

The event was attended by members of the diplomatic community, parents and teachers of the school, and specially invited guests. The Hummingbird attended and takes this opportunity to share some of the memories with you. ■



# CONTACT US

ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean,  
1 Chancery Lane, P.O. Box 1113,  
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago,  
West Indies.

Telephone: 1 868 224 8000  
Facsimile: 1 868 623 8485  
E-mail: [registry@eclacpos.org](mailto:registry@eclacpos.org)

MEDIA CONTACT  
Tel.: 1 868 224 8075  
E-mail: [media-pos@eclac.org](mailto:media-pos@eclac.org)

## SOCIAL MEDIA



[www.eclacpos.org](http://www.eclacpos.org)

