In this issue:

Highlights - Pg 2
- ECLAC HOSTS THIRD UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY MEETING
- REINVENTING THE CDCC

DocCentre - Pg 4
Economic - Pg 6
- TRADE STATISTICS DATABASE PROJECT ...
- ECLAC HOSTS REGIONAL SEMINAR ON GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT AND EQUITY ...

Projects - Pg 8
Publications - Pg 9
SciTech - Pg 10
- BIODIVERSITY AND BIOPROSPECTING

SIDS - Pg 12
- ... THE ROAD TO JOHANNESBURG 2002

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT - Pg 13
- TECHNICAL - Pg 13 ASSISTANCE TO THE ECSC
- UNDERSTANDING - Pg 14 POVERTY AND VULNERABLE GROUPS: THE CASE OF DISABLED PERSONS
- DEVELOPMENT - Pg 17 OF SOCIAL STATISTICAL DATABASES ...
ECLAC HOSTS THIRD UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY
COLLABORATION MEETING IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The third annual coordination meeting of United Nations bodies and agencies operating in the Latin American and Caribbean region convened in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, over the period, 8-9 March, 2001. This meeting was convened by ECLAC which had been mandated with the responsibility for the overall monitoring of the new cooperation and coordination mechanisms that have been developed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Reflecting the significant links of collaboration that exist between agencies of the UN system and regional agencies in the execution of their respective work programmes, the meeting was also attended by representatives of such organizations as the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDEMA) and the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI). The meeting was attended by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, as well as the Secretary of the Commission, among other high-level personnel from the Commission’s Headquarters in Santiago, Chile, in addition to the Director of the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean and other staff members from the Port of Spain office.

As foreshadowed above, these meetings have their genesis in the system of wide-ranging reforms initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and geared towards, inter alia, the projection of ‘one UN,’ with the attendant key objectives of greater unity of purpose and enhanced collaboration and coordination among organizations belonging to the United Nations system.

In the context of that reform initiative, the Secretary General has introduced the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as a mechanism for strengthening the effectiveness of the contribution of the United Nations system agencies to the development efforts of member countries. Since its inception, this fairly structured framework, together with the process of formulating Common Country Assessments (CCAs), notwithstanding certain limitations recognised to be inherent in these processes, is setting the stage for enhanced cooperation between and among organizations of the United Nations system.

In reviewing these approaches to inter-agency cooperation and collaboration, the Inter-Agency Meeting also paid great attention to another approach to collaboration, namely, one that is of an ad hoc and, necessarily, less structured nature, but nevertheless recognised to constitute an important modality that also helps to further the objective of increasing efficiency within the United Nations systems, while also furthering the image of “one UN.” This type of approach was indicated to be undertaken solely at the discretion of the agencies themselves on the basis of the compatibility of their mandates and interests. On this basis, organizations within the United Nations system operating in the Caribbean, have undertaken joint projects, as well as subregional and national level meetings, research and publications.

Particular instances of this form of inter-agency collaboration were highlighted in the background document prepared for the meeting by ECLAC, namely, the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS POA), including preparations for Johannesburg 2002; gender issues, mainly in the context of post-Beijing follow-up; and collaboration in the area of natural disasters. Overall, however, that background document provided a conceptual framework for greater collaboration among UN system agencies, both within the structured processes of the UNDAF and CCA, as outlined above, as well as in the context of the less formal and less structured approach.

In the course of the interventions made by the range of agencies represented at the Meeting, notwithstanding the fact that no definitive solutions to the various issues raised were anticipated, a number of important suggestions were advanced with respect to the types of modalities for inter-agency collaboration that might be both appropriate and feasible, starting from a review of the existing formal stipulations of the UNDAF and CCA approaches.

Likewise, suggestions were made for the amplification of the range of activities that might be pursued in the context of the “case histories” highlighted in the working document that was presented to the meeting. Significant among these was the proposal for the concept of “disasters” to be broadened to encompass man-made disasters, in addition to such natural phenomena as seismic and meteorological events. Identified in this specific context were such aspects as accidents involving aircraft and vessels; pollution of the marine environment, whether occasioned by oil spills or other ship-generated or land-based sources; and collision of vessels, including accidents involving cruise ships. All these aspects were linked to the critically important tourism industry across the Caribbean subregion. Finally, many new areas of relevance to the countries of the subregion were identified as being amenable to the type of collaboration that was pursued by the meeting.
REINVENTING THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE (CDCC)

By the time of its conclusion, the Tenth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC, which convened in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, over the period, 6-7 March 2001, was already being hailed as yet another milestone in the evolution of the organ.

In the April-June 2000 issue of Focus, readers were informed of the concern expressed by the Ministers of the CDCC membership at the Eighteenth Session of the Committee which convened in Trinidad and Tobago, on 30 March-1April 2000, that so significant had been the transformation of the development landscape since the establishment of the Committee in 1975, that a remodelling of the Committee was deemed necessary so as to enable it to more effectively assist its membership to meet the challenges of the future.

In the view of the Ministers, many of the basic concepts, ideas and approaches enshrined in the Constituent Declaration of 1975, no longer found resonance in an international environment characterised by the intensified globalisation of economic activity that bore “liberalisation” as its hallmark. Thus it was that in the Chaguaramas Declaration, adopted at that Eighteenth Session, that Ministers mandated the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat “to undertake a comprehensive review of the Constituent Declaration of the CDCC with particular reference to the specific objectives, goals, structures, mechanisms and processes of the organ, including its relationship with other organs.” It is important to note that this decision was adopted by the Ministers even as they emphasized “the importance of the continuing existence of the Committee as a Caribbean entity for cooperation in support of the CDCC member States in recognition of its utility as a mechanism whose basic ideas as enshrined in its Constituent Declaration remain valid.”

When the Tenth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee commenced its deliberations, the ministerial mandate outlined above was recognised as the most important and urgent item on its Agenda. Transposing the ministerial mandate into operational elements, this Agenda Item was reduced to three major aspects, namely, Review of the Constituent Declaration of the CDCC; Review of the Rules of Procedure of the CDCC; and Adoption of Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee.

In the context of the review conducted by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat pursuant to the ministerial mandate and which was before the Committee, the Review of the Constituent Declaration of the CDCC incorporated all the elements related to the objectives, goals, structures and other aspects as stipulated by the Ministers. The Review of the Rules of Procedure of the CDCC involved, inter alia, the formalization of certain practices that had developed over time, as well as the more adequate formulation of certain procedural requirements, for example, with respect to voting in the Committee, notwithstanding the fact that recourse has never been had to this expedient during the over 25 years of its establishment. A number of other elements were also incorporated in order to bring the procedures of the Committee into line with, inter alia, standard United Nations practice. With respect to the last element, relating to the Adoption of Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee, this represented an innovation that was deemed necessary in order to place the structures and processes, as well as the very existence of the Monitoring Committee, on a more formal footing. The Committee had simply evolved as an “Inter­sessional Body” that would convene between the formal sessions of the CDCC to, inter alia, pursue the follow-up of the resolutions adopted by the CDCC. The Monitoring Committee first convened in March 1989.

Since the adoption of these new instruments to govern the work of the CDCC remains the prerogative of the Ministers, the proposals adopted by the Monitoring Committee, as outlined above, will be submitted to the Nineteenth Session of the CDCC which is to convene in early 2002.
Analysis of maritime transport and its costs for the Caribbean

Presented in three parts, this analysis first gives an overview of Caribbean foreign trade, focusing on the cost of maritime transportation and its impact. The second part gives a detailed analysis of the factors that influence the cost of maritime transportation. Among these factors are, the volume of trade, the need for transshipment, trade imbalances, port efficiency and security, customs procedures, and the special circumstances associated with being an island. Recommendations are presented in the third section. In general these suggest actions which could be taken by the region's public sector to promote trade and reduce transport costs.

Report of the high-level seminar on basic planning functions

Following the opening remarks and an outline of the working methodology of the meeting, three topics occupied the attention of participants: 1) an evaluation of plans, programmes, strategies and projects; 2) planning and policy coordination, including a detailed look at integrated development planning in the British Virgin Islands; and 3) long-range thinking, institutional downsizing and action.

Poverty and social integration in the Caribbean

This document looks at seven major indicators of poverty in the region: infant mortality; malnutrition; communicable diseases; employment and income; education; social services such as water, sanitation and housing; and the incidence of natural disasters. There is also some focus on crime and violence and the issue of the illicit traffic and use of drugs, as expressions of social deterioration.

Report of the training workshop on the ECLAC methodology for assessing the macroeconomic, social and environmental impacts of natural disasters

This report looks at special aspects of disasters in the context of the small island States of the Caribbean. Its focus is the methodological and conceptual aspects of disaster impact assessment. The impact on infrastructure and on various productive sectors is examined and the usefulness of information systems and adequate human and financial resources and institutional capacity is stressed. Policy implications of the ECLAC methodology of natural disaster assessment are also explored.

Reconceptualizing social indicators in the Caribbean: a review and discussion

This document discusses the relevance, strengths and limitations of social indicators. Difficulties encountered in the analysis of such data in the Caribbean are identified and discussed. Issues related to the availability of social data for social planning and the implementation of programmes and projects are also explored.

Report of the eighteenth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC)

The report summarises 9 major recommendations which emerged from the discussions at the CDCC meeting and provides synopses of the discussions on the following agenda items: the CDCC into the new millennium; the document entitled “the Caribbean in the Decade of the nineties”; the non-independent Caribbean countries; and resolutions recently adopted by the United Nations.

Report of the Experts’ Meeting on maritime transport in the Caribbean

Convened to exchange experiences and coordinate ongoing and future activities by the region’s port and maritime authorities,
regional and international organizations and academic institutions, the meeting focused on improving port and maritime transport services in the Caribbean. Deliberations during the first session centred on the cost and availability of maritime transport and the impact on trade performance. In the second session, each of the 22 organizations represented presented their own work and priorities in the area of port and shipping services. Finally five working groups analysed specific ongoing and future activities. Databases for trade and transport, port costs and productivity; and shippers and commodities were considered by three of the working groups. The other two working groups focused on future research activities; training; and capacity building.

Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on gender and macromeconomic policies in the Caribbean

26 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.626

The meeting focused on the following: the relevance of gender in public policy; macroeconomic policies in the Caribbean and the implications for social equity; and the application of gender to fiscal policy. In its final session, the meeting explored elements of a project that would encourage gender-sensitive macroeconomic policies in the region. Research, training, and advocacy were among the components of the project identified.

Report of the ECLAC-CDC/CMonional Secretariat regional meeting on gender mainstreaming

35 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.624

The training workshop focused on: an evaluation of best practices in gender mainstreaming in the region; clarifying the definition of gender and the use of the concept as an analytical tool in public policy and planning; establishing mechanisms and building capacity to enable gender mainstreaming; and the development of resource materials. This report contains status reports on gender mainstreaming initiatives in all countries represented at the workshop, and presented a study on the subject undertaken by ECLAC. The role of other agencies, both regional and international, is also outlined.

Global economic developments - 1999

32 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.623

This document describes global output, regional performance and the impact of inflation. Developments in world trade are also outlined, with special focus given to tourism. Institutional developments in the area of trade are highlighted, and financial developments described. These include the reforms of the global financial system, financial adjustments, trends in savings and investment, current account developments, capital flows, external debt and debt reduction initiatives.

Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Caribbean Planners Network (CPN)

23 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.620

This report summarises discussions and presentations on the following agenda items: the Caribbean Planners Network (CPN) website and the CPN online newsletter. Guidelines for submission of material to the website, the concept, content of and approach to the newsletter, and guidelines for theme-based articles are among the areas covered. Annexes include a list of action items for follow up, and the summary of the preparatory discussions for the Istanbul+5/HABITAT meeting.

Report of the regional seminar on growth, employment and equity: the impact of economic reforms in Latin America and the Caribbean

22 p. ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean LC/CAR/G.629

The objective of the Seminar was to examine the findings of an ECLAC project on the impact of the economic reforms undertaken by the Caribbean and Latin American countries over the past 10 to 15 years. There were the four topics discussed: the economic reform process in Latin America and the Caribbean; the impact of the reforms on investment and technical change; the impact of reforms on employment and income distribution; and a policy agenda for the next decade.
TRADE STATISTICS DATABASE PROJECT - TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE IN THE CARIBBEAN

Despite the extremely high dependence of Caribbean countries on external trade, the national systems for recording transactions with the rest of the world are as varied as the national systems for recording and processing data collected from the customs. Several trade analysis initiatives have been embarked on in the past with limited success. The challenge has been the ability of the national statistical systems to publish timely trade statistics. It is to the credit of earlier project interventions by other Agencies including the UNDP that there is in place a means of accessing trade statistics. Nomenclatures used are not the same throughout the subregion as various revisions of the Standard International Trade Classification are used. Within more recent times all countries have been reporting their trade statistics according to the Harmonized System (HS) format, but this is not satisfactory for analyzing the trade for economic and end-use analysis. The several versions of nomenclatures used make it difficult to access normalized Caribbean trade statistics. This difficulty is manifest when one consults the major sources of harmonized trade statistics worldwide.

Objectives of the Project:
ECLAC has secured funding for a project that seeks to correct the difficulties as described above through a number of objectives, both longer term and immediate in nature. The longer term objective seeks to provide timely and quality information to policy makers, researchers and businessmen who can influence trade flows within the subregion and between the subregion and the rest of the world. The immediate objectives are centered on the provision of the outputs that would provide for enhanced comprehension of the trade flows and their implications on the economies of the subregion.

Development (longer term) objective:
1. To provide policy makers, trade negotiators, researchers and business people with up-to-date and detailed information on trade, both within the Caribbean subregion and between the Caribbean subregion and the outside world
2. To develop trade among CDCC countries and increase the capacity of Caribbean countries to better participate and benefit from trade liberalization

Immediate objectives:
1. To improve the capability of the countries to provide current and detailed trade data and also to improve the comparability of the data produced
2. To provide a fully searchable database at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain
3. To provide users with improved trade statistics on the Caribbean and improved analytical documents on trade and economic performance
4. To undertake studies to further promote trade among CDCC countries and assess the implications for the NICCs of membership in hemispheric trade agreements
5. To improve the capacity of trade policy makers to formulate appropriate policies to participate effectively in trade negotiations so as to benefit from membership of trade liberalization agreements

Design considerations
The project will establish a trade database at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. This facility will be available for access by a large community of trade and transport data users. Studies of the feasibility of including other significant factors of analysis with the query function are underway. The designers of the database are looking towards the maximized use of the data by ensuring at least three data output formats that would migrate seamlessly into an identified set of analysis packages.

Project Outputs
1. A report presenting an assessment of the current capabilities of selected statistical offices' trade units, types of data available, the periodicity of publication of such data and the comparability of data across the Caribbean.
2. Report on training seminar(s)
3. Report on technical assistance missions
4. A fully searchable database at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain.
5. Three studies:
   a) Trade expansion between CARICOM and the Netherlands Antilles
   b) Trade expansion between CARICOM and Aruba
   c) Implications of the FTAA for selected NICCs
6. Reports on workshops on trade liberalisation issues of relevance to the Caribbean

Work done to date
ECLAC/CDCC has prepared and distributed a questionnaire to the Statistical Offices in the Caribbean countries. The questionnaire aims to collect information that would describe the state of the art in the collection and publication of trade statistics. Simultaneously, consultations are being held with major users of trade statistics to ascertain the extent to which their requests for key information pertaining to trade are not being met. The responses will inform the project of the additional outputs that can be programmed with minimal additional cost.

In addition to the proposed content of the database, some discussions have been held on the form in which the data will be collected and on the software to be used to perform the searches that will yield the analytical tables. Preliminary indications are that it will not be difficult to design a collection vehicle that will collect information on trade as well as transport data, thereby satisfying the needs of two data using communities with one collection effort. The questionnaires when collected in their entirety will afford an indication of the feasibility of such an initiative.
ECLAC HOSTS REGIONAL SEMINAR ON GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT AND EQUITY: THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC REFORMS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) hosted a Regional Seminar on Growth, Employment and Equity: The Impact of Economic Reforms in Latin America and the Caribbean on 27 October 2000 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. This represented a joint effort by its Headquarters in Santiago, Chile, and its Subregional Headquarters in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and was attended by representatives of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) member countries and other specially invited guests.

**Objective**

The objective of the seminar was to examine the findings of a project carried out by ECLAC on the impact of the economic reforms undertaken by the Latin American and Caribbean countries over the last 10 to 15 years. The impact was discussed in terms of its effects on economic growth, productivity, employment and equity.

**Overview of Project**

Ms. Barbara Stallings, Director of the Economic Development Division, ECLAC, Santiago, presented an overview of the project, which was based. She informed that the book entitled “Growth, employment and equity: the impact of economic reforms in Latin America and the Caribbean” was the synthesis of a multi-year project to investigate the impact of the economic reforms in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project was undertaken by ECLAC in collaboration with local researchers in nine countries covered by the study. These countries were: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru.

Ms. Stallings prefaced her discussion of the findings of the project with a caveat to the effect that countries were chosen not necessarily as representative of the region but rather as representative of the reform process. Despite the fact that the Caribbean was included in the title of the book, only one Caribbean country was studied - Jamaica. However, because of severe difficulties with data, analysis on this country was not included in all areas. She further informed that Jamaica was not chosen as a representative Caribbean country, but rather a country undergoing the process of reforms.

The meeting was informed that the one of the goals of the seminar was to ascertain the extent to which the reform process was relevant to Caribbean countries and whether the results presented in the publication might or might not be relevant to the Caribbean experience. This would determine whether there was any basis for formulating a joint-venture project aimed specifically at assessing the impact of economic reforms on Caribbean countries.

**The Findings**

Ms. Stallings stated that ECLAC’s approach to the project was based on the fact that in the past 10 to 15 years, the Latin American and Caribbean region had undergone the most significant transformation of economic policy since World War II. Through a series of structural reforms, an increasing number of countries had moved from the closed, State-dominated economies that characterized the import-substitution industrialization model of development, to economies that were more market-oriented and more open to the rest of the world. Complementary aspects of the process had accorded a new priority to macroeconomic stability, especially lower rates of inflation and to increasing expenditure in the social area. Policy makers expected that those changes would accelerate economic growth and increase productivity gains and, at the same time, lead to the creation of more jobs and greater equity.

Econometric evidence from the ECLAC study indicated that the reforms have had a small positive effect on investment and growth and a small negative effect on employment and income distribution. However, evidence of strong effects from the reforms was found by analysis at the country, sectoral, and microeconomic levels. The reforms fostered investment and modernization, but at the same time, they led to significant differences in performance: high- and low-growth countries, dynamic and lagging sectors, a gap between large and small firms and a shift in favour of transnational corporations over domestic firms. The result was specialization and polarization, with the implied opportunities and challenges.

The main characteristic that distinguished the ECLAC study from other comparative studies of economic reforms was the focus on the interaction between the macroeconomic and microeconomic processes. To make significant advances at this time, the researchers believed that it was crucial to focus less exclusively on the aggregate, macroeconomic level and more on individual countries and the microeconomic behaviour of firms, grouped by sector, size and ownership.

**AGENDA FOR THE NEXT DECADE**

The final session of the seminar discussed an agenda for the next decade. The main policy recommendations were:

* A shift in focus to second generation reforms;
* The need for competitiveness and investment promotion to increase growth;
* The need to undertake a major offensive in the social area to deal with problems relating to employment and income distribution;
* The need to maintain and improve macroeconomic stability;
* The need for closer relations between the public and private sectors and for policies to deal with external vulnerability; and
* To develop a comprehensive reform package which would increase growth based on policies that addressed investment, technology, and small-scale firms.

**POLICY PROPOSALS IDENTIFIED FOR THE CARIBBEAN SUBREGION**

Specific policy recommendations were made for the Caribbean subregion. Countries were urged:

* To embark upon a comprehensive integration of policy - social, economic and environment;
* To take a more proactive role in global regulatory reform; adopt policies to deal with competition through the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) etc.; and seek special treatment for small economies that have to deal with shocks, such as natural disasters; and
* To formulate and adopt a radical education-training programme geared towards ensuring a workforce that was competitive in knowledge-based areas of economic activity.

From the discussions, it was observed that the Caribbean subregion had a more varied experience with respect to the reforms. It was therefore strongly recommended that ECLAC and in particular the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean undertake a comparable study for the Caribbean subregion.
PROJECTS

The following projects are being implemented under the Netherlands/ECLAC Technical Cooperation Programme.

1. Project number NET/00/079: Development of a Regional Marine-based Tourism Strategy

Background

The Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was held in Barbados, 10-14 November 1997. At this meeting it was observed that while some progress has been made on the environmental sustainability of land-based tourism much less progress has been made on marine-based tourism.

Marine-based tourism, or MBT, is that segment of tourism that focuses on the use of the marine environment and includes yachting, diving, whale watching, recreational fishing and the array of support and ancillary services such as marinas or boat maintenance facilities. In this context, it excludes cruise-ship tourism because the large number of cruise-ship visitors warrants its own sub-classification.

It is anticipated that marine-based tourism will continue to grow in the Eastern Caribbean. Even more than mainstream tourism, this segment of the tourism market is driven by nature, whether this be reefs as in the case of diving, whales for whale watching or islands and sheltered and clean ocean conditions as in the case of yachting. In addition, the increased awareness by tourists and the continued pressures on marine resources are likely to force a more environment-friendly approach towards marine-based tourism in the future.

The yachting aspect of the marine-based tourism project will be analysed during the first phase of the project.

Objectives and outputs

The project will thus seek to address weaknesses of marine-based tourism while maintaining the strengths and dynamism of the subsector and provide bases for national policies to promote sustainable marine-based tourism.

The main outputs of the project are expected to be:

- Preparation of national reports on issues pertinent to marine-based tourism.
- Preparation of a draft national marine-based tourism strategies
- Conduct of a regional assessment on economic and on environmental impacts of marine-based tourism
- Preparation of a Draft regional strategy and action plan on marine-based tourism

2. Project number NET/00/035: Development of Social Statistical Data Bases and a Methodological Approach for a Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) for Small Island Developing States. (See page 17 for information on this project)

3. Project number NET/00/81: Support to the Development of Trade in the Caribbean

Background

Despite the extremely high dependence of Caribbean countries on external trade, the national systems for recording transactions with the rest of the world are as varied as the national systems for recording and processing data collected from the customs warrants. Several trade analysis initiatives have been embarked on in the past with limited success. The challenge has been the ability of the national statistical systems to publish timely trade statistics. It is to the credit of earlier project interventions that there is in place a means of accessing trade statistics. Nomenclatures used are not the same throughout the subregion as various revisions of the Standard International Trade Classification are used. Within more recent times all countries have been reporting according to the Harmonized System (HS) format, but this is not satisfactory for analyzing the trade for economic and end-use analysis. The result is that it is at present difficult to access normalized Caribbean trade statistics. This difficulty is manifest when one consults the major sources of harmonized trade statistics world-wide.

Objectives and outputs

The present project seeks to correct the situation described above through a number of objectives, both longer term and immediate in nature. The longer-term objective seeks to provide timely and quality information to policy makers, researchers and businessmen who can influence trade flows within the subregion and between the subregion and the rest of the world. The immediate objectives are to: prepare the baseline data to:

- improve the existing harmonic systems
- improve the existing trade data sets
- improve the existing Harmonized System
- improve the existing Standard International Trade Classification
- improve the existing United Nations Trade Statistics
- improve the existing Directional Analysis of Trade
- improve the existing Harmonized System
- improve the existing National Statistical Systems

This project is of particular importance for the ECLAC/CDCD secretariat, since it represents a useful approach for consideration by other governments in the region that wish to clarify their human development goals and to define more rigorously the most effective strategies.

The impetus for this initiative has come from dissatisfaction with five-year development plans that are perceived as remaining largely unimplemented. In addition to the understanding that the goals of human development are long term by nature and cannot be met only through a five-year planning cycle. It is expected that the NHDA, unlike the five-year plans, will cut across the life span of governments and will be developed through widespread consultation with civil society and with governmental sectors charged with implementation responsibilities. Fundamental to the thinking on the Agenda is that human development is the primary goal of economic growth.

The NHDA is not expected to replace national and sectoral plans and strategies but rather will provide a vision within which shorter-term plans can be formulated. In that regard, the NHDA will have a long-term vision for human development in Belize, and will clearly specify goals, achievement targets and indicators to allow for continuous monitoring by government and civil society.

A National Human Development Advisory Council (NHDAC) has been charged with the responsibility for the development and monitoring of the NHDA. This Council is comprised of high-level representatives of a cross-section of ministries, as well as representatives for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and the Ministry of Human Development are the lead agencies on the project.

The formulation of the NHDA will be the outcome of exhaustive consultations with the national community since successful implementation of the Agenda will depend on large measure on an active monitoring and input of civil society.

The ECLAC/CDCD secretariat will be providing technical assistance in a number of areas, including guidance on the formulation of a long-term concept of a NHDA: guidance on organizing and facilitating community and focus group consultations in relation to the drafting of the Agenda; and assistance in the preparation and presentation of the final draft of the Agenda. The HDA is expected to be completed by November 2001.
STATUS OF PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED SINCE JANUARY 2001

Documents/Reports

• Copenhagen+5: The Special Session on Social Development in 2000 - Issues of Relevance to the Caribbean, LC/CAR/G.631
• Recent developments in Intra-CDCC Trade, LC/CAR/G.632
• Special and Differential Treatment in the FTAA, LC/CAR/G.633
• A Review of the CDCC incorporating a review of its Constituent Declaration and Rules of Procedure, LC/CAR/G.634
• Selected Statistical Indicators (VOL.XIII), LC/CAR/G.635
• Inter-agency collaboration in the Caribbean - Towards a framework for collaboration, LC/CAR/G.636
• Environmental Technologies in Caribbean Hotels, prepared in collaboration with CAST, LC/CAR/G.637
• Implementation of the ECLAC/CDCC work programme for the 2000-2001 biennium, (up to January 2001), LC/CAR/G.638
• Summaries of resolutions recently adopted by the UNGA an the Security Council which may be of special interest to member countries of CDCC, LC/CAR/G.639
• Macroeconomic policies in the Caribbean, LC/CAR/G.640

Newsletters

• Focus Newsletter: [A newsletter providing information on activities carried out by ECLAC/CDCC]
• Current Contents: [A bulletin on current information housed in the Caribbean Documentation Centre] January to April 2001
• Current Awareness Bulletin: [A bulletin on current information housed in the Caribbean Documentation Centre] Vol.24 No1, Jan/Feb; No.2, March/April 2001
• Issue Brief: [Newsletter providing information on current trade and economic issues] Vol.2 No.1
• Gender Dialogue: [Newsletter providing information and dialogue around policies and programmes for women] Issue #3
• Info Bits: [Newsletter providing information on Science and Technology] Issue 01/2001
• Caribbean Action on Population and Development: [Newsletter providing information on population issues] Vol.4 #4

Abstracts of publications

• Recent Developments in Intra-CDCC Trade*, [LC/CAR/G.632, published in February 2001].

• In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the development of intraregional trade in the developing countries, in general, and the Caribbean, in particular. As a consequence, Caribbean countries now have to rethink their development strategies and promote economic growth and development based on a paradigm of open regionalism.

• In this process, countries have abandoned the import-substitution model of industrialisation in favour of an outward-oriented export led growth strategy. The implementation of structural adjustment programmes, including trade liberalisation, has increased the region's openness to trade and investment.

• To further strengthen the integration process, CARICOM continues to work towards the establishment of a Single Market and Economy (SM&E). Despite all these measures, Intra-CDCC trade has seen only modest growth in the 1990s. Intra-CDCC exports posted growth of 3.4 per cent, almost 2.0 per cent less than the world's average.

• Against this context, the paper analyses the evolution of intra-CDCC trade in the 1990s and examines the underlying factors that may be responsible for the observed trends.

• Macroeconomic policies in the Caribbean and Latin America - Towards a framework for collaboration, LC/CAR/G.640

• Special and Differential Treatment in the FTAA* [LC/CAR/G.633]

• In response to requests from member States for guidance on the process and highlights of the implementation of the decisions of Copenhagen +5, the ECLAC Port of Spain is preparing a paper entitled "Copenhagen +5: the special session on social development in 2000, issues of relevance to the Caribbean," [Document LC/CAR/G.631 was published in January 2001]

• The publication Selected Statistical Indicators (VOL.XIII - 2000) is a collection of time series on the major areas of economic statistics. This collection is an input into a number of analytic documents prepared by this office and many organizations. Rising costs of publication and the possibilities afforded by the Internet have influenced the decision to restrict the numbers of printed copies, while making the data available on the office's website. This document was published in December 2000, LC/CAR/G.635

The report on the "Environmental Technologies in Caribbean Hotels", [LC/CAR/G.637], prepared jointly by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean and the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), was designed to expose hotels to regional hotel experiences about the application of environmentally sound technologies and to educate hotels about buying specifications, benefits, drawbacks and financial issues needed before purchasing a variety of cost-saving technologies. A large number of case studies illustrate the five chapters on energy generation and management, water, effluents and waste water, solid waste and products and chemicals. Within each chapter a variety of equipment and technologies, their cost and pay back period are discussed.
Biodiversity

The earth's biodiversity is a capital resource that provides vital ecosystem systems services, goods such as food, fuel, fibre and medicines, as well as the aesthetic, recreational and cultural riches associated with nature. It remains a poorly understood scientific frontier, with an estimated 90% of species yet to be discovered and described.

Biodiversity therefore refers to the genetic variation of all life on earth. It is this diversity of life that makes it sustainable. Natural populations of organisms are more diverse than crop or horticultural cultivars which have been manipulated by humans. This manipulation leads to a reduction in diversity. A downside to reduced diversity is that a disease or disaster that affects one plant is likely to affect them all. Species extinction, which has been estimated by E.O Wilson of Harvard University to be occurring at the rate of 70 species per year, also reduces diversity. The reasons for this can be summarized by the acronym HIPPO - Habitat destruction, Introduced species, Pollution, Population growth and Over consumption. As biodiversity declines, the web of life which supports us all is weakened, and is less able to respond to environmental changes such as global climate change or increased ultra violet radiation.

Few people are aware of the links between biodiversity, genetic resources, and the agricultural productivity that sustains us. In recent years these links have been closely scrutinised because of the continuing decline of the natural environment. With this decline there is the disappearance of many organisms of known and unknown potential value. There is therefore, an increasing awareness of the intrinsic value of genetic diversity, both in the broad sense of conserving what we know of the natural environment, and in the more narrow sense of materials for current and future exploitation by humanity.

At present there are an estimated 250,000 known plant species in the world today, of which approximately 5,000 have been screened for their medicinal potential. It is significant to note that some areas possess a richer variety of species than other areas. Although living things can be found on all continents, in every sea and from pole to pole, biodiversity is not spread equally around the globe. At low elevations, for instance, species diversity is greater than at high elevations, where temperatures are cooler and the growing season shorter. Areas in which a generous supply of rain encourages the growth of lush vegetation are more diverse than arid locations. And in freshwater environments, species diversity tends to decrease as the water gets deeper. Biodiversity also increases as one moves from the poles to the equator. Tropical climates also tend to be more stable, with an inherent decrease in the chances of weather-related extinction. Also, tropical forests support a wider range of habitats and can therefore host a wider variety of species.

Bioproducting

Any one species could be the cure for a disease that is considered incurable. Biodiversity prospecting or biopropecturing is the exploration, extraction and screening of biological diversity and to some extent indigenous knowledge, for commercially viable genetic and biochemical resources. The use of traditional medicine and medicinal plants in most developing countries, as a normative basis for the maintenance of good health, has been widely observed. Furthermore, an increasing reliance on the use of medicinal plants in industrialised societies has been traced to the extraction and development of several drugs and chemotherapeutics from these plants as well as from traditionally used herbal remedies. For example, between 1956 and 1976 the United States National Cancer Institute screened over 35,000 plants and animals for anti-cancer compounds. Paclitaxel (also known as Taxol), a compound found in the Pacific yew tree is an anti-cancer compound, likewise the drug vinblastine vincristin that is used to treat blood and lymph cancer is derived from the rosy periwinkle. Drugs to treat diabetes have also been found in the rosy periwinkle and in the Caribbean, many of us are familiar with "bush teas" that are taken for everything from high blood pressure to de-worming in small children. The active ingredient in aspirin once came from willow bark. Digitalis used in the treatment for cardiac arrhythmias is derived from the foxglove, quinine (malaria) is derived from Cinchone and the muscle relaxant tubocurarine is derived from Curare, native to the Amazon.

Herbal remedies are also becoming increasingly popular in the treatment of minor ailments, and also on account of the increasing costs of personal health maintenance. Indeed, according to Lucy Hoareau and Edgar J. Da Silva of UNESCO, the market and public demand have been so great that there is a great risk that many medicinal plants today, face either extinction or loss of genetic diversity.

Bioprosective agreements

Global genetic resources, which could be read to refer to genetic resources found in the tropics which comprise most developing countries of the Third World as opposed to more developed nations, are now seen as economically, and therefore politically, important. Unfortunately, few of the governments in the Third World understand how to protect and sustain these resources, the costs of doing so, and the true reasons for embarking on such initiatives. Perhaps no country is in a better position to appreciate the importance of sharing biodiversity for the generation of wealth than the United States, whose agricultural productivity largely depends on non-native species introduced in the early years of the nation's development.

The debate over appropriate international policies for the conservation and use of genetic resources includes a number of political and economic issues regarding access to both private and public collections (current and future) and in situ resources. Among these are issues concerning intellectual property rights or alternative forms of ownership - rights of indigenous or local communities, farmers' rights, access to and compensation for genetic resources collected prior to implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and religious and cultural objections to property rights for some or all categories of genetic resources. Since 1993, there has been a continuing concern to establish sound and sustainable national and international policies based on accurate data and broad consultation.

In the past, genetic resources were treated as a common heritage, available without restriction for research and other usage. This system was, however, perceived as contributing to a rapid extinction rate and as being unfair to developing countries, the major source of genetic resources. Since the Biodiversity Convention declares that governments have the "sovereign right to exploit" the genetic resources under their domain, efforts to regulate access began. Conceptually, payments are supposed to
lead to greater conservation efforts. The Convention also recognizes the “knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communi-
ties” and specifically “encourage(s) the equitable sharing of benefits aris-
ing from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.”
(Article 8(j)).

However, according to the Rural Advancement Foundation Interna-
tional (RAFI), no matter how convincing the rhetoric, conservation and equity
are secondary issues. They are of the view that under the vast majority of
current bioprospecting agreements, when indigenous peoples share
information on genetic materials, they effectively lose control over such
resources, regardless of whether or not they are compensated. They also
believe that as it stands, the Biodiversity Convention offers only passive
endorsement of bilateral contractual agreements that will pit indigenous
communities and countries against each other. While multinational cor-
porations are free to patent bio-materials, there are no effective guidelines
and conditions defined for recognising and rewarding the contributions
of indigenous peoples and other informal innovators who are responsible
for nurturing, using and developing biodiversity worldwide. RAFI esti-
mates that medicinal plants and microbials from the South contribute at
least $30 billion a year to the North's pharmaceutical industry. It is con-
servatively estimated that the market for natural product research speci-
mens (samples or extracts) of biological materials within the United
States pharmaceutical industry alone is $30 - 60 million per annum.

The first major bilateral contract for bioprospecting was made public in
September 1991, when Merck & Company, a United States based pharma-
caceutical corporation, announced a two-year, $1.135 million deal with the
Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio) of Costa Rica, a private, non-
governmental research institute. INBio agreed to provide Merck's drug-
screening programmes with chemical extracts from wild plants, insects
and micro-organisms. In return, Merck agreed to give INBio a two-year
research budget of $1.135 million, an undisclosed share of royalties on any
resulting commercial products, and technical assistance and training to
establish in-country capacity for drug research. INBio also agreed to con-
tribute 10% of its up-front payment from Merck and 50% of any royalties
it might eventually receive to Costa Rica's National Park Fund.

Since the announcement of the Merck/INBio agreement, other contracts
between corporations/institutions and research institutes, governments
and agencies have followed. In December 1993, three agencies of the
United States - the National Institute of Health (NIH), the National Science
Foundation and the Agency for International Development (AID) - which
collaborate under the name of the International Cooperative Diversity
Group (ICBG), announced awards for the largest public-private biodiver-
sity prospecting agreements in history. The ICBG awards for US govern-
ment-funded bioprospecting agreements are worth $12.5 million over 5
years and involve public-private collaboration between diverse organisa-
tions, including pharmaceutical corporations, academic researchers, gov-
ernment representatives and environmental NGOs, in seven countries. All
but one of the countries affected by the ICBG agreements are Latin
American: Argentina, Cameroon, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru and
Suriname. The pharmaceutical corporations that will receive biological
extracts from source countries under the ICBG awards include Bristol-
Myers Squibb, American Cyanamid; and Monsanto (Searle). According to
ICBG, the goals of the biodiversity grant programme are drug discovery,
sustainable economic activity and biodiversity conservation. It is pro-
posed that these goals will be accomplished by linking developing-coun-
try organisations and indigenous peoples with United States academics
and industry partners.

Within the immediate Caribbean region, Guyana is one of the few
countries to have used specimen-based information to devise a protected area
system for the country. While that country is rich in biodiversity, only one
square mile area, the Kaieteur Falls National Park is protected. The
Smithsonian Institution, in conjunction with the Centre for Biodiversity at
the University of Guyana, is compiling information to assist in the estab-
lishment of a protected area system in Guyana. The goal is to assemble data from plant and animal spec-
imens from museums around the world and to combine the data with recent collection information to produce recom-
endations for the establishment of protected areas. In addition,
these data are to be used as a basis for monitoring the health of the protected areas. The World Bank is also assisting
the Government of Guyana in establishing and maintaining a
protected area system by funding a pilot project. The World
Bank-funded study demonstrates that specimen-based research is proving valuable to the provision of answers to bio-
diversity questions and that only by involving local scientists
and the global scientific community can pressing conserva-
tion problems be effectively addressed.

Given the biodiversity that exists in the Caribbean region, it would be useful to undertake research and development
activities and documentation of local/endemic species and
their traditional uses, as a first step towards their preserva-
tion and sustainable exploitation. Several programmes exist that may be used as models for collections resources.
It will also be useful to pay close attention to the policies
that regulate access to genetic resources and the impli-
cations of these trends for effective benefit-sharing
arrangements. Governments and NGOs can help
ensure that the policies developed by nations to regu-
late access meet conservation and development
objectives. These may be achieved by:

(i) promoting the inclusion in access regula-
tions of a requirement to obtain prior
informed consent of local communities;
(ii) the establishment of simple “one stop
shopping” review and permitting offices
for the issuance of access approval; and
(iii) the elaboration of “certification” sys-
tems to guarantee that the collection
of genetic and biochemical samples
within countries is undertaken in a
manner consistent with the letter of
the access regulations and the
intent of the CBD.

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THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: THE ROAD TO JOHANNESBURG 2002

In order to advance the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS POA) in the subregion, a meeting of representatives of the SIDS of the Caribbean and of regional and regionally-based organizations, convened at the Subregional Headquarters of ECLAC for the Caribbean, on 7 March 2001. The meeting was directed towards two major objectives, namely, to review the status of implementation of the Joint Work Programme (JWP) adopted in 1997 and the development of an updated version, even as the region prepared for Johannesburg 2002.

The Joint Work Programme under review, comprising some 130 concrete activities extrapolated from the SIDS POA, was adopted by the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the SIDS POA which convened in Barbados in November 1997. In adopting an updated version of the JWP, attention was given to the few outstanding elements of the 1997 prototype, to the extent that they remained relevant, as well as to the new socio-economic elements that were incorporated into the "SIDS process" in explicitly operational terms, by the twenty second special session of the United Nations General Assembly which convened in September 1999. These elements include poverty, unemployment, capital markets, trade and investment and complemented the almost exclusively environmental focus of the Programme of Action. Attention was also given to issues such as those related to crime, including the illicit traffic and use of drugs, which are also recognized to impinge on the sustainable development prospects of SIDS of the Caribbean, among others.

At the 1997 Ministerial Meeting, an Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG) comprising some two dozen regional and regionally based agencies, including a number of agencies of the UN system, was formally endorsed as a primary mechanism for the implementation of the JWP that was adopted at the same meeting. The incorporation of new elements at this recently convened meeting inevitably led to the expansion of the IACG to encompass agencies with corresponding mandates. The process of development of an updated JWP continues and is expected to be concluded in the near future, as inputs continue to be received from Caribbean SIDS as well as from the agencies mentioned.

In developing a new JWP, Caribbean SIDS also had an eye to Johannesburg 2002, the "ten-year review session" of UNCED, more specifically the implementation of Agenda 21, which will convene in South Africa next year. In taking their cue from the decisions adopted by the twenty-second special session of the United Nations General Assembly, as far as the range of issues to be incorporated into the implementation process of the SIDS POA is concerned, Caribbean SIDS perceive themselves to have adopted a course of action that might well influence the future evolution of that Programme of Action.

With respect to Johannesburg 2002 itself, the process of preparation was outlined. In this regard, an offer from the Government of Cuba to host a subregional preparatory meeting was accepted. This meeting will convene in Havana, on 28-29 June 2001. The decisions adopted at that meeting will then be transmitted to the Regional Preparatory Meeting which will convene in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in a segment immediately following the Thirteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, on 23-24 October 2001. On the basis of an agreement formally concluded between the two organizations, ECLAC and UNEP will jointly provide the secretariat for both the subregional preparatory meeting, as well as its regional counterpart.

At the wider international level, the basic preparatory steps for Johannesburg 2002, comprising actions of a mostly organizational and logistical nature, will be taken in the context of the Tenth Meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-10) which convenes in New York, over the period, 30 April-2 May 2001.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE ECSC

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat is currently providing technical assistance to the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court on its Family Law and Domestic Legal and Judicial Reform Project. The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court is a legal institution, which is shared by the member countries of the OECS. It was established in 1967 by the West Indies Associated States Supreme Court Order No. 223 of 1967 and functions as a superior court of record for nine Member States namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat.

The ECSC project has two major objectives. The first relates to the improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial system in the member countries, which share the ECSC. The second is aimed at the eradication of gender-based inequality both in the content of the law as well as of unequal results of apparently non-discriminatory legal provisions.

In determining the direction of legislative reform, the project will be using, as a guide, the obligations elaborated in the international human rights instruments of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (the Women’s Convention) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The mandate that informs this project may be culled from a number of different sources. The Beijing Platform for Action agreed upon at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) reiterated the need for governments and relevant bodies and organs of the United Nations to work toward eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. More recently, at the Third ECLAC/CDCC Ministerial Conference on Women, in October 1999, delegates canvassed the need to maintain and strengthen the process of review and reform of legislation and of administrative and bureaucratic practices to ensure full compliance with the relevant international human rights conventions, most particularly, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

On the question of violence against women, which is an issue of central concern in the region because of its causative links to gender inequality, Caribbean governments were concerned with ensuring an ongoing review, monitoring and implementation of legislation to counteract and eradicate violence against women. More specifically, the governmental delegates at the Third Ministerial Conference called for the development of appropriate training, advocacy and awareness programmes for judicial, legal, medical, social-sector, educational, media and police personnel, with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of legislation and the fair treatment of female victims.

The primary goals of the ECSC project are to:
- Identify areas for legal reform in laws related to the family and to children, particularly children in difficult circumstances and juvenile offenders;
- Develop model legislation in these areas for consideration by governments;
- Analyse and make recommendations for the strengthening of legal and social services for persons making applications under the relevant Domestic Violence Legislation; and
- Development of a data collection system for reports of domestic violence.

The ECSC project has emphasised inter-agency collaboration and in addition to ECLAC, UNICEF, National Children’s Home (NCH), Action for Children and the OECS secretariat are centrally involved in project planning and implementation. The research, which will inform the national consultations, is being undertaken by a team comprising consultants and personnel from the Law Faculty of the University of the West Indies.

At a meeting held on 13 November 2000, representatives from the offices of the Attorney-General and the national machinery for women from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines endorsed the project.

ECLAC has agreed to provide technical assistance in a number of areas including:

a) The undertaking of an evaluation of the implementation of domestic violence legislation; and

b) The establishment of databases to collect information on domestic violence needed for monitoring, planning and policy development in the judicial, law enforcement and support services agencies.

This project is an important initiative, not only with regard to its intended output namely, the integrated reform of law and social policy and social service delivery but, also, its significance as an initiative in gender mainstreaming, that is, the application of gender analysis and planning to the legal system in the indicated countries.
Social Development

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

Introduction
There are over 500 million persons with disabilities world-wide - or 10 per cent of the global population. Approximately two thirds live in developing countries. In certain developing countries nearly 20 per cent of the general population are in some way disabled. If the impact on their families is taken into account, 50 per cent of the population are affected.

Not surprisingly, many of the disabled are poor. The overwhelming majority - perhaps 80 per cent - live in isolated rural areas. Almost that same percentage lives in areas where supporting services are unavailable. Too often their lives are handicapped by physical and social barriers in society which hamper their full participation. Because of this (this situation is the same in all parts of the world) they often face a life that is segregated and debased. Without help, many will live in isolation and insecurity.

The United Nations has dedicated itself to defending the basic human rights of all persons, including those with disabilities. Through its development work, it has shifted the focus, in ways that have often inspired national legislation and policy-making, from people's disabilities to their abilities. In the 50's the focus became social rehabilitation of the disabled and special attention was mandated for the visually impaired.

Disability is a "restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being." It describes a functional limitation or activity restriction caused by an impairment. Disabilities are descriptions of disturbances in function at the level of the person. Examples of disabilities include difficulty seeing; speaking or hearing; difficulty moving or climbing stairs; and difficulty grasping, reaching, bathing, eating and toileting.

Changing perspectives on disability
Over the course of the United Nations' first half-century, people with disabilities have gone from passively accepting whatever was made available to them to actively asserting strength and confidence in their own abilities to lead self-reliant and independent lives. The following brief history shows how the United Nations' efforts have helped to bring about this transformation.

The 1970s marked a new approach to disability. The concept of human rights for disabled persons began to become more accepted internationally.

In the 1980s numerous efforts were undertaken to improve the situation of the disabled. Many programmes were launched to focus on rehabilitation and prevention and in 1981 experts in the field of disability met at several symposia and conferences. The World Symposium of Disabled Persons was convened in Vienna, Austria, 12 to 23 October of that year.

The 1990s showed a proliferation of action and research, which generated a wealth of information and data on several issues surrounding the question of people living with disabilities. High-income countries particularly, paid much attention to data-gathering and the publication of relevant statistics. This, of course, has widened the horizon of possibilities not only for improvement of life conditions of persons living with disabilities, but also to develop and implement policies, geared towards prevention of disabilities. These disabilities have usually originated from low levels of development and high levels of poverty and the poor social, physical and economic conditions which have prevailed in many countries of the South and sometimes even in pockets of society in countries of the North.

Development planning
Efforts have also been made at the international level to incorporate a "disability perspective" into development planning. Most studies which examine initiatives by governments, however, bemoan the continued lack of policies and procedures designed to secure opportunities for persons with disabilities. Some studies advise that training and development should be built-in elements of projects which aim at social and economic inclusion of disabled persons. Perhaps one should be reminded that the overall changes required in the transition from the previously existing or non-existing situation to one which reflects the new understanding take time as they also require a change of the mind-set and of attitudes which existed before and to some extent still exist today in many parts of the world.

Employment and income
It is often asserted that having a job is more than an income as it brings a sense of dignity and self-worth. While self-directed employment is one option for providing jobs and incomes for disabled persons, employment opportunities have largely been the result of initiatives created by this group of persons themselves. Hardly any initiatives have come from the corporate world or the world of work generally. Some experiences in Caribbean countries with regard to income generation strategies for disabled people are set out by way of illustration.

Institutions in some countries, for example in Grenada and Jamaica, have developed credit-revolving projects which assisted a few disabled persons for some time. In this regard craft projects have been tried in several countries. Guyana launched a hatchery project, for example, and Dominica pursued a venture into the production of PVC furniture. The projects sometimes included skills training and have often revealed satisfaction and increased self-esteem among participants.

However, while all these endeavours are generally very well-intentioned, documentation and evaluation are generally inadequate for purposes of monitoring improvement and advancing success. Dependency on external funding exerts severe pressures on organizational survival. Business management approaches are generally poor and participation and control by disabled persons in the various phases of the projects are often non-existent.

Trinidad and Tobago has an interesting and successful experience with the Rehabilitation Centre in San Fernando. The Centre actually operates a multifaceted training and employment programme for the disabled on a commercial basis. The areas of training and employment are woodwork, garment construction and printing. Some trainees are retained in the Centre's own operations which are 80 per cent self-financed. A credit facility has been established to assist the remainder (and other disabled persons from the wider community) with establishing their own businesses. There are no reports of the involvement of disabled persons in the establishment or management of this operation.
GROUFS: THE CASE OF DISABLED PERSONS

The Port of Spain Independent Living Centre, also in Trinidad and Tobago, undertook a successful training/human development project, which focused on confidence-building and advocacy. Action in this programme was controlled by disabled persons themselves. Most of the participants were directed towards waged employment rather than towards self-employment.

In 1993 the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Social Services of Trinidad and Tobago drafted a Policy Statement on Persons with Disabilities. The main objective defined in the Policy Statement was that of integrating the disabled into the mainstream society by inculcating self-reliance, encouraging them to participate in the socio-economic development of the country to provide a better quality of life. The policy addresses the preventive measures necessary to reduce the disabling effects of many impairments and the rehabilitative services that are to be offered to the disabled, the provision of trained staff and physical facilities such as special accommodation and equipment.

The poverty connection

The regular receipt of an income generally determines the economic and social status of a disabled person. This is applicable whether the person is poor or not. As suggested earlier, on the basis of several studies reviewed, most disabled persons are found in poor societies and most disabled persons are themselves poor.

Information on the relationship between being disabled and having access to an income through work, has been often captured under indicators such as work and employment. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has contributed significantly to the training of disabled persons for the world of work. Most disabled persons who are trained become self-employed, despite the many obstacles to succeed. An observation made is that there has been considerably more experience in supporting entrepreneurship with disabled persons in low-middle income countries than in high-income countries. The focus of attention by advocacy of disabled people in high-income countries has given primary emphasis to pursuing wage employment and virtually no attention to self-directed employment.

The situation in low-income countries is different for disabled people. They face tremendous challenges in generating sufficient income to guarantee basic survival, let alone in the pursuit of a quality of life that is taken for granted in high-income countries. Yet, the very challenges have also led to much creativity. Wage employment has been an option for very few. If they are to become financially independent, the only real option for most is to seek some form of small business enterprise.

Consequently, self-directed employment as an agenda for action has been high on the list of priorities of low-income regions.

Seven main strategies to assist disabled people to become engaged in self-directed employment were identified in a study on low-income countries. Five of these include:

- * Create awareness on the possibility of becoming economically independent;
- * Provide technical skill training for specific types of work;
- * Offer training in business management and entrepreneurial skills;
- * Facilitate financial support through loans or grants programmes;
- * Marketing assistance through provision of market research and support in marketing.

Nevertheless, disabled people face discrimination in all countries and in all spheres of life. Well-intentioned supporters often end up being unhelpful. Political and policy issues often serve to frustrate opportunity. On the bright side, research projects indicate that there is a growing amount of experience by disabled people’s organizations in developing and operating projects leading to self-directed employment. This gives hope for future planning. As countries see gains in enabling disabled people to be economically integrated, they may also take the steps required to ensure that disabled people are involved in planning.

Governments have been urged by the United Nations General Assembly to show their commitment to improving the situation of persons with disabilities, inter alia, by:

(a) Establishing an appropriate governmental mechanism to be responsible for policy relating to persons with disabilities and overall coordination;

(b) Addressing disability issues within integrated social development policies linked to other socio-economic issues and providing preventive and rehabilitative measures and an equalization of opportunities, with the ultimate objective of facilitating the full integration of persons with disabilities into society;

(c) Where appropriate, creating new or strengthening existing high-level national coordinating committees or other similar bodies in accordance with the Guidelines for the Establishment and Development of National Coordinating Committees on Disability or Similar Bodies, adopted at Beijing;

(d) Supporting the development of organizations of persons with disabilities and using the body of knowledge accumulated by persons with disabilities or their representatives in decision-making processes;

(e) Integrating, where possible, disability components into technical assistance and technical cooperation programmes.

Statistics

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has concluded that there has been a steady increase in the statistical study of disability by governments and other organizations. The Guidelines for the Establishment and Development of National Coordinating Committees on Disability Statistics Data Base (DISTAT); promoting the inclusion of disability topics in national surveys and programmes; and expanding inter-regional technical advisory services and training programmes.
ability by governments and other organizations and a substantial increase in the application of national disability statistics for policy formulation and programme planning. Areas identified for national, subregional, regional and international support include training workshops and international conferences; regular updating of the International Disability Statistics Data Base (DISTAT); promoting the inclusion of disability topics in national surveys and programmes and expanding inter regional technical advisory services and training programmes.

Statistical data in Belize shows that disabled women outnumber their male counterparts. The data also suggests that blindness and amputation of a lower limb are the most common forms of disabili-

y among women in Belize, each accounting for about 13 per cent of the disabled female population. It is also reported that five out of every six amputations carried out in the country are due to diabetes and that most blindness in the country is associated with the disease. Furthermore the disabled people in this country tend to be more numerous among the poor. The 1991 Census reports a total of 6,414 disabled women in Belize, or about 6 per cent of the female population. Amazingly therefore, or perhaps not so amaz-

ingly, blindness and limb amputations prevail more among women than among men.

According to the 1997 Belize study 21.7 per cent of the disabled population receive assistance; the number is reported to have increased in 1999. However, the National Human Development Report of 1999 states that only 15 per cent of the disabled population was receiving assistance. Women (and children) dominated the category in 1999, whereas men received more assistance the previous year.

Vulnerable groups

It is important to realise that there are categories of people with disabilities which are particularly vulnerable and are subject to more acute forms of discrimination and abuse. In this regard, specific attention needs to be paid to the rights of women with disabilities, disabled children, disabled people living in deprived areas, and elderly people with disabilities especially those who live alone.

In terms of vulnerability, one of the most important areas requiring attention is access to information. The nature and extent of the barriers which pre-

vent disabled people from accessing information range from inadequate transport systems to par-

ticipate in public information forums, to public communication systems which fail to provide information in braille or for people using sign language. These barriers can prevent people with disabilities from being informed, access-

ing services, and participating in the main-

stream of society. These barriers are not always obvious to able bodied decision makers and policy specialists.

The most vulnerable group in some coun-

ctries, for example, in Belize, tends to be poor, disabled women.

Inclusion and integration

The question of inclusion and integration has been referred to earlier in this docu-

ment and appears more and more in rele-

vant literature. Inclusion means, for exam-

ple, to:

• Educate children with disabilities and those without in the same schools;
• Provide services, support and advice for parents of all children in regular settings;
• Train and support regular education for teachers and administrators;
• Allow children with disabilities to follow the same schedules as other children;
• Encourage friendships and mutual respect among all children, with and without disabilities;
• Teach all children to understand and accept differences, be it race, colour, sex, ethnicity, language, nationality, social origin, religion, dis-

ability, property, birth or other status.

It goes without saying that for social inclusion, and therefore integration, of children with disabilities to become a reality, several measures should be taken and adaptations made to facilitate such process.

In 2001 the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reports that an esti-

mated 120-150 million of the world’s disabled persons are children (0-18 years) and that these children are predominantly living in low-income regions.

One child in 10 is born with or acquires a physical, mental, sensory, intel-

lectual or psychological disability due to preventable disease, congenital causes, malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, accidents and injuries, armed conflict and landmines. Five hundred thousand (500,000) children lose some or part of their vision due to Vitamin A deficiency. Iodine defi-

ciency disease (IDD) is a leading cause of mental retardation and physical disability.

At least 140,000 children become disabled by polio toil. For every child killed by armed conflict, three are injured and permanently disabled.

Quality of life

Not much of the strategies for “inclusion” have been undertaken in the Caribbean or in the developing world generally. The willingness of gov-

ernments, particularly in developing countries, to grant some priority to improvement of the quality of life of people with disabilities is not appa-

rent in many countries. Nor has the status of persons with disabilities improved significantly in the developed world either. The following infor-

mation illustrates.

No similar studies have been undertaken in the Caribbean. However, a study carried out in the Anglophone Caribbean for an IDRC publication, examined the situation of persons with disabilities in 12 Anglophone Caribbean countries. Since none of the countries interviewed in the research had official statistics relevant to the size of the vulnerable group of disabled persons, the accepted international minimum of 10 per cent of disability in a country was used. Sources of information are unofficial in most instances, especially as none of the countries reviewed possessed official data or statistics or other specific information relative to the popula-

tion of disabled persons.

The findings show that the conditions for persons with disabilities are generally inadequate. Access to education is poor and special education almost non-existent. The law has made very limited provisions for people with disabilities. While the State is primarily responsible for providing health, education and other welfare services for all, such services and any other service organized and provided for disabled persons are provided by non-governmental organizations, particularly the Church.

The study furthermore notes that literacy levels are especially low among the disabled population in, for example, Dominica. The hearing, visually and intellectually impaired persons have virtually no access to education-

al facilities.

In most countries of the region, the world of work and employment is practically inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Perhaps persons with disabilities may wish to face the challenge to exploit the abilities they do possess to their maximum capacity and utilize them for self-employment and/or the development of their own small business. In other words, they could be challenged to become their own boss in an area they have been able to develop and excel.
DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL STATISTICAL DATABASES AND A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX FOR SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Background
In 1995, at the World Summit for Social Development, Caribbean governments adopted the goals of poverty eradication, employment creation and social integration of marginalised and vulnerable groups as part of their national agendas. Six years later, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean is continuing to assist its member countries to successfully attain these goals, reiterated at the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, 6 September 2000. Fundamental to the attainment of these goals, however, is the availability of reliable social data for use by policy makers, social planners and researchers in the subregion. As well, through a series of technical assistance programmes it was ascertained that it was necessary to strengthen the capacity of member countries in the analysis of social policy formulation. It is in this context, therefore, that the project to develop Social Statistical Databases and a Methodological Approach for the Development of a Social Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States has its genesis. Key stakeholders in the region have enunciated their support for both activities having noted that for far too long social policy decisions have been formulated in the absence of concrete data.

Project objectives
The main objective of the project is to improve the social conditions of persons living in ECLAC/CDCC member countries by strengthening the capacity of policy makers to formulate, implement and evaluate social policies. It is complementary to several statistical projects currently ongoing in the region and will enable regional governments and researchers to access a comprehensive database of social statistics of the ECLAC/CDCC member countries. To facilitate this process, the project will generate, among other things: (1) fully searchable databases of socio-demographic statistics for all ECLAC/CDCC countries, housed and/or linked through the ECLAC/CDCC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; (2) an integrated data collection protocol on violence against women; (3) a published Compendium of Social Statistics; (4) a website for dissemination on-line of selected socio-demographic data sets; (5) a methodology for construction of a Social Vulnerability Index (SVI); and a manual for use in the construction and review of the SVI.

A methodological approach for the development of a SVI in SIDS
As a first activity, ECLAC, Port of Spain, hosted a meeting of experts to brief them on the project and to gain insight from their experiences to inform the project’s development.

Against the backdrop of the existence of poor data and meaningless indices available to professionals in the field, Professor Elsie Le Franc shared her concerns on current indicators being used to measure human development. For instance, it is her view that the ‘access’ variable does not speak to the actual availability of facilities, the quality of service or its outcome to fully assess a given situation. Also noted was that, while using a ‘gender lens’ to analyse employment status and security, it did nothing more than disclose the gender distribution and did not speak to equality. Therefore, when looking at human development, she suggested that, for example, one should look at the resilience of a people, i.e., the capacity to effectively respond to shocks to the economy. This would lead to the development of indicators that would inform of the degree and extent of economic diversity, the flexibility of knowledge acquisition and the psycho-social values associated to this, the management of human resources and technical innovation. Indicators to analyse physical and human capital investment, social investment, the existence and components of social capital, social security, stability of the level of crime, and population instability such as the outward movement of labour and why were also seen as being important. It was further stated that the development of a Social Vulnerability Index required an indicator of exposure to external threat.

In expounding on the concept of social vulnerability and its dimensions, Dr. Godfrey Bernard posited several questions including, “Does social vulnerability lead to vulnerability of the social system? What is the system? Is it an entity with specific parts and roles that tie into each other in an ordered way to sustain and promote survival of the system? And, does vulnerability in the system, therefore, represent a threat to the system?” He proposed that the nation was the system containing several subsystems that promoted the survival of the nation for example, the family, NGOs, health and education organizations etc. This line of thinking led him to employ the SWOT Analysis, i.e., Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat, to analyse vulnerability and further, to operationalise weaknesses and threats to combine them to explore social vulnerability. He also proposed to measure vulnerability on a scale that ranged from 0 to infinity. In the context of each of the subsystems, therefore, if one were low on the threat and weakness scale, i.e., that susceptibility to both was minimal, it would be considered to be high on the strength and opportunity scale and thus the degree of vulnerability will be low. He also stated that the measure used to speak to threats to the subsystems should be standard across the board to develop a composite index, perhaps percentages or proportions, or a linear combination of measures.

Continued on Pg 18
Development of the Social Statistical Databases

Serge Poulard, an ECLAC IT professional from Santiago, acknowledged the different expressions of vulnerability in the Caribbean and stated that the ECLAC/CDCC Project provided the platform to showcase these expressions. He envisioned that the Social Statistical Databases should consist of three databases, the first being an Information Retrieval System that would be available to the public, housed on the World Wide Web. The second, an Information Analysis Database, he suggested could be a mega-set of the first, would comprise additional variables to enable useful analyses and comparisons but would not be available to the public. The third database, an Information Planning System, would include variables to enable the measurement of the efficiency of various programmes and projects.

Another IT specialist, Ms. Marcia Mason, communicated her concerns which she advised should be addressed in the early phase of the project. Because of lack of standardization of the data due to the various sources of the information and variability of the data, Ms. Mason envisaged problems in defining the data and data fields contained in the Meta-data Dictionary. Also indicated was that research into laws governing information in all project countries should be undertaken as this would impact on the ability to obtain the data. Further, the need to determine the starting point for the collection of data and proper planning for its collection was stated to be of utmost importance. She advised that the IT consultant needed to be on board the project at the start-up phase to inform, for example, on questionnaire formulation, which impacts on the type and quality of data obtained.

Experience in the field

The meeting heard from other experts from PAHO/WHO, CAREC, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Regional Census Coordinator on their experience in the field of Statistics, working with indicators and in building databases. Some of the problems and challenges identified were: the inability to obtain data from countries in a timely manner; inconsistencies with the quality of data collected; the ‘spotiness’ of the data; the non-use of prescribed software for analysis; lack of common data categories and classifications; and the variability of concepts and definitions which impacted on the capture of information and the incomparability of the data. The Regional Census Coordinator reported, however, that between 75-80 per cent of the Census data were comparable as common questionnaires were used. While the experts agreed that the census was a ‘goldmine’ of specific social indicators and facilitated verification of sample data, they maintained that standardisation of data for the project was necessary to allow comparability.

Issues of concern

Participants lauded the objectives of the project and its timeliness and considered the SVI a tool for country and even intra-country comparisons. The project planners were reminded, however, that some concepts could not be measured and thus the need for qualitative indicators as opposed to quantitative ones in some instances and further, the need for software capable of measuring quantitative data qualitatively. In this vein, it was noted that the importance accorded some indices was misplaced, as they were not useful beyond their ranking ability and, therefore, the need to be mindful of the types of indicators being developed or culled for this project.

Concerns were expressed with regard to the quality of data in the Caribbean, the capacity of CSO personnel and offices and more specifically, how these would affect the support needed for this project. In particular, among the troubling issues voiced were missing data and the anticipated statistical challenges presented to policy-makers in interfacing with the databases. In this regard, it was perceived that there would be need to enhance statistical literacy in CSOs, line Ministries, and for policy-makers in order to fully utilise the project’s output.

Participants lamented the fact that regionally, it appeared that information was not a political priority. However, statisticians present at the meeting gave assurances that in the region, statistics were at a revolutionary stage and the thrust to enhance statistical literacy and the quality of statistics was already taking place. While the issues of confidentiality and legislation surrounding the release of data were reiterated as issues of concern, it was learnt that a primary constraint in releasing data was, however, ‘political will’, which needed to be addressed.

The way forward

Internal training of ECLAC/CDCC staff involved in the project has already begun and has so far covered the use of the SPSS statistical software being used on the project. Training will continue in Social Policy Analysis and plans are afoot to have a training workshop for regional technocrats and policy makers convened by year’s end. The ECLAC Subregional Office in Port of Spain is currently working on the concerns as expressed by the experts at the meeting, such as enquiries into legislation governing data and the securing of the data. As well, ECLAC staff members from the Social Development Unit working on the project will soon welcome the IT Consultant and Data Manager, to further assist in the project.
WELCOME TO MR. NOEL WATSON

Focus wishes to welcome Mr. Noel Watson, a Jamaican, to the United Nations ECLAC Port-of-Spain office. As an Economic Affairs Officer, his work over the next few months will involve analysing trade related issues in the Caribbean including: the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States; Caribbean economic integration; and CARICOM trade with the Netherlands Antilles. He is no stranger to ECLAC, however, having worked in 1999 on an ECLAC study which looked at the impact of trade liberalisation on Government finances in Jamaica.

Prior to this engagement, he worked on several trade-related projects for the CARICOM Secretariat, including conducting cost-benefit analyses of the impact of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy on the economies of Belize, Dominica and Suriname. He has also completed extensive research on issues relating to the free movement of services and capital and the rights of establishment in Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago and the OECS countries.

In Jamaica, Mr. Watson has operated as a Management Consultant and a businessman. He lived and studied in the United Kingdom and Canada for many years. In the United Kingdom he completed his undergraduate degree in Economics and in Canada he completed a Masters and Ph.D. in Economics, specialising in trade. His Ph.D. dissertation provided an economic evaluation of the net benefits of the Kingston Free Zone to the Jamaican economy.

Mr. Watson has extensive experience in the financial sector having operated as a banking executive in a Jamaican commercial bank where he was in charge of marketing and research for four years. He also managed a Microfinance Programme that distributed over 100,000 loans primarily to female entrepreneurs.
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In 1975, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) — then known as ECLA — established the Caribbean Development Cooperation Committee (CDCC) as a permanent subsidiary body at the governmental level. The secretariat of the CDCC is provided by the secretariat of ECLAC, acting principally through the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The CDCC functions as an intergovernmental organization and meets annually at the technical level and every other year at the ministerial level. Its operational activities are carried out under the regular ECLAC work programme for the Caribbean, which includes economic and development planning, demography, economic surveys, environment, international trade and trade-in-services, information for development statistics, sustainable development of small island developing States, science and technology, women in development, tourism, training and assistance with the management of national economies.