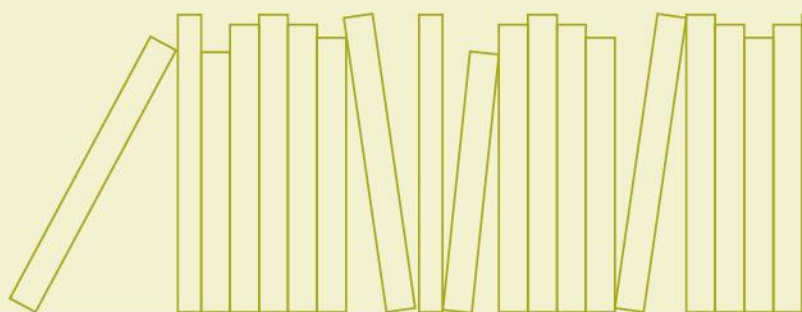


Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN



Report of the nineteenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee



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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

Nineteenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the
Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
17 May 2019
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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**REPORT OF THE NINETEENTH 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 the conclusions and recommendations below, which are based on the statement made by the British Virgin Islands as acting Rapporteur of the meeting (on behalf of the Bahamas), 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 challenged the office to consider multi-year programme planning alongside the new annual budget cycle.
3. ECLAC would convene a meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and other relevant partners to conduct a comprehensive review of a revised proposal for the repositioned Regional Coordinating Mechanism; the TAC would present its findings at the 28th Session of the CDCC.
4. The Monitoring Committee took note that in accordance with the established practice of rotation by country in English alphabetical order, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is the next in line for the Chairmanship of the CDCC. The Committee therefore welcomed the announcement of the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to assume the Chairmanship of the twenty-eighth session of the CDCC in 2020. The Secretariat would consult with the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with a view to finalizing the date for the twenty-eighth session of the CDCC.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date of the meeting

5. The nineteenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC took place in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on 17 May 2019.

2. Attendance

6. Delegations of 11 Member States of the CDCC attended the nineteenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.
7. Delegations of seven associate members were present at the meeting: Anguilla, Aruba, the British Virgin Islands, Curaçao, Guadeloupe, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands.
8. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were represented: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
9. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended the meeting: the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM).
10. Chile, India, Japan, Mexico, Panama and South Africa attended in the capacity of Observers.
11. The full list of participants may be found in annex I.

3. Officers

12. The officers elected to serve the twenty-seventh session of the CDCC presided over the Monitoring Committee, as follows:

Chairperson:	Saint Lucia
Vice-Chairpersons:	British Virgin Islands Jamaica Suriname
Rapporteur:	The Bahamas

4. Documentation

13. 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

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

- The Honourable Dennis Moses, Foreign Minister, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago
- Raúl García Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis, ECLAC
- The Honourable Sarah Flood-Beaubrun, Minister with responsibility for External Affairs, Saint Lucia, and Chair of the CDCC

15. The Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago, signalled his appreciation of the two-day Learning Conference as a unique and timely opportunity to share experiences and best practices of politicians and practitioners from across the region. He noted that his country was implementing Vision 2030, which incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), defined the key priorities for the first planning period 2016-2020, and offered analysis on the main opportunities and challenges. He indicated that they were working on the implementation of the SDGs, with the collaboration of the United Nations, and would be preparing their first Voluntary National Report (VNR) in the months to come. Regarding the programme of work for the 2018-2019 biennium, he underscored that capacity-building, technical and institutional strengthening to augment the region's policy-making mechanisms were highly valuable. He expressed his country's appreciation for the work of the Commission, including its research, technical advice, organizing intergovernmental and expert group meetings, and articulating a regional perspective within global forums and introducing global concerns at the regional level.

16. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC stated that the Monitoring Committee was intended to offer member States an opportunity for mid-term stocktaking on the work they agreed to accomplish during the biennium, for reflection on the broader regional and global challenges that continued to confront the countries of the region, and for considering policy options and effective responses to those challenges.

17. He mentioned that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development had become the most vital, relevant and productive multi-stakeholder platform in the region to follow up and review Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. He stated that ECLAC had long realized the particularities and specificities of the Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) and were implementing a “Caribbean First” strategy - one that put people first and the pursuit of equality at its center - to develop a coherent and realistic response to those challenges. He noted that ECLAC’s focus continued to be on building the necessary skills and institutional capacity, so that member States were better equipped to meet the challenges of integrated sectoral planning and policy coherence, which were essential to the successful implementation of the SDGs.

18. The Deputy Executive Secretary took note of the valuable initiative to revitalize and reshape the CDCC Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM), including the need to incorporate the unique features of Caribbean SIDS, as countries proceeded with mainstreaming the SDGs into their national development plans. He informed the meeting that the entire UN development system in the Caribbean was devoted to supporting national development efforts.

19. The Minister with Responsibility for External Affairs, Saint Lucia articulated her appreciation to UNITAR, UNDESA and ECLAC for organizing the Learning Conference, which not only provided an important peer-learning platform for policy makers, but also raised collective awareness and resolve on the capacities needed and strategies to implement to advance the 2030 Agenda. She noted that, notwithstanding the challenges such as the highest levels of exposure to the impacts of climate change, high levels of debt, small and narrow economic structures, the Caribbean was committed to pursuing a path to development that was resilient, economically viable and socially sustainable. She highlighted important take-aways from the Learning Conference, including the importance of institutional, operational and policy coherence; the value of a strong network national focal points; the fact that there was no one-size-fits-all solution; and the Caribbean’s need to find innovative ways to strengthen its capacity for data capture and analysis to meet the monitoring and reporting obligations of the 2030 Agenda. She pointed to upcoming summits on sustainable development and SIDS - which would be held at the start of the 2019 General Assembly - as places to deliver a consistent Caribbean message. She opined that a properly functioning RCM would help the Caribbean achieve that consistent message, and felt that the RCM should be resuscitated and restructured to support synergistic implementation of the SIDS and SDG agendas in the Caribbean.

2. Adoption of the agenda

20. The meeting adopted the agenda of the meeting without any changes (LC/MCCDCC.19/1).

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Repositioning vulnerable, highly indebted Caribbean SIDS on the path to sustainable development.
3. Report on the third meeting of the forum of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on sustainable development.
4. Preparation for the HLPF and SIDS Summits during the 74th United Nations General Assembly.
5. Shaping a Caribbean Regional Coordinating Mechanism to promote synergy in SIDS and SDG implementation.
6. Progress on the implementation of the 2018-2019 programme of work for the Caribbean.
7. Other matters.
8. Date and venue of the twenty-eighth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
9. Conclusions and recommendations.

3. Repositioning vulnerable, highly indebted Caribbean SIDS on the path to sustainable development

21. The Deputy Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean introduced ECLAC's Caribbean First Strategy to the meeting, and elaborated a socio-economic context as the basis for that strategy. The intent of the strategy was to give focus to persistent Caribbean development challenges including disaster assessment; to raise levels of national and regional advocacy in the search for solutions; to give prominence to discourse on critical Caribbean issues in all ECLAC forums; to leverage financial support and technical assistance for agreed Caribbean priorities; and to promote wider Caribbean engagement in ECLAC forums and initiatives.

22. He spoke of the most critical challenges to development of the Caribbean, and outlined some possible opportunities which the subregion needed to grasp to secure future gains from the implementation of the sustainable development agenda in the Caribbean.

23. Among the key challenges he identified were environmental vulnerability, reflected in significant and frequent damage and loss from storms; high indebtedness; weak economic growth underpinned by weak merchandise exports; and declining foreign direct investment and overseas development assistance. Social challenges were also identified, including high levels of unemployment, increasing criminality and domestic violence, high levels of poverty, and widespread pervasiveness of non-communicable diseases.

24. The Deputy Director highlighted several opportunities related to access to financing for development: investing in the blue economy and the creative industries; strengthening the private sector; and addressing social and environmental resilience. He also called for the deepening of the regional integration process, with a view towards moving beyond the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and greater participation in global value chains. He pointed to the need to focus on building regional value chains and the infrastructure that facilitated such expansion, and identified a need to create a seamless space for trade - both interregional and subregional - with full engagement of the private sector.

25. He proposed the strengthening of partnerships as an approach to confronting those challenges. Other approaches included the promotion of debt for climate change swaps as advocated by ECLAC; investing in green industries through a Caribbean Resilience Fund; and accessing the Green Climate Fund. He also noted the need for stronger partnerships among governments, the private sector and people through building on each other's strengths and learning from each other.

DISCUSSION:

26. The representative of Cuba reaffirmed her country's continuous support for the Caribbean and their interest in greater participation in Caribbean affairs. She reminded delegates of Cuba's chairmanship of ECLAC for the period, and that the following week would be the first meeting of the group on Supporting the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America. She informed the meeting of the Caribbean Fair for business in July 2019.

Food:

27. The representative of Guyana observed that the presentation did not mention import challenges, citing the example of food import as a considerable problem for her country. She pointed out that even when pushing for increased export, there remained a need to reduce imports and change consumption patterns to include more locally produced food. She informed the meeting that land was available in Guyana for investment to support agriculture production of other countries. The Deputy Director noted that Guyana had a vibrant agricultural sector, but pointed to the need for efficient practices and good production capacity in the region. The representative of UNFPA advanced the idea of hotels supporting small farmers to supply

local produce, which she felt would grow national capacity and allow the hotels to offer tourists a unique experience.

Unemployment/Entrepreneurship/Education:

28. The participant from Barbados raised the question of successful models in the Caribbean to address the issue of youth unemployment. He noted that many reforms had been proposed, and wondered if there was evidence that they had worked anywhere in the Caribbean. The Deputy Director noted that Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago had made progress in reducing unemployment. He pointed out that in many countries it was not always clear how many new jobs represented highly productive activity. He highlighted the importance of good vocational training and technical capacity development to create incentives for youth to stay and work in their countries, and pointed to Cuba as a good example of how to properly invest in human capital. The representative of Jamaica supported the Deputy Director's observation on the progress made in reducing unemployment in Jamaica. She also noted that, while business process outsourcing companies were a good source of employment for young people out of university, there was a need for skills upscaling.

29. The representative of UNFPA asked if ECLAC had done any studies on the access to bank loans to support entrepreneurial activities, and raised the question of support to less advantaged young people to advance their vision. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda, supported by the representative of Guyana, noted that there was a challenge in the region to release the entrepreneurial spirit of people. Both representatives agreed on the need for entrepreneurship to be taught in school as part of the curriculum, while the representative of Anguilla noted that different approaches may be required in different areas to address the broader education challenge in the Caribbean. In addition, the representative of Antigua and Barbuda felt that for young entrepreneurs there should be alternative support to banks. He emphasized de-risking as a very substantial issue for the region, and noted that outdated business models continued in the Caribbean. The Deputy Director reminded the meeting that the issue of the banking system was an old one, given that since the 1970s it was recognized that commercial banks did not allow development that aligned with the thinking in the region. He pointed to the need to invent instruments that reflected the environment in the region to address issues such as information gaps.

30. The representative of UNFPA brought up the school drop-out rate of young men, and wondered if it reflected an antiquated Caribbean educational model. The representative of Anguilla spoke of a different education model in one school in her country - developed specifically for boys - which showed initial signs of success.

31. The representative of Montserrat noted that, in terms of human capacity and capital development in the region, there was difficulty in fostering change in the educational system and revamping the civil service with young talent. He observed that women were choosing careers which improved their education and earning capacity relative to their male partners, and the need of the males to re-assert leadership manifested itself through violence. The representative of Anguilla stated that there is an aversion in the region to disrupting systems that could foster innovation. She noted that the Caribbean's human capital that went abroad did well in certain areas, and wondered how those abroad managed to innovate and what stopped those in the Caribbean from realizing the same potential. She pointed to the fact that banks were risk-averse, and queried if consideration was given to leveraging the Caribbean's indigenous banking sectors and conducting research on helping to foster innovation in the subregion – that would facilitate export of products rather than re-importing from abroad.

Debt:

32. The participant from Barbados queried the progress of the debt swap initiative, and proposed that the presentation be used to advocate for the Caribbean at the high-level meetings in New York. The Deputy Director informed the meeting that ECLAC had identified three countries, and their debt profiles were being

developed. He noted that the next step was to seek development partners to advance the initiative. The representative of Guyana supported the idea of a regional debt swap strategy, and signaled her country's willingness to share lessons it had learned on managing debt over the years. She noted that, as a region, there was a need to exchange information and lessons learned, and indicated that her country would be willing to support a working group or other regional arrangement in this regard.

33. The representative of Montserrat indicated that his country had no significant debt, but was looking into lessons learned by other countries and how the debt situation became such an issue. He stated that Montserrat was in the process of restructuring and limiting its budget to get out of debt. The representative of Guyana stated that good management of the fiscal space was key to remaining in a debt-sustainable position, while the Deputy Director added that acquiring debt was not a problem if those funds were used to invest in activities which allowed the countries to repay the debt. The representative of Jamaica indicated that her country had been implementing debt reform as well as business reform initiatives. She noted that they were developing a financial inclusion policy, and were in the process of establishing a fiscal council to ensure the gains made in reducing the country's debt was sustainable.

Environment:

34. The representative of Guyana informed that her country had been pushing for the Green Economy, and noted that its national sustainable development strategy considered how resources were managed and used. The representative of CARICOM pointed to the need to focus on other environmental issues, not only climate change. She highlighted initiatives which had taken place within the Caribbean such as the initiative on sustainable use and management of natural resources, and flagged the issue of sustainable consumption and production.

4. Report on the third meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development

35. The Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean informed the meeting that her presentation would provide information from the Third Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, as well as strongly advocate for robust participation of the Caribbean in future meetings of the Forum. She reiterated the latter point several times during her presentation, as well as at the end of it.

36. She presented an overview on the regional and global dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, highlighting the significant level of engagement of the regional community. She noted that that annual event, convened under the auspices of ECLAC, was a manifestation of multilateralism and regional collaboration to follow-up, review and implement the 2030 Agenda. She stressed the importance for Caribbean States to attend that meeting, and noted the fulsome attendance of both Latin American and Caribbean Regional Coordinators.

37. She described the value of the Forum in linking the national, subregional, regional and global agendas, bringing together governments, civil society, youth networks, the private sector, academia, UN and regional systems, among others, to address the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In considering the specific needs and challenges of the Caribbean, she noted that one of the main areas of focus for the Forum was to support and guide member countries through the VNR process; the outcome of which would feed into the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and other ECLAC subsidiary bodies. She acknowledged the importance of peer learning for the region, highlighting that it provided ECLAC with a sense of the region's progress in advancing the sustainable development agenda. She reiterated the importance of Caribbean States being represented in a forum such as that one, which offered an opportunity for countries to practice presenting their VNRs as well as discuss and arrive at consensus on issues as a region.

38. The Director emphasized the importance of Caribbean participation in the Forum. She spotlighted some of the Caribbean luminaries who attended and their powerful interventions, and reminded the meeting that the “Caribbean First” initiative was inspired by the united voices of the 13 Caribbean representatives who attended the previous year’s Forum, noting that the international community felt compelled to act upon hearing the challenges of the Caribbean. She shared some of the highlights of the third meeting, including the presentation and discussion on the quadrennial report, which was compiled using information provided by the member States and reflected the progress made and challenges faced by Caribbean countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda; the Escazú agreement - the regional agreement on access to information, public participation, and justice in environmental matters - and its importance in ensuring that there was engagement, sharing of information, and a respect of the value of all stakeholders in the sustainable development process; high-level dialogue with the UN special envoy on the climate change summit and Caribbean representatives, which provided the opportunity for the representatives to articulate the concerns of the Caribbean as middle income, highly indebted countries which were among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; multi-stakeholder side-events; a Latin American and Caribbean and European Interregional dialogue and a special session on the General Assembly process.

39. She observed that the panel dedicated to the challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable in the Caribbean focused on resilience building and a people-centered approach, noting that the message from that excellent panel was to address the variety of needs of the Caribbean people - because sustainable development was ultimately and essentially a people-centred process for development. Among other things, that panel felt it was important to build skills in young people, provide job training, and leverage technology.

40. The Director noted that the data challenge in the Caribbean was even more acute in the environmental dimension, observed that VNRs did not have enough attention given to the environmental dimension, and pointed out the seriousness of that gap for countries that were so vulnerable to climate change. She highlighted the need to have indicators that measured the value of natural capital, and to be able to determine the impact that natural disasters, climate change and other such occurrences had on a country’s economic, social and environmental development. She spoke of a side event at the Forum which addressed developing climate change disaster indicators. She stated that ECLAC was designing a project which would allow countries to build the capacity within their statistical institutes or other relevant bodies to design indicators that would facilitate the measurement of natural capital and the impact of natural disasters on it. Noting that the next meeting of the Forum would be in Cuba in 2020, she reiterated the call to the member States, urging them to inform their governments of the importance of their presence at that meeting.

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41. The representative of Aruba then provided a summary of the Learning Conference on implementing the 2030 Agenda in the Caribbean. She noted that during the Conference, the value of peer learning as a practical approach to confronting development challenges was emphasized. She pointed to the fact that, despite the challenges and constraints which Caribbean countries faced, country experiences indicated that the region was making progress in localizing the 2030 Agenda. She also highlighted the Conference’s examination of how public institutions could be effectively mobilized to facilitate a holistic implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the considerable interest in policy coherence in Caribbean countries - including strategies and actions - for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

42. On SDG reporting, she informed the meeting that the Conference acknowledged the four countries which had already reported via their VNRs, welcomed the four committed to report in the next two years, and highlighted the absence of an environmental dimension in Caribbean VNRs as an area of concern. She stated that there was discussion and agreement on a number of critical topics, including the Forum of the

Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, its importance to peer learning and its links to the High-Level Political Forum; strategies for positioning the SIDS sustainable development agenda in the Caribbean; a proposal to revise the monitoring and coordination framework for implementation of the SIDS agenda in the Caribbean; the need for an enhanced coordinating mechanism which emphasized institutional and policy coherence at the country level; the importance of stakeholder engagement and building robust partnerships; and the value of civil society organizations, youth and the private sector participation in the sustainable development process. She signaled that the Conference participants identified several challenges which could impede the monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda, while noting that despite the challenges, the monitoring and evaluation frameworks could be enhanced using technological innovation, “big data” and other systems.

DISCUSSION:

43. The representative of Cuba noted that her country had been working on its VNR and acknowledged that there had been challenges in the drafting process. She indicated that her country faced the same challenges as other SIDS, including being classified as a middle-income country. She informed the meeting that Cuba had also been subjected to an embargo by the United States and thanked the Caribbean countries for rejecting that policy. She hoped for fulsome participation of the Caribbean at the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on sustainable development that would take place in Cuba the following year, and reiterated that the Caribbean needed to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the 2030 Agenda.

44. The representative of Aruba reiterated her country’s commitment to the implementation of the SDGs, and took note of the people-centered approach which was discussed at the regional level. She also signaled her satisfaction with the inclusion of the associate members in the ECLAC community and the work that was being conducted, noting that as non-independent territories they had the same issues as the Caribbean, truly embodying the sense that no one was left behind in implementing the SDGs.

45. The representative of Montserrat confirmed his country’s commitment to implementing the SDGs that were specific to his country’s priorities. He pointed to a national Sustainable Development Plan and a strategic process mechanism which encouraged Ministries and departments to align their work and resources to the achievement of specific goals.

46. The representative of the British Virgin Islands explained their pre-existing challenges were exacerbated by the recent hurricanes and flooding event in 2017. She noted that they were working to stabilize their economy and looked forward to ECLAC’s support in moving forward. The representative of Aruba supported the British Virgin Islands’ comment in flagging that her country needed to bear in mind its own constitutional arrangements and requirements.

47. The representatives of Aruba and the British Virgin Islands reflected their respective countries’ frustration in not being included in setting the development agenda and the attendant challenges posed, and hoped to be included in the regional discussions and initiatives. The Director confirmed her understanding of the frustration expressed by the associate members of the CDCC and assured the delegates that ECLAC was championing their cause. She emphasized that the associate members were an integral part of ECLAC’s efforts in the Caribbean, noting that the territories could not be excluded solely because of their political status. She informed the meeting that ECLAC had made the case to the international community that the non-independent territories were SIDS and needed to be included in every forum that addressed SIDS issues. She noted that ECLAC did enquire whether the associate members would be a part of the HLPF and was told that their participation would be through the Forum. She reminded the meeting that that was a political engagement, but ECLAC would continue to engage in that conversation to encourage that no one was left behind and to ensure that a “space at the table” was found for all its members.

5. Preparation for the HLPF and SIDS Summits during the 74th United Nations General Assembly

48. The Programme Officer in the Office of the Executive Secretary of ECLAC presented on the preparations for the HLPF as well as the SIDS Summit to be held during the 74th General Assembly of the United Nations. In elaborating the basis for the proposed meetings, she noted that the HLPF was mandated in 2012 by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), "The Future We Want", and provided the political leadership, orientation and recommendations for the implementation, follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda and promoted sustainable development. She further indicated that since 2013, the HLPF had convened a meeting of Ministers annually, under the auspices of the ECOSOC, while every four years it convened a meeting of Heads of States under the auspices of the General Assembly. She highlighted the inclusion of a series of side events and exchanges that encouraged partnerships among multiple actors and proposed innovative solutions. Among the main activities of the HLPF she touched on the presentation of the annual SDG Report; an in-depth review of certain SDGs each year; substantive discussions on various country groupings (SIDS, LDCs, etc.); interventions from major groups and other stakeholders; a ministerial segment in which Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) were presented; and a report of the five Chairs of the Regional Fora on Sustainable Development in the ministerial segment.

49. In assessing the performance of the HLPF to date, the Programme Officer observed that each year the HLPF focused on SDG 17 and several other SDGs. In 2017, the HLPF theme was "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world", and focused on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17; in 2018, "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies" and SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17. She advised that in 2019 the focus of the HLPF would be on SDGs which were very relevant to the Caribbean, viz. SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17.

50. While acknowledging that the region had demonstrated great commitment to the 2030 Agenda in the first HLPF cycle (2016-2019), she highlighted the need to find ways to support the countries which had so far not presented their VNRs. With respect to the Caribbean, she noted that the Bahamas and Jamaica had presented in 2018, Guyana and Saint Lucia were scheduled to present in 2019, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago had indicated interest in presenting their respective VNRs to the HLPF in 2020. She expressed the hope that the number of countries presenting VNRs would increase in the short term, since both the process of preparing and presenting a VNR provided opportunities to measure implementation progress.

51. In terms of implementation of the SDGs, she updated the meeting on to the status of preparations of VNRs and noted that 16 countries at the global level presented more than once during the first cycle of the HLPF, with six from Latin America and the Caribbean. Altogether, 51 countries did not present their VNR during the first HLPF cycle, of which 11 were from Latin America and the Caribbean. She indicated that of great concern were the number of countries being left behind in the process, and avenues were being explored on how to support those countries' efforts.

52. With respect to the upcoming high-level week of events which would be held under the auspices of the General Assembly, she touched on the activities, forums and opportunities which would occur during that week. She pointed out that those could be leveraged by Caribbean SIDS to advocate for the advancement of their development agenda under the SDGs. Of those activities, she elaborated on the SDG Summit, noting that the Summit included the first HLPF meeting at the Heads of State level, and that it would assess the overall implementation progress across the 17 SDGs. The HLPF meeting would be chaired by the President of the General Assembly, and result in a negotiated political declaration. She informed the meeting that the negotiations for the political declaration had already started, and alerted the meeting to the importance of ensuring that the needs of Caribbean SIDS were properly reflected in the declaration. She

stated that during that meeting the United Nations would mobilize support for action to achieve the SDGs and encourage voluntary commitments by governments and other stakeholders.

53. The Programme Officer shared several lessons learned from the first HLPF cycle. She indicated that the VNRs prepared and presented by 105 countries could be great sources of information for those preparing VNRs. She also informed that the VNRs could be tools for transformation as well as for requesting partnerships and building trust among stakeholders, while providing an opportunity for stocktaking and for assessing and monitoring the country's progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

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54. The Sustainable Development Officer of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean stated that 2019 was an important year for the SIDS, and informed the meeting of the major SIDS events in the margins of the HLPF, which included International SIDS Day on 10 July, a global multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue, a Caribbean SIDS Side Event, and in September, a special decision to be taken on SIDS through the negotiation of a political declaration. She emphasized the opportunity for the Caribbean to spotlight the Caribbean SIDS agenda over the next four years, given that the Chairmanship of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) resided with Belize and would be followed by Antigua and Barbuda.

55. In addressing the challenges facing SIDS, she drew attention to the fact that the 2030 Agenda had the focus and interest of the international community and felt that there was a need to re-establish that the SIDS agenda was the sustainable development agenda for the region. She highlighted several other challenges based on the outcomes of the SAMOA Pathway Midterm Review, which included declining financial flows to the SIDS; uneven progress compounded by lack of data; lack of systematic assessment, documentation and reporting on implementation of the SAMOA Pathway; having synergies with other developmental agendas (e.g. 2030 Agenda, Sendai Framework, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Paris Agreement); weak human and institutional structures; limited or no fiscal space for investment in sustainable development; and partial implementation of SIDS support as was requested in the JIU report on UN system support to SIDS. She also noted that those challenges were not unique to Caribbean SIDS.

56. The Sustainable Development Officer pointed to the two main documents on the SAMOA Pathway Midterm Review for the Caribbean: the San Pedro Declaration from Belize and the Apia Outcome from Samoa. She noted that those documents addressed the Caribbean challenges with means of implementation and defined a programme of implementation for the next five years. She indicated that the San Pedro Declaration emphasized the importance of building resilience in all its dimensions and identified 25 priority areas for action. In line with the purpose that those two documents served, she signaled that AOSIS would be using them for the reviews on SIDS priorities and as the main basis for engagement in multilateral processes.

57. She informed the meeting that the zero draft of the SAMOA Pathway Midterm Report had been recently released, and that it contained a preamble on the assessment of implementation progress and priority areas for the following five years. She advised that the Caribbean should examine the report to afford full preparation for and participation in the United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting to review progress made in addressing the priorities of SIDS through the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. She encouraged the Caribbean countries to fully participate in the 74th session of the General Assembly and to introduce special issues which affected Caribbean SIDS at other General Assembly events.

DISCUSSION:

58. The representative of Aruba thanked the presenters for highlighting the importance of side events, noting that her country had organized a side event in 2018 and had submitted a side event request for 2019 on “Promoting peaceful societies and safe communities: The responsibility of the State in small island developing States”. She felt that that was an important issue for SIDS and in line with SDG 16, and hoped to find innovative solutions to governance issues and specifically those issues highlighted in SDG16.

59. The representative of Guyana queried the format of the review of the VNRs that were presented at the HLPF. The Programme Officer of ECLAC responded that there would be a dedicated session during the first week of the HLPF titled “VNRs: What have we learned from them”, and strongly encouraged countries wishing to present during that session to inform DESA through their country’s Permanent Mission in New York. She informed of the annual synthesis report on the VNRs which provided key messages and commonalities of the VNRs that were presented each year.

60. In terms of the performance of the region in presenting its VNRs, a delegate of Trinidad and Tobago expressed an interest in seeing the Caribbean information disaggregated from the wider regional statistics of Latin America. She considered it important for the Caribbean to get a clear picture of its performance, which was lost in the aggregated Latin America and the Caribbean data. She felt that that knowledge could better inform the Caribbean on where they could improve their progress on the VNRs. The Programme Officer confirmed her understanding of the request.

61. The participant from Barbados expressed the view that there was a major advocacy platform for the Caribbean in the HLPF, and that outputs such as ECLAC’s Caribbean Outlook – an excellent analysis of the state of the Caribbean – and the JIU report mentioned by the Sustainable Development Officer, should be featured on SIDS Day. He emphasized the importance of the JIU report, noting that it included recommendations to the UN system to allocate resources to SIDS programming, and called on ECLAC to explore the possibility of prominently featuring those two publications at the high-level event. The Programme Officer noted that, with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as the President of ECOSOC and presiding over the HLPF, there were a series of opportunities for the kind of advocacy mentioned by the participant from Barbados. She also pointed out that meetings of the ECLAC subsidiary bodies were open to ECLAC members and occurred every other month and encouraged the meeting to use those platforms to highlight the priorities of the Caribbean. The Sustainable Development Officer acknowledged the need for high-level SIDS advocacy of the United Nations, while highlighting the importance of SIDS advocacy on the ground level. She pointed to information obtained during the preparation of the SAMOA Pathway Midterm Review, which revealed that at the ground level there was little awareness of the SIDS agenda and the objectives and purpose of the SAMOA Pathway. Within the context of SIDS Day, the representative of Guyana also wondered how it would be organized, given the list of issues to be covered. Since time was limited, she advanced the idea of a small working group to prioritize and present the issues to properly leverage the event. The Director informed the meeting that ECLAC had been in discussions with the CARICOM Secretariat and UNDESA to plan a side event at the HLPF in July, harnessing high-level advocacy to shape a uniquely Caribbean SIDS message. She stated the importance of having the side event at the July HLPF to highlight the unique circumstances of the Caribbean SIDS in particular, given that the high-level summit in September would address the concerns of all SIDS. She noted that planning for the side event was well advanced and that holding the side event on SIDS Day could lift the official profile of the event.

62. The participant from Barbados felt that the relevance of the SIDS agenda in the international discourse was the responsibility of the Caribbean and appealed to the meeting to support the Caribbean leadership for AOSIS since Antigua and Barbuda would follow Belize as the Chair of that body. He recommended that as the countries prepared their VNRs – which focused on the 2030 Agenda – they found

ways to relate it to the SAMOA Pathway, particularly since the JIU report addressed UN agencies raising funding to support the SIDS agenda.

63. The representative of UNFPA suggested that countries presenting VNRs should determine if their country had recently done a Universal Periodic Review, and, if so, they should consider using it, since that review would provide comprehensive information on what initiatives the government planned to advance. She felt that the Caribbean had made good progress on economic issues around the SIDS agenda but missed opportunities to link the financial challenges to the social development impacts it faced. She pointed out that while donors cared about social development impacts, they did not understand the nuances of the Caribbean situation. She recommended that countries examine the Caribbean Outlook, consider the points raised by the Deputy Director in his presentation earlier that day, and make the linkages to the social impacts.

64. The representative of CARICOM indicated that CARICOM advocated a strategy to treat their interventions in all fora from a SIDS perspective. She noted that the consensus of CARICOM was that political support and high-level participation at the HLPF – both in July and September – were needed. She informed the meeting that the high-level political declaration which was discussed earlier that day had been released that Monday and lauded the efficiency and attentiveness of the Permanent Missions in New York which had already discussed the declaration that Wednesday. She stated that the CARICOM Secretariat would ensure that it raised and represented the issues of its members at the highest level.

6. Shaping a Caribbean Regional Coordinating mechanism to promote synergy in SIDS and SDG implementation

65. The representative of Jamaica laid out the timeline for the Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM). She indicated that from its inception in 1995, the RCM was aimed at achieving three objectives: promoting and strengthening economic, social and environmental cooperation and integration among the countries of the Caribbean and Latin America; sharing of information and experiences amongst member States; and promoting common positions and strategies on (Caribbean SIDS) sustainable development priorities and their relationship with third countries. The representative further noted that those positions were to be included in the wider regional and international fora and in the work of agencies which facilitated sustainable development in Caribbean SIDS.

66. She noted that in 2016 and 2018 there were CDCC resolutions for ensuring synergy in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the SAMOA Pathway and other development agendas, and recalled that the outcome of the Caribbean SAMOA Pathway Midterm Review - The San Pedro Declaration (August 2018) - called for the revitalization of the RCM with a view to advancing political advocacy on the SIDS issues at the regional level. The revitalized RCM would also facilitate cooperation among SIDS to ensure that the SAMOA Pathway was implemented in a coherent and effective manner.

67. The representative informed the meeting that the present task was to reposition the RCM to serve as the forum for sustainable development for Caribbean SIDS. She envisioned it would support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, facilitate Caribbean countries' preparation for the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, and aid country preparation of VNRs and to present at the HLPF. She opined that the revised mechanism would also provide an opportunity to highlight SIDS-specific vulnerabilities, priorities and challenges.

68. She touched on the structure of the existing RCM, including the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), then focused on the considerations made in repositioning the RCM. She highlighted the fact that during the Learning Conference it was recognized that the current CDCC-RCM was limited in its scope and structure for providing a long term, sustained, comprehensive and systematic mechanism for supporting the Caribbean SIDS sustainable development agenda. Further, it was agreed that the repositioned

mechanism needed to ensure that the specific challenges faced by Caribbean SIDS were central, one such issue being climate change. She indicated that, to achieve that stated purpose of preserving the identity of the Caribbean SIDS and focusing on their unique and special challenges, the meeting proposed that the repositioned CDCC-RCM should preserve the identity and unique challenges that the Caribbean SIDS faced; be country led, owned, and focused on strengthening the institutional processes; the national focal point should be institutional rather than individual to ensure continuity; be a space for Caribbean SIDS to have a common negotiating strategy and common SIDS voice; and strengthen operational processes to ensure policy coherence at national, regional and international levels.

69. She indicated that the next steps would be for ECLAC, as well as the TAC and other partners, to further develop the proposal for the repositioned RCM, giving consideration to: formalizing linkages which existed; a mechanism similar to the HLPF where specific SDGs would be discussed annually; adding more countries to the TAC; and the inclusion of administrative, institutional, financial and reporting rules and procedures. She suggested that ECLAC convene a TAC meeting for that purpose and present its findings at the 28th Session of CDCC.

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70. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda felt that it was important for the CDCC to re-engage the political directorate at a high level. He noted that the SIDS faced an existential threat, since it appeared that the SIDS agenda had been marginalized by the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In light of that threat, he acknowledged that the proposal to reform the RCM was both timely and appropriate.

71. He pointed out that a more nuanced approach to implementing the SIDS agenda and SDGs should be considered, given that within the Caribbean SIDS there were countries of varying sizes and capacities. He thought it was critical for Caribbean SIDS to strengthen the links with the leading regional institutions to facilitate better collaboration, as well as with AOSIS to ensure that, as that organization advocated for SIDS in the international arena, the peculiarities of the Caribbean SIDS were represented.

DISCUSSION:

72. In addressing the repositioned RCM, the representative of Guyana noted that technical, financial and other requirements - at the national and regional levels - would be needed to support and sustain its effective operation. She also noted that technical advice was needed on the issues on which the RCM should focus. The Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean supported this view, noting that the lack of dedicated national and regional human, institutional and financial resources had affected the continued performance of the RCM. She pointed out that the RCM needed separate and dedicated resources, including a revised and stable management structure. In moving forward on the repositioned RCM, she proposed that a meeting of the TAC of the RCM be held to conduct a comprehensive review and offer recommendations for consideration by the CDCC. That review should also include how the mechanism would operate financially, institutionally, politically and on the international scale.

73. The representative of CANARI pointed to the absence of a civil society representative in the repositioned RCM and suggested that representatives be included to inform the mechanism of the views of civil society.

74. The representative of the ACS noted that her organization had enhanced its engagement with regional organizations and felt that each regional organization could support the work of the CDCC based on its particular area of comparative advantage. She indicated that further support should be provided for the political directorate, and at the operational and technical levels, to ensure that all issues were addressed in a coordinated manner.

75. The participant from Barbados noted that in the restructured CDCC-RCM political connections would be extremely important. He felt that the CDCC members needed to expand the TAC of the RCM to provide it with a comprehensive mandate to address the sustainable development concerns of the region. The RCM would need to develop a dynamic communication strategy and a capacity-building platform to assist member States. He further suggested that it should seek to strengthen cooperation beyond the Caribbean including AOSIS, to leverage the support of other SIDS, to develop cluster approaches to better address SIDS priorities and to connect with CARICOM and the other subsidiary organs of ECLAC. The Director supported this view, underscoring the need for SIDS advocacy at the national, regional and international levels. With the Caribbean region holding the position of Chair of AOSIS over the next four years, she felt that there was an opportunity to heighten the attention given to Caribbean SIDS sustainable development challenges and priorities. She encouraged the Caribbean to use its position as Chair of the AOSIS to anchor the SIDS agenda in the global political agenda. She also felt that the Caribbean SIDS sustainable development priority clustering and the creation of synergies across sustainable development agendas could mitigate the competition from the 2030 Agenda and other sustainable development agendas.

76. A delegate of Trinidad and Tobago enquired whether consideration was given to SIDS-SIDS cooperation in restructuring the RCM, noting that that issue was addressed in the SAMOA Pathway Midterm Review meeting in Belize that previous August. The Director noted that SIDS-SIDS cooperation occurred within the ambit of AOSIS and highlighted the importance of the Caribbean proactively engaging directly with the Pacific SIDS and AIMS to facilitate more effective SIDS-SIDS cooperation. She pointed to more effective collaboration in SIDS-South cooperation, where SIDS aligned with a better resourced South partner. The representative of Jamaica informed the meeting that the draft working paper highlighted the need to leverage SIDS-SIDS cooperation in repositioning the RCM.

77. The representative of Jamaica also emphasized the importance of keeping the SIDS agenda alive and the challenges faced by the SIDS and commended ECLAC for doing so. She noted that, given the inherent vulnerabilities in the Caribbean, more support was needed from within the UN system despite the budgetary constraints.

7. Progress on the implementation for the 2018-2019 programme of work for the Caribbean

78. The Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters expressed her appreciation to the staff of the office for their dedicated support to the subregion and presented an account of the progress made in the implementation of the 2018-2019 programme of work of the organization for the Caribbean. She highlighted the work done by the office in responding to global mandates, CDCC mandates, and national requests, and presented a summary of the 2020 work programme for consideration by the Monitoring Committee.

79. In elaborating the context for the implementation of the 2018-2019 programme of work, the Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean noted several platforms to which the work programme was oriented, including the SDGs, the SIDS Development Agenda, Financing for Development, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. She pointed out that the work programme also responded to social development platforms in relation to women, population, ageing, disabilities among others, and reflected ECLAC's convening role in brokering dialogue on development issues pertinent to the Caribbean. Among the specific outputs she highlighted were the completion of the Caribbean Outlook; the elaboration of a revised regional coordinating mechanism for monitoring the development progress of SIDS; the Economic Survey of the Caribbean and the Preliminary Overview of the economies of the Caribbean; focused studies on population and development; elaboration of gender and trade policies for specific countries; and training in and application of the damage and loss assessment methodology in the evaluation of the impacts of disasters, both in the Caribbean and Latin America. She noted that the work of the subregional headquarters also gave focus to the application of ICT

for development with specific orientation to girls in ICT, support to countries in the preparation for their latest rounds of population censuses; and assistance in the elaboration of national databases for energy efficiency indicators.

80. She informed the meeting of the office's implementation of a programme of public outreach and media reporting of ECLAC's work, which had further raised the profile of the office during the reporting period. With respect to SDG implementation, she emphasized the subregional office's partnering with many regional partners and the wider UN system in supporting the implementation of the SDGs. In this regard, she highlighted the work done in fostering capacity building of the countries to produce SDG indicators, as well as in the preparation of VNRs.

81. In terms of looking ahead, she indicated that the most immediate action for the office would be in June 2019, when it would support a preparatory meeting for Beijing +25. In addition, she stated that the office would seek to extend its work in the areas of tourism diversification, ICT for development, debt sustainability, and youth, and that training would continue in the use of ECLAC's Damage and Loss Assessment Methodology and REDATAM. The Director also touched on the new annual programme and budget cycle being implemented in the United Nations beginning in 2020, and noted that the office was reflecting on how the change would affect the types of products and services offered to the Caribbean, while maintaining their quality and value in the reduced delivery period.

DISCUSSION:

82. Several delegations commended the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean for its extensive programme of work over the review period. A delegate of Trinidad and Tobago, supported by the representative of Jamaica, suggested that ECLAC consider longer-term programme planning alongside the new annual budget cycle, given some of the possible challenges in implementing an annual programme of work. The Deputy Executive Secretary informed the meeting that the issue was being reviewed in ECLAC.

83. The representative of Guadeloupe requested support in assessing the impact of the sargassum problem in the Caribbean. The Director assured Guadeloupe of ECLAC's support in undertaking the necessary research and dialogue in response to the still-emerging challenge.

84. The representative of Guyana called for the expansion of ECLAC's delivery of regional comparative data on the various sectors through its research and analytical work, as well as further support to the countries in the delivery of their VNRs and Public Expenditure Reviews. The Director reiterated ECLAC's support the countries in the elaboration of their VNRs, noting specific and ongoing efforts with both the Governments of Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. She also indicated willingness to support Guyana and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in this regard.

85. A proposal was advanced by a delegate of Trinidad and Tobago for the ECLAC subregional office to consider the re-instatement of the Regional SIDS Advisor as part of the RCM mechanism. He also suggested that ECLAC prepare the Caribbean Outlook at least on a biennial basis, since it could be used as a foundation document for supporting countries in referencing Caribbean issues at multilateral negotiations.

86. The representative of Guyana called for innovative research into the reforms and delivery of the education sector in the region. She also encouraged ECLAC to continue its efforts in supporting the countries to strengthen their data systems.

8. Other matters

87. The representative of Guyana, supported by the Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, encouraged colleagues to ratify the Escazú agreement to demonstrate the Caribbean's coherence and commitment to pursuing the sustainable development agenda. The Director also suggested that the Caribbean consider leading the region in this agreement.

88. The participant from Barbados asked whether ECLAC had done any work on the contribution of the offshore financial services sector to the delivery of the SDGs, noting that that sector was a significant contributor to the revenue streams of Caribbean countries and constantly under threat. The delegate of Jamaica pointed out that the issue raised by the participant from Barbados had to be considered within the context of de-risking, since such industries were often viewed negatively because of the de-risking issue. The Director responded that no work had been done since the Commission had not been officially asked to do so. She acknowledged that grey- and black-listing by the OECD and EU were both issues of concern. She pointed out that, in ECLAC's previous work on de-risking, it was found that the banking sector was reluctant to share data. She noted, however, that if countries were able and willing to provide the data, then ECLAC could conduct the research, while observing that the extreme vulnerability of the Caribbean to those external factors would form part of a general assessment in the following year's Caribbean Outlook. Additionally, she pointed out that if countries wished to have individual case studies, those requests could be addressed separately.

9. Date and venue of the twenty-eighth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee

89. The Chair noted that, in accordance with the principle of rotation among the member States in the English alphabetical order, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was in line to be the next Chair of the CDCC. The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines formally indicated the readiness of her Government to assume the Chairmanship of the CDCC in 2020. ECLAC would continue its consultation with the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on the matter of the date of the twenty-eighth Ministerial Session of the CDCC and notify Member States and Associate Members in due course.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

90. The representative of the British Virgin Islands, in her capacity as acting Rapporteur of the meeting, presented an account of the day's proceedings. The statement can be found *ad verbatim* in annex III.

91. The statement was adopted by acclamation.

92. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC expressed his hope that the meeting was enriched by the Learning Conference which had preceded it and provided an opportunity to build capacities relevant to the fulfillment of the SDGs in the Caribbean. He indicated that ECLAC had taken note of the valuable initiative to revive, reshape, further develop and strengthen the RCM. He emphasized ECLAC's support for the integration of the SIDS sustainable development agenda into national development planning, which ensured that the essential strategies for addressing the unique vulnerabilities of Caribbean SIDS were given the deserved focus and attention.

93. He noted that, in recognition of the specific challenges faced by small island developing States in the broader context of SDG implementation, ECLAC, through its Caribbean First strategy, would continue to offer support to advance the Caribbean SIDS agenda. He acknowledged the Caribbean's focus on accelerating SDG implementation, and looked forward to Guyana and Saint Lucia's presentations of their VNRs at the HLPF that year.

94. He underscored three key points from the meeting: (i) the importance of greater Caribbean participation in the Forum in Cuba in 2020, particularly since it would be the first time the Forum would be held in the Caribbean; (ii) the role of policy coherence as an essential factor in effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and (iii) the fact that VNRs were instrumental to enhance 2030 Agenda implementation. He encouraged the member States to register for the 2020 HLPF, and reiterated ECLAC's commitment to support the countries in the above. He also acknowledged the call from the Associate Members to strengthen their participation in various regional platforms, including in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development, and indicated that ECLAC would explore avenues to expand their participation.

95. The Deputy Executive Secretary noted that the "Escazú Agreement" was the first regional environmental treaty in the region and the only one that emerged from the Rio+20 Conference. He highlighted it as an historic milestone of achievement for public participation and access to justice in environmental matters. It aimed at safeguarding the right of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment through access rights, focusing on the most vulnerable and aiming to leave no one behind. He encouraged those countries which had not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Agreement as soon as possible.

96. He thanked the Director, the Port of Spain team, translators, the Trinidad and Tobago delegation and distinguished delegates for making the meeting of the Monitoring Committee possible and for their enthusiastic participation in the day's activities.

97. In her closing remarks, the Chair of the CDCC acknowledged that much had been achieved, but emphasized that it was just the beginning and the Caribbean needed to proceed to the next steps. She underscored the importance of continuing the debate on strategies to build resilience until the Caribbean was on a sustained path to making developmental progress. She emphasized the solidarity of the Caribbean with its Latin American partners, particularly considering the One UN approach. She expressed her pleasure in chairing the MonCom meeting for the CDCC, thanked the host country, members and associate members, and closed the meeting.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. Member States

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Representative:

- Ambassador Colin Murdoch, Senior Adviser, Office of the Prime Minister

BARBADOS

Participant:

- Travis Sinckler, Senior Environmental Officer, Ministry of Environment

BELIZE

Representative:

- Darlene Padron, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, Sustainable Development Unit
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development

CUBA

Representative:

- H.E. Tania Diego Olite, Ambassador, Embassy of Cuba in Trinidad and Tobago

Delegation members:

- Cristobal Díaz Morejón, Senior Official, Environmental Specialist, Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment
- Ana Martinez, Economic and Commercial Counsellor, Embassy of Cuba in Trinidad and Tobago
- Solangel Santana, Trade Policy Specialist, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment

DOMINICA

Representative:

- Kyra Paul, Social Development Planner, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

GUYANA

Representative:

- Sonya Roopnauth, Director, Ministry of Finance

Delegation member:

- Dominique Ambrose, Economic and Financial Analyst II, Ministry of Finance

JAMAICA

Representative:

- Rochelle Whyte, Senior Technical Adviser to the Director General, Planning Institute of Jamaica

Delegation members:

- Delita McCallum, Counsellor, High Commission of Jamaica in Trinidad and Tobago
- Hope Perkins, Senior Research Officer, Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

Representative:

- Ghislaine Williams, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Saint Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations

SAINT LUCIA

Representative:

- Hon. Sarah Flood-Beaubrun, Minister with responsibility for External Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Economic Growth, Job Creation, External Affairs and Public Service

Delegation member:

- Sarah Leon, Economist, Department of Economic Development

SAINT VINCENT GRENADINES

Representative:

- Janelle Hannaway-Horne, Economist II, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology

SURINAME

Delegation members:

- Lucill Starke Esajas, Senior Desk Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Jacqueline Warso, Senior Desk Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Representative:

- Hon. Dennis Moses, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs

Delegation members:

- Peter Mitchell, Director, Project Planning and Reconstruction, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Adriana Sharpe, Assistant Director, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Anesa Ali-Rodriguez, Foreign Service Officer IV (Ag.), Multilateral Relations Division, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
- Nickesha Smith, Senior International Relations Officer, Multilateral Relations Division, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
- Kennethia Douglas, Monitoring and Reporting Officer on SDGs, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Jael Daniel, Research Assistant, Ministry of Planning and Development

B. Associate members

ANGUILLA

Representative:

- Lori-Rae Alleyne-Franklin, Chief Statistician, Anguilla Statistics Department

ARUBA

Representative:

- Jocelyne Croes, Special Adviser on Multilateral Affairs, Chair of the National SDG Aruba Commission

Delegation member:

- Ghislaine Nicolaas, Policy Adviser, Department of Foreign Affairs

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDSRepresentative:

- Najan Christopher, Director (Ag.), International Affairs Secretariat, Office of the Premier

CURAÇAODelegation member:

- Mitsui Maduro-Croes, Policy Coordinator, Ministry of General Affairs

GUADELOUPERepresentative:

- Emily Siousarram, Chief of Service, international Cooperation, Regional Council of Guadeloupe

MONTserratRepresentative:

- Kenya Lee, Director of Economic Management, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDSRepresentative:

- Sabrina Williams, Deputy Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics

Delegation member:

- Tarina Parker, Statistician, Department of Statistics

C. Diplomatic corps**CHILE**

- H.E. Juan Aníbal Barría, Ambassador, Embassy of Chile in Trinidad and Tobago
- Sebastián Anich Jadue, Consul, Third Secretary, Embassy of Chile in Trinidad and Tobago

INDIA

- Mukhtiar Chand Bhagat, Second Secretary, High Commission of India in Trinidad and Tobago

JAPAN

- Toshihide Kanaya, Second Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Trinidad and Tobago

MEXICO

- H.E. Rosario Molinero, Ambassador, Embassy of Mexico in Trinidad and Tobago

PANAMA

- H.E. Luis Cigarruista, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Panama in Trinidad and Tobago

SOUTH AFRICA

- H.E. Xoliswa Ngwevela, High Commissioner, High Commission of South Africa in Trinidad and Tobago

D. United Nations Secretariat

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

- Anya Thomas, Economic Affairs Officer, Small Island Developing States Unit, Division for Sustainable Development Goals

Department of Global Communications (DGC)

- Amanda Laurence, National Information Officer, United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean Area

United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices (UNRCO)

- Mikiko Tanaka, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Guyana

E. United Nations Funds and Programmes

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

- Alison Drayton, Director and Representative, UNFPA Caribbean

F. Other intergovernmental organizations

Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

- Tricia Barrow, Political Adviser

Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)

- Devon Rowe, Executive Director

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

- Amrikha Singh, Programme Manager, Sustainable Development

G. Other Non-Governmental Organizations

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)

- Anika Granderson, Senior Technical Officer

H. Secretariat

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

- Raúl García-Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis
- María Ortiz Pérez, Programme Officer, Office of the Executive Secretary
- David Barrio Lamarche, Environmental Affairs Officer, Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division
- Lucía Concha, Meetings Services Assistant

ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

- Diane Quarless, Director
- Dillon Alleyne, Deputy Director
- Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit

- Omar Bello, Coordinator, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit
- Catarina Camarinhas, Social Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Artie Dubrie, Sustainable Development Officer, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit
- Maharouf Oyolola, Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Development Unit
- Johann Brathwaite, Programme Officer, Programme Support Unit
- Michael Hendrickson, Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Development Unit
- Francis Jones, Population Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Willard Phillips, Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit
- Alexander Voccia, Coordinator, Strategic Planning and Outreach Unit
- Amelia Bleeker, Associate Programme Management Officer, Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre
- Luciana Fontes de Meira, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit
- Lydia Rosa Gény, Associate Social Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Hidenobu Tokuda, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Development 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
- Sita Inglefield, Personal Assistant to the Director and Deputy Director
- Blaine Marcano, Public Information Assistant, Strategic Planning and Outreach Unit
- Iskuhi Mkrtchyan, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
- Machel Pantin, Economic Affairs Assistant, Economic Development Unit
- Aurélie Quiatol, Meetings Services Assistant, Programme Support Unit
- Nyasha Skerrette, Economic Affairs Assistant, Economic Development Unit
- Rossano Thompson, Computer Information 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
- Shawn Campbell, Team Assistant, Administration Unit
- Jeniffer Sankar-Sooknarine, Team Assistant, Programme Support Unit
- Arianna Ottley, Computer Information Assistant (*on-the-job training (OJT)*)
- Deion Smith, Computer Information Assistant (*on-the-job training (OJT)*)

Annex II**PROVISIONAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

Agenda item 1 LC/MCCDCC.19/1/Rev.1 LC/MCCDCC.19/2/Rev.2	Adoption of the agenda and organization of work Provisional agenda Annotated provisional agenda Provisional programme
Agenda item 2	Repositioning vulnerable, indebted Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) on the path to sustainable development <i>Presentation</i>
Agenda item 3	Report of the third meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on sustainable development <i>Presentation</i>
Agenda item 4	Preparation for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and SIDS Summits during the seventy-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly <i>Presentation</i>
Agenda item 5	Shaping a Caribbean Regional Coordinating Mechanism to promote synergy in SIDS and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation <i>Presentation</i>
Agenda item 6 LC/MCCDCC.19/3	Progress in implementation of the 2018-2019 programme of work for the Caribbean Progress report on the implementation of the 2018-2019 programme of work for the Caribbean
Agenda item 7	Other matters <i>No document</i>
Agenda item 8 LC/MCCDCC.19/4	Date and venue of the twenty-eight session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee Date and venue of the twenty-eight session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
Agenda item 9	Conclusions and recommendations <i>Rapporteur's report</i>

Annex III**STATEMENT OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS AS ACTING RAPPORTEUR
OF THE MEETING (AD VERBATIM)**

Minister Sarah Flood-Beaubrun, 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;

In my capacity as acting Rapporteur of the CDCC, it is my pleasure to provide you with a summary of today's proceedings.

Opening of the meeting

We heard opening remarks from the Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC, and the Minister with responsibility for External Affairs and Chair of the CDCC. They collectively drew the meeting's attention to the following:

- That the Learning Conference provided an opportunity to share best practices to help countries navigate the 2030 Agenda, but, to optimize the potential benefits of the Agenda, the region needed improved capacity building to advance its sustainable development.
- There was a need for countries to explore better modalities for integrating the SDGs into their national development strategies.
- Three key issues needed to be addressed in implementing the SDGs, which were:
 - The need to adopt a whole of government approach to implementation;
 - SDGs should be mainstreamed into the development process;
 - Mechanisms for dialogue with civil society should be improved.
- Member countries needed to examine ways in which they can put people and equality at the centre of development, and should seek to leverage four key upcoming UN summits:
 - The HLPF - to review how far the region has come since the 2030 Agenda;
 - The UN climate review;
 - The High Level Dialogue on Financing for Development; and
 - The High Level Review of the SAMOA Pathway for sustainable development.
- It was noted that these fora presented an opportunity for the Caribbean to raise its unique challenges to its development, including high debt and the impact of natural disasters.
- It was felt that the reconfiguring the RCM was an initiative that was worthy of the support of the international community.
- Key takeaways that should inform the way forward were also highlighted, including:
 - The importance of institutional, operational and policy coherence to the success of the sustainable process;
 - Strong networks of national focal points were necessary to advance the 2030 Agenda;
 - A one-size-fits-all approach was ineffective in advancing the region's development;
 - The region needed to find innovative ways to strengthen its capacity for data capture and analysis to meet the monitoring and reporting obligations of the 2030 Agenda;
 - A properly functioning Caribbean Regional Coordinating Mechanism would help the region achieve improved advocacy at the global level. In this regard, the RCM should be resuscitated and restructured to support synergistic implementation of the agendas for SIDS and the SDGs in the Caribbean.

Following the opening remarks, the agenda and organization of the work of the meeting were adopted with no amendments.

Repositioning vulnerable, highly indebted Caribbean SIDS on the path to sustainable development

The Deputy Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters of the Caribbean introduced ECLAC's Caribbean First Strategy to the meeting and elaborated a socio-economic context as the basis for this strategy. The intent of the strategy was to:

- Give focus to persistent Caribbean development challenges including disaster assessment;
- To raise levels of national and regional advocacy in the search for solutions;
- To give prominence to discourse on critical Caribbean issues in all ECLAC forums;
- To leverage financial support and technical assistance for agreed Caribbean priorities; and
- To promote wider Caribbean engagement in ECLAC forums and initiatives.

He also noted as broad elements the most critical challenges to development of the Caribbean, including environmental, domestic macroeconomic constraints, and social and external uncertainties. The presentation also outlined some possible opportunities which the sub-region must grasp in order to secure future gains from the implementation of the sustainable development agenda in the Caribbean.

Among the key challenges identified were environmental vulnerability, reflected in significant and frequent damage and loss from storms; high indebtedness; weak economic growth underpinned by weak merchandise exports; and declining foreign direct investment and overseas development assistance. Social challenges were also identified to include high levels of unemployment and accompanying increasing criminality and domestic violence, high levels of poverty, and widespread pervasiveness of non-communicable diseases.

Several opportunities related to access to financing for development investing in the blue economy, and the creative industries, strengthening the private sector and addressing social and environmental resilience were highlighted. Deepening of the regional integration process, with a view towards moving beyond the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and greater participation in global value chains was called for, as well as the need to focus on building regional value chains and the infrastructure that facilitated such expansion. The creation of a seamless space for trade, both interregional and sub-regional, with full engagement of the private sector was also identified.

Finally, the strengthening of partnerships for confronting these challenges was highlighted, among these being the promotion of debt for climate change swaps as advocated by ECLAC; investing in green industries, through a Caribbean Resilience Fund; and accessing the Green Climate Fund. The need for stronger partnerships among governments, the private sector and people through building on each other's strengths and learning from each other was also noted.

In responding to the presentation, the meeting acknowledged the comprehensiveness of the presentation in treating with the contemporary social and economic concerns of the Caribbean. However, general concerns were raised in respect of the regions' high food import bill, youth unemployment, debt, and other environment issues outside the domain of climate change.

With respect to the high food import bill, it was observed that the collapse of export agriculture in the region in the decade of the 1990's resulted in a dismantling of substantial agricultural infrastructure resulting in higher reliance of the region on imported food. Exceptions were nonetheless noted for Guyana and the larger territories of the sub-region.

Considering youth unemployment, the meeting acknowledged that this was a pervasive problem in the Caribbean, and speculated about the possible deficiencies of the education system in preparing then sub-region's youth for the world of work. Questions were raised regarding the existence of possible models for solving this problem, and it was suggested that the solution was to be found first in enhanced economic

growth which could then provide the border economic space for creating the number and scope of jobs necessary to solve the problem. Additionally, it was felt that the strengthening of technical and vocational skills training; nurturing of entrepreneurship as well as enhancing the overall quality of jobs were also critical. Ultimately, it was suggested that reforms to education were also necessary for addressing the challenge of youth unemployment.

In the case of the debt issue, the meeting acknowledged ECLAC's efforts in promoting the debt swap initiative and inquired about its current status. ECLAC indicated that to date three countries had been identified for which profiles were being developed. Canvassing of the support of development partners in supporting the initiative was also on-going. Additionally, many countries indicated a range of initiatives that they were currently undertaking to address the debt issue, and noted the importance of sharing lessons learned to overcome this issue.

The meeting acknowledged that de-risking of the banking sector was a critical threat to the future investment in the region. Further, it was also observed that the Caribbean banking sector in general had not functioned so as to promote entrepreneurship and business innovation in the region.

The meeting was also urged to give consideration to other issues related to the protection of the natural environment, outside of the well-recognized challenge of climate change. Among such issues were the need to focus on sustainable use and management of natural resources, with specific emphasis on sustainable consumption and production, land degradation, loss of biodiversity waste reduction and disposal, and less use of pesticides.

A number of countries highlighted specific upcoming initiatives at country level which to varying degrees seek to respond to some of the challenges raised.

Report of the third meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on sustainable development

The report began by highlight the fulsome attendance of regional coordinators at the Third Forum on Sustainable Development. One of the main areas of focus of the Forum was to support and guide member countries through the VNR process. This was important as the outcome of the process will feed into the HLPF and other ECLAC subsidiary bodies. Crucially, the peer learning critical for the Caribbean, since it gave ECLAC a sense of the region's progress in implementing the sustainable development agenda in the region. Therefore, it was vital for Caribbean States to be represented in a forum such as this one. Further, the Forum offered an opportunity for countries to practice presenting their VNRs.

The session also highlighted need for the region to tackle key challenges, including limited fiscal space and access for concessional finance, the impact of de-risking on financial operations and the impact of climate change on the region.

The meeting indicated that the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters would partner with the wider ECLAC system to design a project to allow member States to build capacity in statistics and data capture to better evaluate the impact of natural disasters and loss of natural capital.

During this session key outcomes of the "Learning Conference on implementing the 2030 Agenda in the Caribbean Region" were highlighted. The meeting also underscored the importance of CDCC Associate Members being represented in all forums dealing with SIDS issues.

Preparation for the HLPF and SIDS Summits during the 74th United Nations General Assembly

The meeting was updated on plans for the hosting of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and SIDS

Summit proposed to take place during the 74th United Nations General Assembly. The HLPF was formed as a direct result of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), "The Future We Want".

The meeting was briefed on the frequency of convention of the Forum under the auspices of both ECOSOC and the General Assembly. For the upcoming Forum, the focus of the review will be on progress under SDG 8, 10, 13, 16, 17.

With respect to the SDGs, the meeting was advised of a SIDS summit also to be held during the 74th General Assembly. This summit would build on recent SIDS initiatives which led to the San Pedro Declaration and Apia Outcome and would review the Midterm Zero Draft. The meeting was encouraged to pay specific attention to the Mid-Term Review Zero Draft, since this would have particular importance in advancing the interests of SIDS.

Shaping a Caribbean Regional Coordinating Mechanism to promote synergy in SIDS and SDG implementation

After lunch we examined how the region could fashion a Regional Coordinating Mechanism to promote synergy in SIDS and SDG implementation.

The meeting noted that the current CDCC-RCM was limited in its scope and structure for providing a long-term, comprehensive and systematic mechanism supporting the Caribbean SIDS sustainable development agendas. Therefore, a repositioned RCM should formalize linkages by bridging the gap between the technical and political demands in advancing sustainable development in the region. There was also the need to amend the composition of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to include more countries and more detail on its functions. In the next steps, ECLAC would convene an RCM TAC meeting to review the revised and repositioned CDCC-RCM, which would be presented at the 28th Session of the CDCC in 2020.

Nevertheless, in the repositioning the region faced a number of challenges including the lack of knowledge at senior level of the work of CDCC, and the need to establish linkages between CDCC and the work of SIDS. Further, the region needed to prioritize the agenda for efficient allocation of resources and to recognize that SIDS comprise a mix of small and micro States with varying needs based on size.

In planning the way forward member States needed to address some key issues, including:

- The reduced attention to the SIDS agenda at the international level as it becomes superseded by the SDG agenda;
- The need for the SIDS agenda to be more nuanced to take account of varying capacity among individual member States;
- The need to include greater participation from civil society to advance the SIDS agenda;
- The need for increased focus on finding structured resources to fund critical aspects of the SIDS agenda;
- Need to improve the operation of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

Progress on the implementation of the 2018-2019 programme of work for the Caribbean

In elaborating the context for the delivery of the work programme ECLAC's Director of the Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean noted several platforms to which the work programme was oriented, including the SDGs, the SIDS Development Agenda, Financing for Development, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. The work programme also responded to the social development platforms in relation to women, population, ageing, disabilities among others. The work programme also reflected ECLAC's convening role in brokering dialogue on development issues

pertinent to the Caribbean. Among the specific outputs presented in the review were the completion of the Caribbean Outlook; the elaboration of a revised regional coordinating mechanism for monitoring development progress of SIDS; Economic Survey and Preliminary Overview of the economies of the Caribbean; focused studies on population and development; elaboration of gender and trade policies for specific countries, and training in, and application of the disaster assessments methodology in the evaluation of the impacts of disasters both in the Caribbean and Latin America. The work of the sub-regional office also gave focus to the application of ICT in the development with specific orientation to girls in ICT, support to countries in the preparation for their latest rounds of population censuses; and assistance in the elaboration of national databases for energy efficiency indicators. The office also implemented an elaborate programme of public outreach and media reporting of ECLAC's work, which served to further raise the profile of the office during the reporting period. With respect to SDG implementation the sub-regional office partnered with many regional partners and the wider UN system in supporting the implementation of the SDGs. In this regard, the office worked specifically in fostering capacity building of the countries to produce SDG indicators, as well as in the preparation of VNRs.

In terms of looking ahead, the most immediate action for the office would be in June, when it would support a preparatory meeting for Beijing +25. It would also seek to extend its work in the areas of tourism diversification, ICT for development, debt sustainability, and youth. Training would also continue in the use of ECLAC's Damage and Loss Methodology and REDATAM.

The meeting acknowledged the extensive programme of activities undertaken by the subregional office during the reporting period. ECLAC was however asked to give consideration to whether there was need to delink its programme budgeting and work programming cycle given some of the possible challenges in implementation. The meeting was assured that this was a process that was currently the subject of internal review.

Additionally, requests for support in the assessment of the impact of the sargassum problem in the Caribbean was received. Ultimately the meeting thanked ECLAC for its extensive efforts in the delivery of the work programme over the review period.

Other matters

Colleagues were encouraged to ratify the Escazu agreement to demonstrate the Caribbean commitment to pursuing the sustainable development agenda. Further, it was felt that the region should lead in this agreement and member States should be encouraged to ratify the agreement as soon as possible.

The question of whether ECLAC had done any work on the contribution of the offshore financial services sector to the delivery of the SDGs was posed. ECLAC responded that no work has been done as the Commission had not yet been officially requested. Grey-listing and black-listing by the OECD and EU are both issues of concern. In ECLAC's previous work on de-risking, it was found that the banking sector was reluctant to share data. However, if countries were able and willing to provide the data, then ECLAC could conduct a general assessment in the Caribbean Outlook. Additionally, if countries wished individual case studies they could submit official requests.

Date and venue of the 28th Session of the CDCC

The meeting indicated that using the modality of proceeding in English alphabetical order, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was next in line to chair the twenty-eighth session of the CDCC. The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines formally indicated the readiness of her Government to assume the Chairmanship of the twenty-eighth session of the CDCC in 2020.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report of the day's proceedings.



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