



# SOCIAL PROTECTION

WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL  
PROTECTION PROGRAMMES IN THE  
CARIBBEAN

# CARIGEO

ECLAC DIRECTOR ADDRESSES  
CARIGEO EXECUTIVE FORUM

# NATIONAL REVIEWS

HIGHLIGHTING THE CARIBBEAN'S  
VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS (VNR)  
2020

# Contents

- 4** Workshop on sustainable social protection programmes in the Caribbean
- 6** ECLAC Director addresses CARIGEO Executive Forum
- 10** Regional conference discusses cooperation post-COVID-19
- 12** Jamaica attempts to revitalize its tourism sector
- 14** ILPES meeting says planning must be an instrument of change in order to build a new future with equality and sustainability
- 16** Highlighting the Caribbean's Voluntary National Reviews 2020



## About us

Issued on a monthly basis, The Hummingbird offers strategic insights into the latest projects, publications, technical assistance missions and research carried out by ECLAC Caribbean. In addition to these, sneak previews are provided of the most salient upcoming events, alongside enriching follow-ups to previously covered issues. With a view to featuring a variety of facets of Caribbean life and lifestyle, The Hummingbird also zooms in on cultural activities and landmark occurrences through an eye-opening regional round-up.

### EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor: Johann Brathwaite

Copy Editor: Denise Balgobin

Publication Design: Blaine Marciano

Please see our contact details on the back cover of this magazine

# International Days

## 10 November

World Science Day for Peace and Development

## 14 November

World Diabetes Day

## 20 November

World Children's Day

## 25 November

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

## 29 November

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

---

# Upcoming Meetings

## 8 December

The Escazú Agreement in Antigua and Barbuda: empowering societies for sustainable development - St John's, Antigua and Barbuda

## 8 December

Dialogue on population impacts and policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Caribbean - Virtual





## Workshop on sustainable social protection programmes in the Caribbean

Senior policy makers and social development specialists from the Ministries of Social Development of CDCC Member and Associate Member Countries gathered on 6 and 7 October 2020 for an online workshop, entitled 'Leaving No One Behind in the Caribbean: Building resilience through universal social protection'.

The workshop was organized jointly by ECLAC Caribbean, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility Segregated Portfolio Company (CCRIF SPC).

The session brought together approximately 50 delegates to participate in interview panels, case study discussions, and breakout

sessions featuring interactive activities such as polls and (Q&A) conversations.

Participants interacted with panellists over the two days on a range of topics such as emerging tools and strategies for leaving no one behind (LNOB), which is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It represents the unequivocal commitment of all United Nations Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole; planning for resilience in the Caribbean; and the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development

(RAISD) and its implementation in the Caribbean. This was adopted by ECLAC member States in October 2019, to support the implementation of the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in those areas linked to the mandates of the ministries of social development and equivalent entities.

Among those actively participating were representatives of social security institutions and civil society organizations, including those of women, youth, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities, as well as the private sector, trade union organizations and academia.

The workshop was designed to expand the capacity of policymakers in the Caribbean to develop and implement universal social protection

systems and programmes, and to enhance the competency of technical officers to measure inequality and identify the countries facing the most challenges, as a necessary first step in reducing inequalities through social protection.

The workshop allowed participants to share their ideas for policies for advancing social and labour inclusion. They prioritized productive high-quality employment; decent work opportunities for women, persons with disabilities and youth; formalization of work, as well as closing the digital divide by recognizing Internet access as a basic necessity.

Participants also indicated interest in more and longer workshops in the future. The breakout sessions were flagged as a highlight of the workshop. Respondents of the survey rated the workshop design, overall workshop, resource persons and facilitators very positively. Many felt that these were effective in helping them accomplish the workshop's objectives. Participants identified those concepts, tools, and examples that they considered most useful to them, suggesting that the workshop was successful in meeting a range of their expectations. ■



## Cubans receive last of remittances via Western Union

Western Union closed its 407 locations across Cuba on 23 November 2020, a sanctions-driven move that left thousands bereft of remittances on an island that depends heavily on these financial resources.

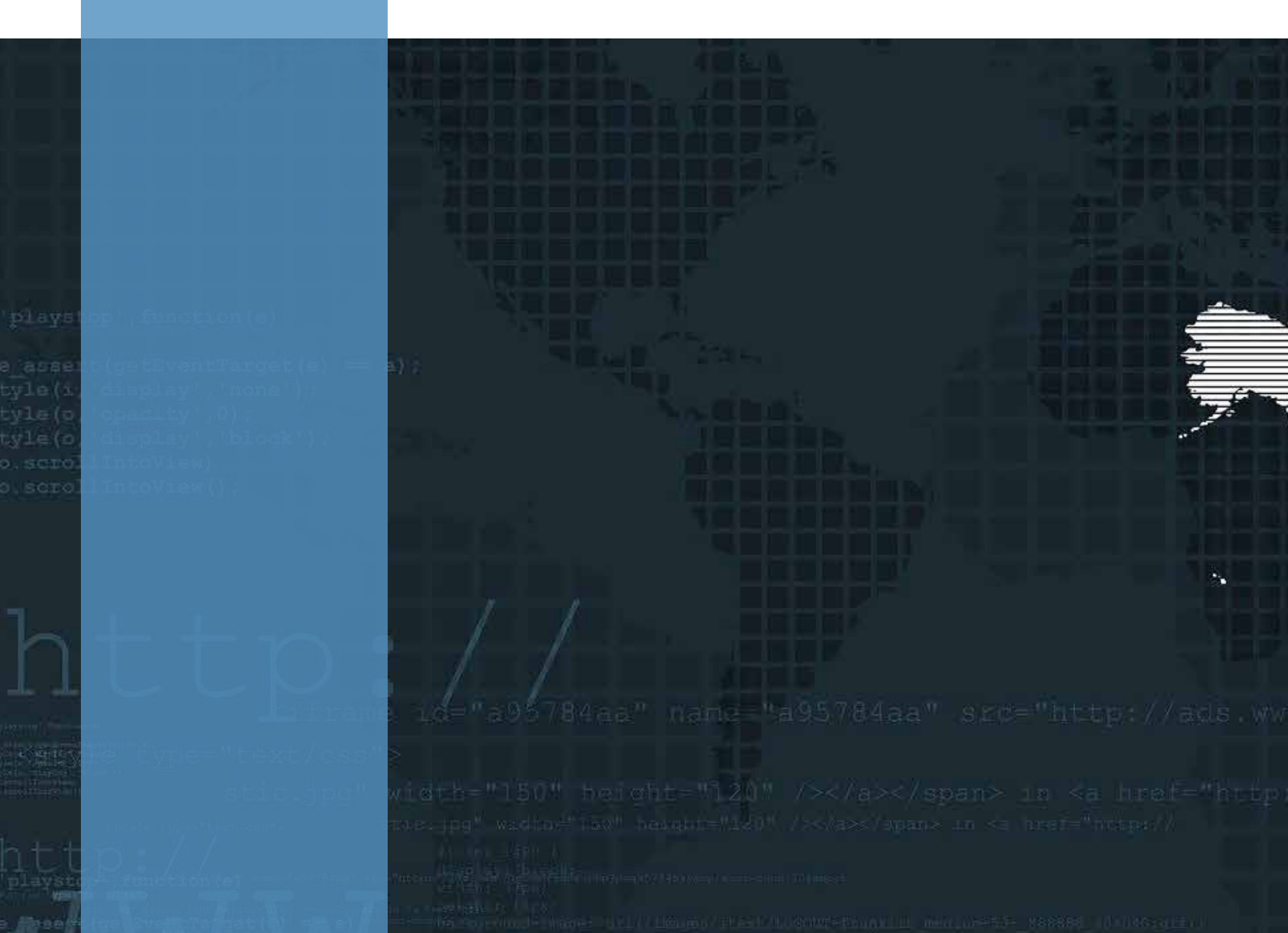
The closure of offices that have operated for more than 20 years in Cuba was the fall-out from a barrage of sanctions that the Administration of US President Donald Trump imposed, while courting conservative Cuban-American voters in Florida ahead of the 3 November election.

"The problem is not the closure of Western Union, but that Western Union is practically the only US-to-Cuba provider of remittance payments," said Manuel Orozco, director of the Center for Migration and Economic Stabilization at Creative Associates International, a development-oriented advisory firm in Washington, DC. "The impact will be felt."

While Cuba doesn't publish figures on remittances, economists estimate that it receives billions of dollars a year and Orozco said that roughly half came from the United States, and 20 per cent of the overall total through Western Union.

Some Cubans said they were taken aback by the imminent closures despite the sanctions being announced in late October. Eighty-two-year-old retiree Luis Nuñez said he found out when his son called him on Sunday night and deposited US\$200 for him.

Many lamented the closures and the need to find less convenient or more costly alternatives. "We have other ways because there are private services that take it to your home ... but it's not the same," said Esperanza Piñeda, a 62-year-old retired teacher. ■



ECLAC Director addresses  
**CARIGEO EXECUTIVE FORUM**



**E**CLAC recognizes the importance of geospatial tools and data in enhancing its research for policymaking and supporting the Caribbean small island developing States' priorities for sustainable development. This was stated by the Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, Diane Quarless, as she addressed the Caribbean Geospatial Development Initiative (CARIGEO) Executive Forum held online on 30 October 2020.

[READ MORE](#)



# ECLAC Director addresses CARIGEO Executive Forum

The Caribbean Geospatial Executive Initiative (CARIGEO) is a collaborative initiative that seeks to improve the capacity of the countries and territories of the Caribbean, to advance the greater use and sharing of geospatial and statistical information to support improved decision-making for sustainable national and regional development.

Speaking on the importance of geospatial information in supporting decision making, national public policies, and priority developmental challenges, Quarless informed the meeting that the drive

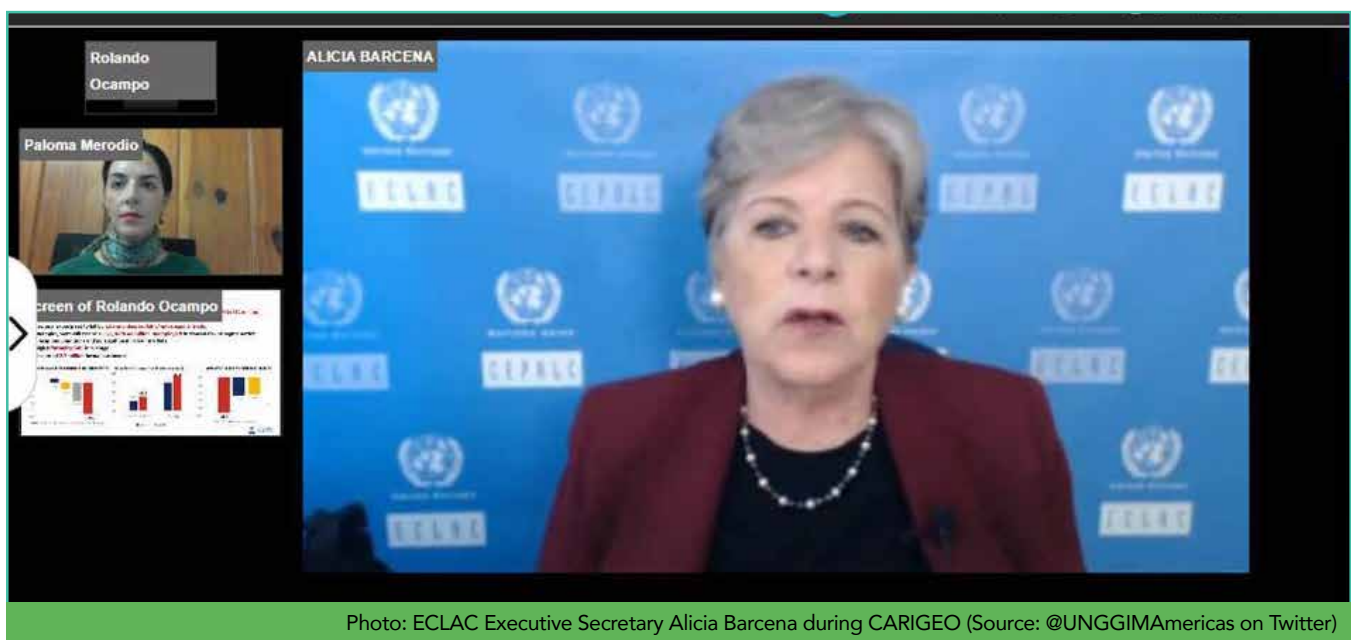
towards wider adoption and application of geospatial technologies in this hemisphere, has been led primarily by the United Nations Regional Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas, in partnership with the Association of Caribbean States and others.

“Our Executive Secretary, Ms. Alicia Bárcena, has also endorsed and championed the integration of statistics and geospatial information in our region, and we at the subregional headquarters also recognize the importance and significance that this holds in

providing for a data driven platform for decision-making for the Caribbean”, said Quarless.

The 2020 Executive Forum was staged to share knowledge and create awareness among the region’s senior decision-makers on the value of leveraging geospatial and statistical data with related technologies to support policy development and decision-making.

Quarless said: “Where development has historically been stymied by the paucity of critical data, geospatial technologies can assist the subregion by filling existing data







*Where development has historically been stymied by the paucity of critical data, geospatial technologies can assist the subregion by filling existing data gaps through innovative means...*

- Diane Quarless, Director ECLAC Caribbean



gaps through innovative means, thereby establishing concrete evidence to guide appropriate development strategies. It is an excellent decision-making tool, as it effectively places in the hand of the user a powerful mechanism to organize, manage and analyse data in a manner which reveals patterns and linkages within the spatial dimension. The ability of these tools to visualize data also offers considerable potential for the region. It can be used in tracking, analysing and monitoring public policy while simultaneously informing on the implementation status of various development agendas,

thus providing quality analysis to guide possible and appropriate policy decisions.”

The CARIGEO initiative was designed to be aligned with the regional spatial data infrastructure objectives and global frameworks. These include the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF), the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (GSGF), and the Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters. All of these may ensure that projects to be implemented will be fit-for-purpose within the context

of the Caribbean’s specific conditions. ■



## Regional conference discusses cooperation post-COVID-19

Countries with economies linked to service exports are significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, said the Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, Diane Quarless, at the Fourth International Cooperation Conference organized by the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), held online for the first time on 19 October 2020.

Director Quarless added that the Caribbean tourism sector had been significantly impacted and its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) has been reduced by 7.7 percentage points on average, while there has been a 9 percentage point decrease in the total number of people in formal employment. She also mentioned that food security, social well-being and keeping economies afloat through development intervention must be addressed in a comprehensive way.

"Growth is down, income and employment are seriously

impacted, and debt service is particularly challenged, because we are speaking of the capacity of governments to continue supporting their populations in the midst of the crisis", stated Quarless.

Former Secretary General of the ACS, Dr. June Soomer, noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has made it necessary for countries of the region to engage in multilateral cooperation. "There has been evolution of the substantive focus on South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation from technical and economic cooperation to embracing the three dimensions of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social. All development partnership activities undertaken by the ACS, on behalf of the Greater Caribbean, must support and improve the impact of national development plans and their efforts to fulfil national sustainable development commitments."

The Conference featured presentations on scenarios and strategies for cooperation in the region post-COVID-19 from the cooperation agencies of Mexico, Chile, Peru, United Arab Emirates, European Union, the Republic of Korea, Alba Bank and the Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation. One of the key conclusions which emerged from the Conference was that coordinated cooperation and multilateralism should be at the centre of any recovery and response plan.

The Conference was an opportunity for the major agencies in global cooperation to further develop and discuss solutions to regional challenges, and to foster and strengthen existing relations and develop new alliances. ■



## UWI, ACS partner to improve regional integration

The University of the West Indies (UWI) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) are engaged in a new partnership for co-operation on resource mobilization, integration and furthering the sustainable development of the Caribbean.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed on 27 October 2020 by UWI's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles and then ACS Secretary General, Dr. June Soomer.

The agreement will allow for the exchange of information, collaboration in organizing of conferences and seminars, research and innovation, and training in the areas of disaster risk reduction, trade, transport, sustainable tourism and the protection of the Caribbean Sea.

Dr. Soomer said, "I'm very happy today that we are signing this agreement that will give the University the opportunity to engage with us on some very

forward-thinking and engaging issues. We have been working with the university on geospatial data management, we have the opportunity to further that engagement, as well as a variety of other areas. Concerted action is about implementation and we have a restructured organization fit for purpose."

Beckles said, "The University of the West Indies is resolute in its agenda to decolonize the structures inherited from history. Only the integration of our Caribbean world can fully unleash the potential of our people. It is our mutual intention to advance the process of regional co-operation and consciousness. This MOU between UWI and ACS will give greater sustainability to our integration activities."

He added that such efforts began with UWI's move last year to build partnerships with Cuba's University of Havana and Universidad de los Andes (UNIANDES) in Colombia and

further cementing of the initiative with the University of Sint Maarten's incorporation into the UWI system in October 2020.

Beckles said that was part of UWI's strategic priority to be multilingual by 2023 as part of the "preparation of an entire generation of students and young people to take command and control of their Caribbean space."

The MOU was prepared in English, Spanish and French for signing. ■



## Jamaica attempts to revitalize its tourism sector

Already seeing a slow return of buoyancy to the tourism sector, the Caribbean destination only welcomed over 200,000 visitors between June and September 2020.

Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, said the COVID-19 pandemic should be viewed as a transformative opportunity.

“This new normal will be how we choose to define it. It will require proactive measures to make it safe and viable,” he said, in a pre-recorded video message at the opening of the Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX) 2020 on 9 November.

This year, the two-day event which usually attracts hundreds of stakeholders from around the world, was held virtually for the

first time, though still offering a variety of interactive booths, discussions and informative sessions, as officials continue to sell the “land of wood and water” to the rest of the world.

Last year, the destination welcomed some 4.3 million stay-over visitors and raked in an estimated US \$3.7 billion or about 9.5 per cent of the island's gross domestic product. The sector is said to directly provide an estimated 170,000 jobs. Like other regional destinations, Jamaica did not escape the dramatic drop in visitor arrivals when travel halted following the discovery of the COVID-19 pandemic at the start of the year.

However, since it reopened around 15 June, following the implementation of several health

and safety measures, preliminary figures show that from that time until the end of September the country earned about US \$131 million, and hotel occupancy had steadily increased.

Officials say they were hopeful for a 40 per cent increase in arrivals over the winter season, which officially runs from 15 December to 15 April.

Bartlett said tourism officials were aware that post-COVID-19 travelling would not be the same, adding that destinations will need to continue to reassure travellers that their health and safety will be top priority when they visit. ■



## Saint Lucia energy awareness month highlights COVID-19 impact

The Government of Saint Lucia through the Department of Infrastructure, Ports and Energy, in partnership with the OECS Commission and Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation (CARILEC), in November hosted a five-part webinar series on the nature and scope of energy, as part of its annual Energy Awareness month observances in 2020.

One of the webinars in this series was dedicated to energy and COVID-19, as the pandemic is having an impact on the economies of many countries around the world. The effects on the Caribbean are exacerbated by a decline on international travel, and a decline in the number of imports. One of the sectors least spoken of with respect to COVID-19 impacts is the energy sector.

During a presentation at one of the webinars, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean's Economic Affairs Officer, Willard Phillips, addressed the challenges and opportunities within the sector.

Phillips outlined the challenges as they relate to high water scarcity and the island's natural water availability which is projected to decline by 20 per cent by 2080. He highlighted the increased seasonality and droughts anticipated; the growing demand for water due to urbanization, and supporting industry; the high energy cost for water production and distribution; and an aging water distribution infrastructure, with high system leakages. Finally, he discussed the limited fiscal resources available for re-investment/capitalization; and evolving perverse incentives for water consumers.

Providing a perspective for improvement, Phillips noted that these challenges may be managed by encouraging private corporate investment into water utilities or transitioning to water service companies. Also, these issues may be mitigated with renewable energy production, rainwater harvesting and wastewater management policy.

Saint Lucia is noted for being the subregion's pioneer in the observance of Energy Awareness Week (EAW). The EAW model was adopted by CARICOM and observed by all CARICOM member states under the title, 'CARICOM Energy Week', since 2015. ■



## ILPES meeting says planning must be an instrument of change in order to build a new future with equality and sustainability

The virtual 28th meeting of ECLAC's Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning (RCP), through its Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) was held on 12 November 2020. The event was spearheaded on behalf of ECLAC Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, by Deputy Executive Secretary, Raúl García-Buchaca.

According to senior officials from Latin America and the Caribbean, the current global and regional context demands flexible, participatory, comprehensive and inclusive planning, which can serve as an instrument of change to build a new, post-pandemic future with equality and sustainability.

García-Buchaca, stressed that the health, social and economic crisis prompted by COVID-19 has dealt a blow to the entire world, posing unprecedented challenges, and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have not been spared.

He said that the forecasts which ECLAC has shared in recent months reveal that, if the trend holds, regional GDP per capita will contract by -9.1 per cent; the number of people living in poverty will rise by 45.4 million; inequality will grow by between 1 and 8 per cent; and the number of unemployed people will increase by 18 million versus 2019.

For that reason, the role of the State is more important than ever for leading the processes of response and recovery in light of the current crisis. "To respond to the challenges arising out of this time of uncertainty that we are living through, it is essential to have comprehensive, flexible and open planning, which would enable us to anticipate events, strengthen participation and citizen collaboration and public leaderships, coordinate sectors and actors, enhance territorial intelligence, and which would have the capacity to incorporate lessons learned and transform its practices and methodologies to formulate more robust plans, policies, programs and projects that would

meet the population's existing and emerging needs."

In the framework of the XXVIII Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the RCP, senior officials from the region examined the scope and challenges of planning for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Caribbean, given the impact of COVID-19. In addition, they analyzed the role of planning with a territorial approach in the post-pandemic recovery to reduce inequality gaps at subnational levels, and the planning challenges related to building resilient public institutions.

Participants also reviewed progress on the resolutions approved at the XVII Meeting of the RCP, held in Montevideo in 2019, as well as preparations for the XVIII Meeting of the Regional Council for Planning of ILPES, which will take place in 2021. The RCP's Presiding Officers are representatives of Argentina, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Panama and Paraguay, with Uruguay as the Chair. ■



## Antigua – Barbuda named Lonely Planet’s emerging sustainable destination of the year

Lonely Planet’s Best in Travel Awards has named the twin-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda 2021’s Emerging Sustainable Destination of the Year.

This year, Antigua and Barbuda has been heralded as one of the destinations that is transforming the travel industry. From banning single-use plastics to establishing a “Green Corridor” of environmentally friendly businesses, Antigua and Barbuda has made sustainability a priority.

Charles Fernandez, Minister of Tourism for Antigua and Barbuda, stated that the islands were incredibly proud to have been recognized by Lonely Planet’s Best in Travel Awards. “As a

nation, we are constantly striving to ensure sustainability is at the forefront of everything we do. Although we are a small country, we are pioneering initiatives to ensure that the beauty of our islands is preserved and nurtured for generations to come. The sustainable tourism department has made this a priority in Antigua and Barbuda, and within a short five-year period, we are very proud of the progress that has been made and the example we have set.”

The twin-island nation has introduced several sustainable initiatives over the years, which include the “Green Corridor”. This initiative aims to assist businesses in reducing the

negative aspects of tourism on the environment by improving the efficiency of their operations. Under the “Green Corridor” initiative, Antigua has introduced the “Green Fins Programme – and is the only country in the Western hemisphere to have done so.

The “Green Fins Programme” is a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) initiative that provides support and guidance to snorkellers and divers. It is the only internationally recognized environmental standard for dive and snorkel operators, established through a partnership between UNEP and The Reef World Foundation. ■



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## Highlighting the Caribbean's Voluntary National Reviews 2020

- by Gina Marajh

On 15-16 July 2020, Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago each presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the United Nations High Level Political Forum 2020.

VNRs are a way for countries to share with the rest of the world their progress being made towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Countries also can highlight the challenges being faced, including financing gaps, in implementing these goals; how these challenges are being addressed; and how progress is being tracked towards achievement of the SDG targets.

In-depth countrywide analysis including stakeholder consultation was used in assessing each country's sustainable development progress. Each VNR indicated how the Governments planned to tackle the current pandemic plaguing the world.

Trinidad and Tobago's VNR, entitled 'Connecting the Dots to the SDGs' was presented by H.E.

Ambassador Penelope Beckles, then Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, on 15 July 2020. She reaffirmed the country's commitment to maintain the trajectory toward sustainable development, to meet the SDGs and address national issues.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' VNR, entitled 'Accelerated action and transformative pathway: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development', was presented by the Honorable Camillo Gonsalves, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development, and Information Technology, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on 16 July 2020.

The VNR allowed Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to showcase the country's development within the context of their own National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013-2025. The targets and goals of the national development plan have been aligned with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

Barbados' VNR was presented by Honourable Minister, Marsha Caddle, Minister of Economic Affairs and Investment on 16 July 2020. The Government of Barbados highlighted the 2018 Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) Plan which sought to restore macroeconomic stability and place the economy on a path of strong, sustainable and inclusive growth, while safeguarding the financial and social sectors.

The BERT Plan outlines the policies that reflect the Government's alignment of its anti-poverty and sectoral strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals. In terms of progress with the goals, it was noted that SDG 3 – Good health and wellbeing was achieved through more resources devoted to public health, introducing new clinics and nurses.

Each country was congratulated by their peers for presenting their first VNR in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and commended on their progress toward achieving the SDGs. ■





## Dominica to stimulate economy through aggressive construction programme

Although Dominica is coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic like every other country, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Roosevelt Skerrit, reported that the “government is actively seeking innovative ways to keep the wheels of the economy turning to ensure that Dominicans are gainfully employed, through an aggressive construction programme.”

“Further economic stimulation and job creation will come from the continuation of our housing programme, and government’s thrust to build 5,000 climate-resilient homes for Dominica’s most vulnerable citizens of which we have constructed well over 1,640 so far,” PM Skerrit added.

“These homes are architecturally pleasing, well-constructed and resilient. The construction plan

that was outlined will have beneficial impacts on other sectors of the economy, from transportation to manufacturing, mining and quarrying to wholesale and retail to name a few.”

Meanwhile, the government of Dominica continues to prioritize healthcare and COVID-19 pandemic response. The National Health Commission has been engaged in an extensive exercise of stakeholder consultations and a public information campaign, all aimed at enhancing and revolutionizing the way health care is delivered in Dominica.

“The process of consultation has been completed and where practicable, suggestions will be taken on board to ensure that as a priority we pursue a path of accreditation for our public hospitals. We aim to develop

a system of secondary hospital care that is more responsive, that delivers value for money and places first-class patient care at the forefront of its mission. The hospitals, health centers and numerous other infrastructural projects that are ongoing at this time have the triple purpose of creating jobs, stimulate economic activity and preparing us for the post-COVID-19 recovery,” the Prime Minister said.

Dominica’s Citizenship by Investment (CBI) programme supports the government’s healthcare infrastructure. The commissioning of three health centres is expected shortly, while two other health centres should be completed before the end of 2020. Construction on health centres in Soufriere and New Town are scheduled to begin soon. ■

# Trinidad and Tobago Homestyle Sponge Cake

## What you will need:

- 6 oz butter
- 6 oz sugar
- 6 oz flour
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp each lemon zest and juice, orange zest
- A few drops of vanilla essence
- 1 tsp mixed spices

## How to Make it:

Step 1: Grease and flour 1 large cake pan or 2 small ones.

Step 2: Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy.

Step 3: Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Step 4: Sift flour and baking powder together 4 times.

Step 5: Add in flavourings, then flour in three batches, mixing lightly after each addition.

Step 6: Pour into cake pan and bake for 30 to 35 minutes at 350 degrees.

Step 7: The cake is done when a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.

Step 8: Cool in pan for 5 minutes before taking it out.



# CONTACT US

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

## MEDIA CONTACT

Tel.: 1 868 224 8075

E-mail: [eclac-media-pos@eclac.org](mailto:eclac-media-pos@eclac.org)

## SOCIAL MEDIA



<https://www.cepal.org/en/headquarters-and-offices/eclac-caribbean>

