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CARIBBEAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
FEASIBILITY STUDY - RESUME

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1. The report of the consultant engaged to advise on the feasibility of the Caribbean Council for Social and Economic Development (COSED), together with the draft organizational structure and statutes is now available.
2. Between October and December 1982 the consultant visited a representative group of CDCC member countries and held discussions with a cross-section of government officials responsible for social and economic affairs and for regional co-operation, professionals in regional institutions and researchers in the universities and institutes.
3. Eight countries were visited, namely St. Lucia, Jamaica, Barbados, Grenada, Suriname, Guyana, Dominican Republic and Haiti. The consultant is normally resident in Trinidad and Tobago. A total of fifty-five (55) persons was interviewed largely from the government ministries responsible for planning and external/foreign affairs, from the universities and institutes of research, and from the OECS, CDB and CARICOM.
4. The consultant sought views on the merits of COSED, alternative models of organisation, critical areas in its work programme, likely hurdles in the way of its establishment and the measure of support for such an institution.
5. The merits for COSED were strongly asserted and considerable support for the institution was found. With one or two possible exceptions who expressed scepticism, support ranged from the enthusiastic to the guarded. In the view of the latter group, the success of COSED would depend on how it dealt with a number of delicate problem areas, among them: the sensitivities of governments on social and economic policy issues, financial stringency for most present-day Caribbean governments, fears of loss of cultural identity, and the practical benefits to be derived from co-operative institutions such as COSED.

6. In the view of the consultant, the case for COSED derives from a perception that Caribbean countries were impelled by a common set of historical forces and that the central problem areas could escape appreciation unless approached holistically through dialogue and collaborative research using a mechanism such as proposed. Such a perspective transcends difficulties brought about by differences in size and resource endowment, language, ideology or in patterns of social and economic organization, which formidable as they are, cannot count for the same order of importance.

7. The consultant considered COSED to be both feasible and desirable and urged its being brought to fruition. Despite the preference of academicians for a loose association of Caribbean social scientists, the balance of opinion is for an inter-governmental agreement which admits to membership and participation the community of academics and researchers.

8. The draft organisational structure and statutes proposed follow fairly closely those approved for the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology, the kindred organisation to COSED.



