



SDG MASTERCLASS

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ADDRESSES
UN MASTERCLASS FOR TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO PARLIAMENT

TATT SURVEY

TATT CONDUCTS DIGITAL INCLUSION
SURVEY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT

ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT ENTERS INTO
FORCE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN

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About us

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

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Please see our contact details on the back cover of this newsletter.

International Days

3 May

World Press Freedom Day

15 May

International Day of Families

21 May

World Day for Cultural Diversity for
Dialogue and Development

22 May

International Day for Biological Diversity

Upcoming Events

28 May

ECLAC participates in the session
Innovation in water and sanitation
management within the framework of
the IV Latin American and Caribbean
Forum on Housing and Habitat

31 May

Technical meeting on national
accounts data requirements for the
International Comparison Program
(ICP), Cycle 2021 - the Caribbean

8 Jun

8 June 2021 - Preparing for the 2021
High-level Political Forum (HLPF)





DIGITAL INCLUSION SURVEY

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

*Starting Saturday April 17th, 2021,
6000 households from communities across
the country will be chosen to participate.*

Find us on:    

TATT conducts digital inclusion survey in Trinidad and Tobago

The Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT), in collaboration with the Central Statistical Office (CSO), commenced a national Digital Inclusion Survey on 17 April 2021.

The survey aims to measure the digital divide, that is, the gap that exists between persons who have access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and those who do not.

Data will also be collected during the survey to assess factors necessary for the efficient use of ICTs, such as skill, motivation and trust. This initiative is one of many arising from Trinidad and Tobago's National ICT Plan 2018-2022 and TATT's Universal Service Framework for Telecommunications Services in Trinidad and Tobago and The Telecommunications (Universal Service) Regulations.

As part of the data collection exercise, approximately 6000 households will be surveyed from various communities in the country. All members from the selected households, ages five years and older, with the permission of a parent or guardian where applicable, will be eligible to participate in the survey.

The information collected from this survey, which will be conducted over a three month period, will be used to inform TATT's policies, towards improving ICT access in key geographic areas and to address issues affecting population groups at risk of being digitally excluded. The survey results will also form part of the national statistics of Trinidad and Tobago. ■



Photo: ECLAC Executive Secretary Alicia Bárcena

ECLAC Executive Secretary addresses UN Masterclass for Trinidad and Tobago Parliament

The United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) recently organized a Masterclass series on the High-Level Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the T&T Parliament, with key UN personnel sharing information and providing clarification on this important initiative.

Addressing the opening of the Masterclass was ECLAC Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, who congratulated the Parliament for requesting the refresher on SDGs, noting the critical role Parliaments have in the implementation, follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

Bárcena said, "It is you who enact laws, adopt budgets, monitor accountability and play a strategic role in ensuring that your government effectively implements important global commitments such as these, at the national level."

The Executive Secretary identified that achievement of the SDGs were hindered by many challenges, including the lack of an institutional framework for coordinating SDG implementation; limited data for planning and monitoring progress in national development; capacity limitation in long-term development planning; and inadequate development financing. She described all of these as requiring an Act of Parliament for real progress to be achieved.

Explaining some of ECLAC's work, Bárcena said, "We are often described as the region's think tank; we support the sustainable development process in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) through the offering of a range of services and activities, such as research and data collection towards comprehensive multisectoral analysis; the provision of technical and policy advice to

governments; shaping regional and subregional perspectives on major global issues; training and assessment in damage and loss; and in the Caribbean, support for implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)."

Most recently, Bárcena stated, ECLAC has undertaken in-depth research on the multisectoral impact on LAC of COVID-19, and has issued a series of publications addressing these challenges. She invited the Parliament to review *The Caribbean Outlook*, an ECLAC flagship publication devoted uniquely to exploring the issues and challenges of principal concern to the countries of the subregion. ■

•See the following related article.



MASTER ON THE DEVELO

FOR THE P
TRINIDAD



*The
Hummingbird*

ECLAC Caribbean participates in
UN MASTERCLASS FOR TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO PARLIAMENT

MASTERCLASS ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PARLIAMENT OF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

While ECLAC Executive Secretary addressed the Masterclass series, another presenter was ECLAC Caribbean's Deputy Director, Dillon Alleyne, who shared his perspective on decent work and economic growth: the post-pandemic reality.

READ MORE



ECLAC Caribbean participates in UN Masterclass for Trinidad and Tobago Parliament

The Hummingbird sat down for a virtual one-on-one Q&A session with him to discuss his presentation to the T&T Parliament.

Hummingbird: Mr. Alleyne, thank you for taking the time to have this virtual chat with us. We understand the Masterclass was well-received by the Members of Parliament. Can you share some background on why the Parliament was the center of attention in this initiative please?

Alleyne: Parliaments, in general, have a critical role to play in the implementation, follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Parliaments enact laws, adopt budgets, and monitor accountability. They play a strategic role in ensuring that Governments effectively implement global commitments at the national level. In fact, many challenges in SDG achievement, such as a lack of an institutional mechanism for coordinating SDG implementation, the paucity of data for planning and monitoring progress in national development, capacity limitation in long-term development planning, and inadequate development financing, require an act of Parliament to be addressed.

Hummingbird: What are some of the key points you shared with the T&T Parliament?

Alleyne: My presentation was entitled, "Decent Work and Sustainable Economic Growth: the post-pandemic reality". The focus was on challenges arising from COVID-19 and other structural factors, such as the new economy, lack of sustainable economic growth, high unemployment and low labour productivity in the Caribbean in general, and Trinidad and Tobago in particular. I also spoke about the likely impacts of COVID-19 on the decent work agenda, including (1) employment creation; (2) supporting workers' rights ; (3) improving social protection; and (4) the need for social dialogue among the stakeholders in the labor market.

Hummingbird: Speaking of the pandemic, how does COVID-19 affect the issue of decent work for the Caribbean and elsewhere?

Alleyne: The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a health shock, has imposed social, economic and environmental consequences on a global scale. In the Caribbean, it has exposed many

inequalities in a variety of areas. While the virus does not discriminate between rich and poor, the poorest and most marginalized members of society have been most significantly affected, due to the weakening of their coping strategies (UNDRR, 2020). I emphasized that while we must therefore address the immediate challenges to keep our citizens safe, and to support those in need, we must also look beyond COVID-19 as we contemplate what decent work means, given the vulnerability of our societies and what appears to be new challenges and opportunities for the world of work. I believe that these challenges will multiply in the post COVID-19 world.

Hummingbird: Before we go further, can you please explain the concept of decent work?

Alleyne: According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), decent work involves opportunities for work that are productive and delivers a fair income. There is security in the workplace and social protection for families. It means better prospects for personal development and social integration. It includes freedom for people to express



Photo of Trinidad and Tobago Parliament courtesy Loop News



According to the ILO, the pandemic is expected to have a devastating impact on global employment..



- Dillon Alleyne - Deputy Director, ECLAC Caribbean

their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives. It is equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all women and men.

Hummingbird: On the issue of gender equality during the pandemic, much is being discussed on its impact on women in particular. How have women been coping during the last year?

Alleyne: In the case of Trinidad and Tobago inequalities in the labour market persist, despite closing the gap somewhat in recent years. Addressing gender inequalities is key to assuring recovery post COVID-19, since the vulnerability of women has increased significantly in the wake of the pandemic. Women occupy the majority of service-related jobs in such sectors as tourism, and also represent the majority of those working in the informal sector. The higher unemployment rate of women has implications for the independence of women and levels of poverty.

Hummingbird: In addition to women, how would you describe the pandemic's impact on the labour market as a whole, given the "lockdowns" imposed in many countries, including T&T?

Alleyne: We do not have actual data for 2020 but a few things are already clear. According to the ILO, the pandemic is expected to have a devastating impact on global employment, with up to 400 million full-time jobs lost and another 340 million jobs at risk of being lost by the end of 2020. From the perspective of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the global pandemic presents tremendous challenges for achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all. The health-related, economic and social impacts of COVID-19 have also put a significant number of workers worldwide at risk of losing their long-

term livelihoods.

Hummingbird: For T&T, what do you think is the impact of COVID-19 on decent work?

Alleyne: I'm glad we are finally speaking of T&T specifically. In a conference held in May 2019 called the "Future of Work in Trinidad and Tobago: Why does decent work matter?", many key stakeholders committed themselves to promote decent work and recognized the link to sustainable growth. The new economy emerging post COVID-19 will transform the world of work for this country. It will be critical to engage in the training and retraining of workers. Globally, the portfolios of Ministries of Labour are changing. Traditional issues such as minimum wages, youth employment, workers' rights and retirement benefits remain important; however, areas such as self-employment and the gig economy (which is based on flexible, temporary, or freelance jobs, often involving connecting with clients or customers through an online platform), the green and blue economy, migration, climate change, environmental sustainability and responses to natural disasters are challenging the traditional boundaries of labour administration. In addition, technological forces such as the Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence have been changing the labour market. These influences signal both threats and new opportunities for labour and small enterprise development, and for the way in which the various stakeholders will interact in T&T.

Hummingbird: What do you believe is an important step towards resilient recovery from the pandemic?

Alleyne: It is important to note that the decisions taken to kick-start the crisis recovery will have dramatic long-term implications for the world of work.

Historically, some major crises have indeed reshaped policies and societies in ways that helped protect and advance the interests of workers, thereby reducing inequality and insecurity. According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), these major shocks have often tested institutions and practices, and reinforced demands for social protection and higher wages. Investing to enhance the resilience of national and community-based health systems is critical. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed inequalities in access to and the quality of care and underlined the value of investing in universal health coverage. It has reinforced the importance of including people with disabilities and underlying health conditions in the design of multisectoral policies and plans to manage their risks. Given the growing frequency and intensity of disasters, more needs to be done to allocate necessary resources and develop capacity to prepare to build forward better in all sectors.

Hummingbird: This has been very insightful, thank you Mr. Alleyne. Surely the T&T Parliament has even more food for thought now. Any final words to share with Hummingbird readers?

Alleyne: Sure. It must be said that with the persistence of the pandemic, the asymmetries in the availability of vaccines and uncertainty about their effectiveness, along with the uneven and divergent paces of economic reactivation, much doubt has been cast on the speed and sustainability of the economic recovery. It is, therefore, important to extend the packages of fiscal measures in 2021 given the fragility of the economic recovery process, and to continue mitigating the negative social, productive and economic effects of the pandemic. ■



Guyana engages in talks about regional energy corridor with Brazil, French Guiana and Suriname

The government of Guyana is in talks with some of its neighbours to create a regional energy corridor, linking Guyana's energy infrastructure to those of Brazil, French Guiana and Suriname.

"The strategy of Guyana is to become a major player in the energy corridor of Brazil, Guyana and Suriname," President Mohamed Irfaan Ali said, during the inaugural virtual diaspora conference.

Recent hydrocarbon discoveries in the Guyana-Suriname basin include significant gas reserves with potential, which has renewed interest in the corridor. Guyana intends to pipe gas to shore from the Liza field to substitute its current oil-fired power generation. The Liza field was the first significant oil find offshore Guyana.

The government is also operationalizing plans for renewable energy projects to support its intention of creating a cleaner energy mix. The energy corridor would see the countries teaming up to share power based on a collective understanding of their needs and ability to supply.

President Ali said the operationalization of this plan would require the development of local knowledge and capacity in the area of logistics.

"Our own demand locally and the spinoff of our own investment that will see more export, would require greater logistics planning. The integration of Suriname and Brazil, creation of that new corridor, making Guyana an important shipping hub for the region, requires careful planning and

development of a logistics hub and industry. And that by itself brings a stream of benefit. It's not only what is happening in Guyana," he said.

"Later this year, we are expecting to have a meeting between Brazil, Guyana and Suriname to look at the energy corridor because as you're aware, Suriname also has a lot of development that is taking place in the oil and gas sector, and we have to look at what the net output would be, and what it means in supplying Northern Brazil, and in supplying French Guiana. So, our energy mix would be broad and comprehensive beyond our shores."

Additionally, in his address during the ceremonial opening of the 12th parliament in February, the president said the government had already commenced discussions with its neighbours on this matter.



The project had been in talks for several years, as the Inter-American Development Bank conducted baseline and pre-feasibility studies in 2016 and 2017 on what it calls the 'Arco Norte Electrical Interconnection.'

The Bank stated that the main benefits of such a project would be the lower-cost generation for all countries involved; potentially lowered electricity prices for consumers in Guyana and Suriname; more secure supply; reduced carbon dioxide emissions and export earnings, especially for Guyana. ■



Anguilla Is Open for Tourism Again

Anguilla has officially reopened its borders for tourism. The island began welcoming back guests on 25 May, following a month-long closure after the identification of a virus cluster. The island says that cluster was successfully contained.

So what do travelers need to know? If you're fully vaccinated, you'll only have to stay in place for seven days, nor will you need proof of health insurance.

All visitors, vaccinated and unvaccinated, will still have to submit a negative PCR test result within three to five days before arrival on the island.

Multi-generational families and groups with a mix of unvaccinated and vaccinated people will have to stay in place for 10 or 14 days. The island has also opened up spa, gym and cosmetology services if parties are vaccinated. All travelers still need to apply for entry approval to Anguilla.

All of these protocols will run through the end of June, after which time Anguilla will require all those who are eligible for vaccination to be vaccinated in order to enter the island.

Beginning 1 July, vaccinated visitors won't have to be tested on arrival (though a pre-arrival test will still be required), and they won't need to stay in place or pay entry fees, among other changes. ■



Escazú Agreement enters into force in Latin America and the Caribbean

Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have reaffirmed the importance of the first regional environmental treaty and their commitment to protecting the planet and the people who defend it. The Escazú Agreement, known formally as the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, entered into force on 22 April 2021, significantly, the same date on which International Mother Earth Day is commemorated.

Having reached the required number of ratifications on 22 January 2021, all of the Escazú Agreement's provisions have now gone into effect. To date, 24 countries in the region have signed the accord and 12 have already ratified it, becoming States Parties to the treaty.

On the day of celebrations organized virtually by ECLAC – the UN regional commission in charge of the Agreement's Secretariat – authorities from the governments that have signed and ratified this legal instrument along with representatives of international organizations, the public and civil society, reaffirmed the importance of this agreement, which was first adopted on 4 March 2018 in the Costa Rican district that bears its name after six years of work and an open, transparent and inclusive negotiation process.

The event was inaugurated by ECLAC's Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, and Epsy Campbell, Vice President of Costa Rica. Subsequently, a high-level dialogue took place that included the participation of António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General (via a message); Mohamed Irfaan Ali,

President of Guyana; and foreign ministers, ministers and high-level authorities from Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Uruguay.

In her welcome remarks, Bárcena emphasized that the Escazú Agreement pays homage to Mother Earth and with it, the region demonstrates its commitment to protecting the planet and those who, by defending it, care for our lives and our future. "The Escazú Agreement compels us to reflect on the close link between human rights and the construction of a more sustainable, inclusive and integrating development. It offers us a path of dialogue for advancing on implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at this very complex time that the



region, and world, are living through. Ultimately, it guides our responses to be able to build better.”

Bárcena indicated that in order to address the planet’s current challenges and build a new future and a transformative recovery with equality and sustainability, it was essential to strengthen the rule of law, bolster more participatory democracy, safeguard human rights and maintain peace, preventing social conflicts while our productive structure undergoes transformation. “It is necessary to recover politics as an instrument of change to generate public goods and lasting compacts. Compacts that invite the broadest and most diverse participation by social actors and that lay the foundation for building a welfare state. We must tread together the path to sustainable development.”

As the first country to ratify the Agreement, Guyana’s President Ali, meanwhile, emphasized that collective action is necessary for the protection of the environment. He described the ratification of the Escazú Agreement as a significant milestone in the region and highlighted its importance to overall development and sustainability. He noted that the agreement will reinforce democracy, transparency, accountability and effectiveness in dealing with an environment affected by climate change. “The Caribbean and Latin America should feel a sense of collective pride on account of its continued sterling environmental leadership as exemplified by this ‘agreement.’”

He added that the effects of the pandemic and the exacerbation of the global climate crisis, highlight the need

for an arrangement tailored to the population’s specific requirements. “The climate crisis represents an existential threat to humanity. Climate change characterized by extreme weather events, rising sea levels, landslides, floods, drought and biodiversity loss, are inflicting losses on our economies and our peoples’ livelihoods.”

The day of celebrations on the entry into force of the Escazú Agreement concluded, after three panels that addressed the history of the treaty, in which participants recounted the journey involving six years of meetings and negotiations; the role of young people in the Agreement; and environmental defenders and the Escazú Agreement. ■



New ECLAC Caribbean study discusses transfer pricing risk in the oil and gas sector

Many small developing economies are endowed with mineral natural resources. However, these countries often lack the capacity to monetize their natural resources and therefore usually engage multinational companies for this purpose. Fiscal incentives are frequently used as the primary tool to attract foreign direct investment to these mineral natural resource-based, particularly hydrocarbon-based, economies.

Small developing economies often compete with each other for this foreign investment by offering deeper and broader incentives, which frequently place the host country in a disadvantageous position. This scenario is often referred to as the “race-to-the-bottom”. The intuition is that when developing countries offer low taxes on their natural resources, they forego potentially significant fiscal revenue.

A new study from ECLAC Caribbean, entitled, “Navigating transfer pricing risk in the oil and gas sector: Essential elements of a policy framework for

Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana”, explores these and other important factors, by first examining the oil and gas taxation framework and assessing the mechanics of the industry’s natural creation of opportunities for transfer pricing.

Transfer pricing is an accounting procedure that records the financial transactions between a company and its subsidiaries and divisions and can be applied for services, intellectual property, financing, interest, and the exchange of goods. Transfer pricing risk is the chance that the transfer prices do not reflect true market prices, i.e. resulting in the shifting of a company’s profit from one jurisdiction to another thereby eroding the local tax base. Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago are among the Caribbean countries with commercial reserves of hydrocarbons, where transfer pricing risk has the potential to result in considerable revenue leakage.

The results of the previously mentioned assessment identify the most appropriate regime

with which to address transfer pricing and provide sound policy recommendations for its implementation. Consequently, the study posits that inherent pricing risk can be mitigated by developing an appropriate fiscal and legislative framework, complemented by the designation of a competent revenue authority to ensure that multinationals set fair hydrocarbon prices.

The extraction and sale of natural resources have the potential to generate natural resource booms and significantly increase government revenues. Governments of such resource rich countries rely on natural resource rents to fund their development objectives.

Developing countries which lack the capacity to commercially produce and monetize their natural gas resources on their own, tend to rely upon multinational energy companies (MECs). Indeed, MECs operate in interconnected global value chains in the process of bringing the hydrocarbons from the ground to the



consumer to the final market.

Since multinationals tend to be vertically integrated, they often have different subsidiaries and divisions operating in different segments of the global value chain. These multinationals often conduct business with their different divisions. While business between the divisions is not a problem, the manipulation of costs can cause the shifting of profits along the value chain, resulting in the changing of taxpayers' tax liability.

The study notes that the attraction of multinationals, perhaps through incentives, facilitates the earning of natural resource rents and encourages economic activity in countries. However, doing business with large players with fragmented yet interconnected global value chains, creates several opportunities for the erosion of taxable income.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has had unexpected multi-sectoral economic and financial impacts on the economies of the subregion,

considerably reducing fiscal revenues by as much as 75 per cent in some Caribbean economies. It has also led to significant growth in fiscal spending.

This has dampened liquidity in many Caribbean countries, which were already challenged by high levels of public debt and fiscal deficits, both of which have worsened in 2020. Hence, for subregional energy exporters, optimizing natural resource rents has not surprisingly re-emerged as a leading short-term policy objective for the post-COVID-19 era.

Fortunately, transfer pricing risk, base erosion, and profit shifting are not inescapable outcomes. Governments can devise a proper policy and legislative framework to avoid the leakage of potential resource rents. Indeed, the magnitude of the estimated revenue losses incurred by Trinidad and Tobago in its natural gas sector due to transfer pricing risk, suggests that this a sufficiently significant issue for the governments of the energy exporting Caribbean

economies to pay urgent attention to, and seek to address through the recommendations advanced in this study.

Moreover, transfer pricing risk can be mitigated if the public authorities mandate the multinational companies to charge prices between their respective subsidiaries using the arm's length principle. If this is done, it would encourage transactions at market rates, and prevent the shifting of profits along the global value chain, thus allowing the developing country to capture its fair share of its natural resource rents.

Read more on this study at: <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/46813-navigating-transfer-pricing-risk-oil-and-gas-sector-essential-elements-policy> ■



ECLAC new policy brief brings recommendations for improving online learning experiences in the Caribbean during COVID-19

Delivery of education worldwide has faced unprecedented adaptation on an ongoing basis since last year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, across the world, COVID-19 has been negatively impacting progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The Caribbean has not been spared the ill effects of the pandemic on education, and, like many other small island developing States (SIDS), was ill-prepared for the widespread rollout of online distance learning.

In place of classroom learning, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have been adopted to support online distance learning – with mixed results. While Caribbean governments have piloted a range of online learning modalities, many children in the

subregion, especially those from poor and rural households, were not able to use those facilities. As a result of a lack of access to the Internet and devices that enable online learning, students have lost nearly a year of education. These inequities have laid bare pre-existing barriers to accessing education at all levels in the subregion.

Taking into consideration the situations described above, ECLAC Caribbean has therefore prepared a new policy brief, with the following key recommendations for improving online learning experiences for Caribbean students. These include:

1. Developing flexible and inclusive online distance learning systems across all levels of education with in-built preparedness for future events on the scale of COVID-19.
2. Improving Internet connectivity

and affordability in rural and remote areas to increase inclusivity and equity of online learning.

3. Addressing device shortages and other barriers to access for poor, rural and marginalized students.

4. Cultivating a mindset shift among key stakeholders, particularly educators, towards wider systemic change.

5. Undertaking regular student assessments and promoting and coordinating data collection and analysis at the national level.

For details on these recommendations, the new policy brief, entitled “Selected Online Learning Experiences in the Caribbean During COVID-19”, is available here: <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/46907> ■



Photo courtesy Caribbean Journal

Hollywood actor opens Caribbean restaurant

It's only open by day. They come by boat or helicopter, or by short jaunt from the tents at the Barbuda Ocean Club. And the early returns are spectacular.

This is the Caribbean's hottest new restaurant, and it just so happens to be Robert De Niro's new Nobu in Barbuda.

It's set on a stunning stretch of sand on the increasingly hip island of Barbuda, and it is home to exquisitely good food — a full-fledged Nobu hidden away on a remote beach in the Eastern Caribbean.

The new Nobu is part of a broader Nobu Beach Inn project, and it's already becoming a local favorite. The menu is classic Nobu — superbly sourced sushi, outstanding entrees like miso black cod and even a Wagyu selection, and right now the eatery is open from Wednesday to Sunday, starting at 12.00 midday.

And yes, it gives new meaning to the term "destination restaurant" — with most guests literally flying or sailing to the island just for a meal at Nobu.

Barbuda is quietly becoming a favorite among the jet set, thanks to the buzz around De Niro's hotel project and the significant Barbuda Ocean Club, just the second Discovery Land Company project in the wider region. ■

ECLAC

Fiscal Panorama 2021

ECLAC's Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, recently presented the Fiscal Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean 2021, which analyzes the fiscal dynamics in 2020 along with the main challenges anticipated in 2021, in a context marked by great uncertainty regarding the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic and social trajectories of the region's countries.



According to the report, growth dynamics in 2021 will not be sufficient to offset the drop in economic activity experienced in 2020 or to roll back the increases in poverty and inequality. Similarly, it foresees a slow recovery in employment levels that will not make up for the sharp job losses incurred last year, with women affected the most as their labor participation suffered a 10-year setback.

Meanwhile, the persistence of the pandemic, the asymmetries in the availability of vaccines and uncertainty about their effectiveness, along with the uneven and divergent paces of economic reactivation, cast doubt on the speed and sustainability of the economic recovery.

"It is important to extend the packages of fiscal measures in 2021 given the fragility of the economic recovery process and to continue mitigating the negative social, productive and economic effects of the pandemic," Bárcena explained.

Along with the need to sustain fiscal policies in the emergency, Bárcena discussed the two major challenges

facing fiscal policy in the region's countries, which are (1) generating financing to maintain public spending amid the pandemic, and (2) strengthening the sustainability of expansionary fiscal policy. Both challenges necessitate rethinking the orientation of public spending and revenue policies, she indicated.

According to the Panorama, in 2020, Latin America and the Caribbean was the developing region most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, while structural gaps intensified in terms of inequality, limited fiscal space, low productivity, informality and fragmentation of social protection and health systems. To address the pandemic's social and economic effects, the region's countries adopted expansionary fiscal policies.

The fiscal efforts announced in 2020 represented 4.6 per cent of GDP on average for the countries of the region. These efforts were aimed at strengthening public health systems, supporting families, and protecting the productive structure. The main instruments used to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the pandemic were subsidies and cash transfers.

According to the report, regarding fiscal revenue, changes would be needed in the taxation structure to increase the tax burden, progressivity and to have a greater impact on improving income distribution. This was essential for maintaining public spending trajectories in a context of fiscal sustainability.

In this sense, the Fiscal Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean 2021 analyses the challenges related to bolstering direct taxes, in particular the wealth tax and its potential for strengthening tax collection and the progressivity of tax policy in a scenario of countries' heightened financing needs.

The report also addressed the fact that fiscal policy was not gender neutral and highlighted the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the design of fiscal policies. It analyses the distributive effects for women on revenue, spending and investment policies, while also highlighting the importance of incorporating a gender approach throughout the entire budget cycle. This in turn, ensures that budget reallocations or cuts do not affect financing for gender equality policies. ■



Revised NOAA outlook calls for more hurricanes in 2021

Forecasters at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have increased the number of named storms they expect to form in the Atlantic basin in the 2021 hurricane season.

The revised forecast was released in mid-May, less than two weeks from the official start date of the Atlantic hurricane season. It calls for twenty named storms, three more than its initial forecast last month. The new forecast anticipates six to ten hurricanes, five of which could become major hurricanes.

During a virtual press briefing, Matthew Rosencrans, head of NOAA's hurricane season outlook team, said the Atlantic basin is still experiencing a period of high activity, and current weather conditions support the call for an above average season.

"As we look forward to the 2021 hurricane season, there are several factors that we

took into consideration when developing the May outlook," said Rosencrans. "Last year's busy season was a clear reflection of the ongoing high activity era which began in 1995 and continues to be a factor in our outlook for 2021." NOAA said April 2021 was the ninth warmest April since 1879. That coincided with a 5.8 per cent reduction in arctic sea ice, or a decrease of 267,000 square miles.

Last year's Hurricane Zeta has been reclassified to Category 3, making it a major storm. The reclassification brings the number of major storms to seven, tying 2005 for the most on record.

Rosencrans said indicators of high activity include warmer than average sea surface temperatures, weaker trade winds in the Atlantic hurricane basin, weaker vertical wind shears, and the development of an El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO). ■

ECLAC CARIBBEAN *Family*



ECLAC Family welcomes back Dale Alexander

ECLAC Caribbean is pleased to announce that Dr. Dale Alexander recently rejoined the Port of Spain family as Programme Management Officer, Chief in the Caribbean Knowledge Management Center (CKMC). He is presently performing his duties, like other staff, via telecommute mode.

Dale possesses over 27 years' experience in Computer Information Technology and over seven years in Programme Management. He has held positions with ECLAC Caribbean as Senior Computer Information Systems Assistant, Programme Officer and Senior Programme Management Assistant. Dale holds a PhD in Organization and Management, a Master's in Telecommunications Regulation and Policy and Associate Degree in Business Administration.

The Hummingbird extends a hearty welcome back to Dale!



ECLAC family - Welcomes Lika Diouf to Port of Spain

The ECLAC Caribbean family welcomes Ms. Lika Doehl Diouf to the Port of Spain subregional headquarters. She is now the Associate Programme Management Officer in the Caribbean Knowledge Management Center (CKMC), following the 2020 UN Managed Reassigned Programme (MRP) exercise.

Before her transfer to ECLAC, Lika was assigned for over three years to the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in New York as an Associate Legal Officer, where her main focus areas were marine biodiversity, marine scientific research and the human dimensions of the law of the sea. She holds an LLB in International Law and an LLM in the Law of the Sea.



DIANE QUARLESS
Director of ECLAC Caribbean

DIANE'S CORNER

The Director's views and thoughts on the occasion of:
World Oceans Day - 8 June



Photo courtesy Michael Gallagher

Oceans cover over 70 per cent of the planet and produce at least 50 per cent of the planet's oxygen. They are home to most of earth's biodiversity, and a primary source of protein for more than a billion people around the world. A true source of life, oceans also play a major role in nutrient cycling, coastal protection, and capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. They are the planet's largest carbon sinks.

Our Caribbean Sea space covers approximately 2,648,000 km² and is shared by over 40 countries, including some 30 small island developing States and territories (SIDS). The economic potential of the marine exclusive economic zones of respective Caribbean countries is many times larger than that of their land space.

The blue economy has thus been assuming steadily increasing importance in the sustainable development trajectory of Caribbean SIDS. The dependence of Caribbean economies on coastal and marine resources is among the highest in the world. In the case of the tourism sector for

example, ocean-based activity remains a principal provider of employment, accounting for over six million jobs across the subregion. This vital industry has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic; diversification towards sustainable ocean-based economies therefore, must be urgently considered as a pathway for resilient recovery in the Caribbean. Now is the time to invest in initiatives that will both protect and maximize benefits to be derived from marine resources as an integral part of the subregion's sustainable development strategy.

On World Oceans Day, let us as Caribbean citizens embrace the challenge to preserve, protect and sustainably use this dominant source of life and livelihood; the sea space which is our shared patrimony. With the combined political will, science and data-driven decision-making and, the cooperation and participation of all stakeholders, the Caribbean will be taking meaningful steps towards securing a more sustainable relationship with the ocean, on which our present and future generations so greatly depend. ■

Chicken Curry

Yield: 4-6 servings

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 10 minutes

What you will need:

Seasoning

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 head of garlic, peeled
- Leaves of a few sprigs of fresh thyme
- Desired amount of scotch bonnet pepper
- ¼ cup water

Curry

- 4 lbs chicken, cut into 3 inch pieces
- 2 tbsp seasoning + 1 tsp curry powder (for chicken)
- 4 tbsp seasoning (for masala-curry powder mixture)
- 4 tbsp garam masala
- 3 tbsp curry powder
- ½ tsp ground geera (cumin)
- ½ cup boiling water
- 6 tbsp cooking oil
- 2 tsp salt (or salt to taste)
- Boiling water, as needed
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 4-6 cloves + 1 small cinnamon stick
- Few pinches geera
- 1 scallion, sliced

How to Make it:

1. In a blender, combine medium onion, head of garlic, thyme leaves, pepper, and ¼ cup water. Blend until smooth and thick like a smoothie.
2. Wash and clean chicken (see below). Remove fat, chop into 3-inch pieces. Pat dry with paper towel, set aside.
3. Add 2 tbsp of the seasoning to chicken plus 1 tsp curry powder. Massage into meat, let it rest for ½ hour minimum. Store remaining seasoning in a container in fridge for use in another recipe.
4. In a bowl, mix 4 heaping tbsp fresh seasoning, 4 tbsp masala, 3 tsbp curry powder, ½ tsp geera, and ½ cup water into a paste.
5. Heat an iron pot with 6 tbsp oil. Add masala-curry powder paste and fry for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly until mixture looks darker and not watery.
6. Add chicken to pot and stir to coat with masala-curry powder mixture.
7. Cover pot and let chicken cook for 15-20 minutes on medium heat stirring every once in a while. Remove lid and allow water from chicken to evaporate. Chicken will then start to look "dry." Add salt and turn chicken.
8. Add enough boiling water to cover chicken.
9. Add tomato paste, and chopped potatoes, cover with lid.
10. Let curry boil on medium-high heat until gravy has reduced by one-third and thickens to your desire.
11. When curry is done, sprinkle a little geera on top and garnish with fresh scallions.



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