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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
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MEDIUM TERM PLAN

1980-1983

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CHAPTER IX: AGRICULTURE

Programme 4: CEPAL

SUB-PROGRAMME 2: ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL

Two specific programme elements connected with the work of this Office in this area were included in section 8.1 of the programme budget for 1978-79:

- 2.2 - Balance-sheets for selected commodities (Caribbean sub-region); and
- 2.3 - Evolution and outlook of the agricultural sector of the Caribbean countries.

Programme element 2.2

The output for programme element 2.2 as described in the programme budget is the "study on the basis of the publication Agricultural Statistics of the Caribbean Countries of products (food or raw materials) which have considerable weight on total production of the sub-region and preparation of their balance sheets".

Situation at the end of 1979

Agricultural Statistics of the Caribbean Countries is a biennial publication. The 1978 issue will include for the first time data on prices. On the basis of this publication, balance sheets are being prepared on the most important products and projections made on demand and supply. The results will be submitted to sessions of CDCC to be held during the 1978-79 biennium and disseminated.

Plans for 1980-83

It is planned to continue the above activity in the two biennia covered by the plan. The objective will continue to be to assist the countries of the sub-region in the consideration of possibilities for expanding the supply of foodstuffs and of agricultural and fishery raw materials.

The problem addressed is the insufficiency of analytical data and projections on prices and demand, particularly for the sub-region as a whole which are required for promoting such an expansion.

The legislative authority is the work programme of CDCC and the report of the second session of CDCC (E/CEPAL/CDCC/21/Rev.1, Section IB, paras 2 to 4).

The basic strategy and output for the two biennia covered by the plan will continue to be the same as for 1978-79. In terms of data collection, two issues of Agricultural Statistics of the Caribbean Countries will be published for 1980 and 1982. The analytical aspect of this work, as described in the programme budget for 1978-79, will however be strengthened and different products will be emphasised in the light of developments in the sub-region and directives from CDCC. Special attention will be paid to the selection of agricultural and livestock products in the sub-region that lend themselves to industrial processing

The expected impact is generally stated in para 541 of the plan for 1978-81. However, a reference to "growth possibilities" at the sub-regional level may be in order to reflect the priority assigned by CDCC to agriculture in its work programme.

Programme element 2.3

The output of this activity "Evolution and outlook of the agricultural sector of the Caribbean Countries" as described in the programme budget for 1978-79 is an "analysis of the different factors which have influenced the productivity of the sector".

Situation at the end of 1979

Analyses of the performance of the various countries of the sub-region are being prepared for consideration by sessions of CDCC to be held during the biennium 1978-79 and dissemination.

Plans for 1980-83

It is planned to continue this activity during the two biennia covered by the plan.

During 1980-81 however, special emphasis will be placed on a study of land taxation systems and the structure of land tenure in the countries of the sub-region. For this purpose consultant assistance will be sought by this Office in connection with its submission for the 1980-81 programme budget. These budgetary provisions will have to be supplemented by extra-budgetary funds.

No specific indications can be provided at this stage on priorities in this research for 1982-83, which will be determined by the CDCC at its coming sessions.

The objective of this activity is to assist the countries of the sub-region in discovering the nature and extent of existing constraints on agricultural development and employment, particularly those arising from the existing land taxation and land tenure systems, and to assist them in developing models more appropriate to their needs.

The legislative authority is the work programme of CDCC and the report of the second session of CDCC (E/CEPAL/CDCC/21/Rev.1, Section IB, para 5).

Problem addressed

Agricultural land is a very scarce resource in most of the Caribbean countries and is characterised in many of them by large estates or plantations. Peasants are often compelled to use poor quality land and are plagued by precarious tenure, unsatisfactory landlord-tenant relationships, extensive unemployment and underemployment and low productivity. As a result, the domestic agricultural sub-sector has not been able to cope with the pressure of rising demand for food of a fast growing population, and imports of food into the region have almost doubled during the last decade. Structural and organizational deficiencies, are responsible for the inadequate response of the domestic agricultural sector to the need of increasing employment in the country side, which in turn has aggravated the trend towards migration from the rural areas to the cities and the consequent worsening of problems such as unemployment, shanty towns and inadequate public services.

Together with problems of land tenure and structure of agricultural production is essential to study the characteristics of land taxation in the Caribbean to determine to what extent such element has been contributing to the permanence of obsolete schemes and to the stagnation of the domestic agricultural sector, as well as to estimate the extent of land taxation contribution to total government revenues as compared with other revenue sources and the possibilities of tax reforms that could be instrumental for promoting redistribution of the land on the one hand and improvement in the financial situation of the governments on the other.

Strategy and output

- a) Monographs on a country-by-country basis
- b) A regional appraisal
- c) A progress report for submission to the 1981 session of CDCC leading to a final report, based on (a) and (b) above, for the use of policy makers and for discussion at the 1982 session of CDCC.

Expected impact

See above remarks in connection with programme element 2.2.

SUB-PROGRAMME 4: REGIONAL CO-OPERATION IN AGRICULTURE

Paragraph 551 of the medium term plan for 1978-81 refers to research and dissemination of information on "the specific problems of some sub-regions" and to studies centering "on the agricultural problems faced by the tropical countries of the Caribbean sub-region".

The promotion of "the agricultural complementation of the countries of the Caribbean sub-region" through inter-alia, "(i) the sub-regional production and industrial processing of crops; (ii) associations of producers/exporters for the sharing of experiences, and promotion of reciprocal cooperation in the various aspects of the marketing of agricultural products without discounting the possibility of exporting by a group to third countries" have been identified by CDCC as a main focus of its activities and a main item in the Committee's work programme (see point 5 of the Constituent Declaration

and Section B, Chapter III of the Committee's work programme). Another principle embodied in the Constituent Declaration is the need to fully utilize the experience accumulated by CARICOM and other bodies which is of value for the achievement of the CDCC's aims.

On the basis of these directives and principles a number of activities^{1/} have been initiated which are being consolidated as the basis for a new item for inclusion in the programme budget for 1980-81. We should therefore like to propose that an appropriate reference to these activities be included in the medium term plan for 1980-83 under sub-programme 4 in the following terms:

The proposed objective of this work would be to help further and expand integration efforts at the sub-regional level, including diffusion of findings and experiences by countries in the sub-region, the greater development of trade in agricultural products within the sub-region, and the promotion of agricultural producers-exporters associations at the sub-regional level.

Problem addressed

Technology and equipment developed in other climates is not generally applicable to the particular conditions prevailing in the Caribbean. Positive and innovative results have been obtained by some countries and in some areas which could be of general benefit if systematically disseminated. Also, agricultural development and integration programmes and experiments are being developed by CARICOM which could be usefully expanded or adapted to cover the Caribbean sub-region.

Similar considerations apply to the various forms of associations of agricultural producers and dealers in agricultural products which are being set up in various countries without links to each other and often without knowledge of the existence of similar organizations in neighbouring countries.

^{1/} The main activity in this connection has been the issuance on 10 January 1977 of a preliminary draft directory of associations of producers, dealers and exporters of agricultural and livestock products of the Caribbean Countries (E/CEPAL/CDCC/14).

The promotion of contact and exchange of information among these associations is a necessary first step towards furthering the goals of CDCC in respect of intra-Caribbean trade and the organization of regional production and industrial processing of crops.

The legislative authority for this work is the Constituent Declaration and work programme of CDCC and the report on the second session of the Committee (E/CEPAL/CDCC/21/Rev.1, Chapter IB, para 1).

Output for 1980-81

- Updating and expansion of the Directory of Producers, Dealers and exporters of agricultural and livestock products of the Caribbean countries, to be published in all CDCC languages.
- Study and assessment of the marketing situation for agricultural products in the sub-region, in collaboration with CARICOM and other relevant sub-regional and international institutions particularly FAO.
- Inventory of research and other institutions in the Caribbean and elsewhere, working on tropical agriculture and cataloguing and dissemination of their findings and results.

Output for 1982-83

It is expected that these activities would continue during 1982-83. In the light of the evolution of the situation, and subject to directives by CDCC, it is hoped that it will be feasible to focus this work on the feasibility of the development of agro-industries at the sub-regional level and on a sub-regional programme of import-substitution.

Expected impact

This is generally stated in para 552 of the plan for 1978-81. A specific reference to the promotion of employment is suggested.

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It should be added that three new proposals relevant to this programme area were submitted to the second session of CDCC and

are now being circulated for comments to member states and agencies in order to prepare their consideration by the Committee at its third session. They relate to:

- a) The establishment of a Regional Centre for Improved Genetic Material for Agricultural Products;
- b) Creation of an Institute for Research into the use of sugar-cane and its by-products for the production of food, meat and milk, fuels and fertilizers in the Caribbean region; and
- c) The study of dwarf strains in sugar-cane.