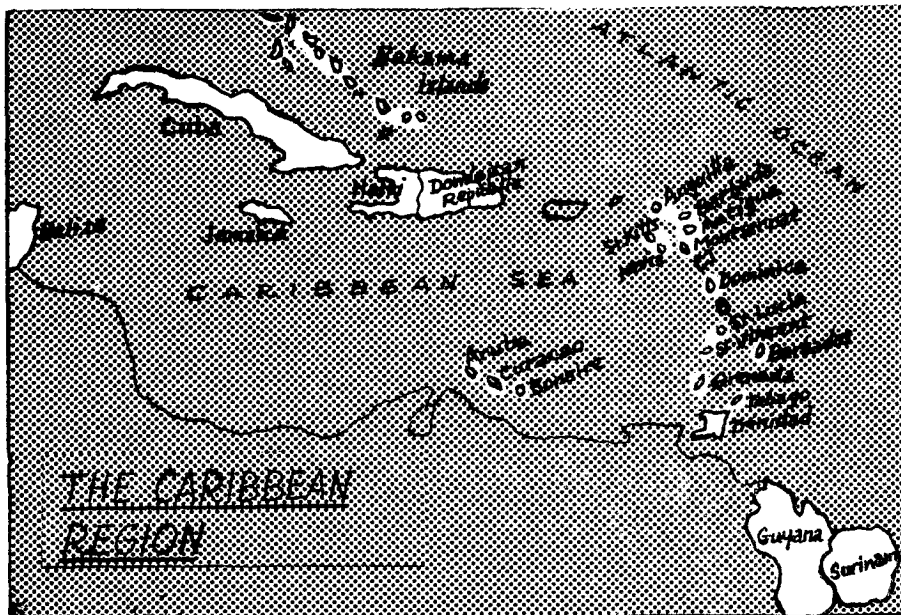


CARIBBEAN
DEVELOPMENT
AND
CO-OPERATION
COMMITTEE



ECLA/POS 76/2

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REPORT
COVERING THE ACTIVITIES
OF THE
ECLA OFFICE FOR THE CARIBBEAN
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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA Office for the Caribbean



C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
Summary	1
GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	2
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE	3
A. Technical Co-operation among Caribbean Countries	3
B. The Agricultural Sector	4
D. The Social Sector	5
F. Education and Culture	6
H. Transport, Communications and related services	6
I. Marine Resources	7
K. Regional Co-operation	7
L. International Trade	8
M. Natural Disasters	8
CO-ORDINATION WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	8
MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES	10



OFFICE FOR THE CARIBBEAN

The period May 1975 to May 1976 marked a greater involvement with meetings and preparations for meetings than any other comparable period since establishment of the Office in December 1966. The Sixteenth Session of the Commission held at Port of Spain, 6-14 May 1975 was closely followed by preparatory work for the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) established under ECLA resolution 358(XVI), which held its first session 31 October to 4 November 1975, at Havana, Cuba. Subsequent to this, considerable effort was expended on the preparatory stages for Specialist meetings tentatively scheduled for 1976.

The greater volume of meetings activities imposed reallocations of resources, resulting in some reductions in research and less direct participation in working groups in support of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) integration programme. Nevertheless, the staff endeavoured to maintain the highest level of collaboration with the governments and the integration bodies that was possible, and responded where they were able, to the main priorities. Allied to this, work to facilitate the consideration of accession to the integration group was undertaken in response to specific country request.

As regards contributions by the Office to region-wide projects handled at ECLA headquarters, there was the notable feature of expansion in the workload due to increase in membership of the Commission with the emergence to independence of the Bahamas and Grenada.

Changes in availability and specialization of staff resulted in the suspension of work in some subject fields, notably transport, and fiscal and monetary policies, while there was initiation of work in social affairs; these changes being dictated not by any change in the needs and priorities or policies of the governments, but rather by the resources at the disposal of the Office.

GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As the Office's contribution to the preparation of the Annual Economic Survey of Latin America 1975, Country Notes were prepared for Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the West Indies Associated States. A summary giving a brief overall view of general economic trends in the CARICOM countries was also prepared. The document Economic Activity - 1974 - Caribbean Community Countries (ECLA/POS 75/4) was published during this period under review.

Despite the continued lack of a specialist Statistician, attention was given to Statistics, especially external trade statistics in the West Indies Associated States. Data were collected and compiled for ECLA Caribbean Office projects and ECLA Santiago projects; and assistance was provided to the Statistical Division, the Natural Resources Division and the Trade Policy Division among others.

Papers prepared include proposals for Amendments to the Standard External Trade Statistics Classification for the East Caribbean Common Market Countries (ECLA/POS 76/1), mainly arising from adjustments to the ECCM Common External Tariff. In addition, some progress has been made on a Statistical Bulletin for the area covered by the Caribbean Office, this work being at an advanced stage on the section dealing with retail prices. Work has also commenced on the Demographic statistics section.

Specific assistance has also been given to Governments in response to ad hoc requests. Such items include, for example assistance to the Government of Antigua in the preparation and publication of their first Official Abstract of Statistics dated 1975; and also gave the Government assistance in the preparation and publication of their 1973 External Trade Statistics Report. Similarly the Office provided to the Trinidad and Tobago Government Retail Price Index information for Latin America and the Caribbean; and also provided tabulated data on External Trade in Petroleum and Petroleum products relating to several Caribbean countries. As part of this general statistical service, the Office has furnished various data from time to time to the Jamaica

Government through the Jamaica High Commission at Port of Spain, and provided information on regional economic developments in 1975.

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

The preparatory work which commenced in June 1975 involved a preliminary round of discussions with Caribbean Governments by a team comprising the Director in the Office of the Executive Secretary, the Director of the Caribbean Office and a Representative of the Government hosting the first session - Cuba. Preliminary drafts of papers prepared beforehand were the basis for these discussions. Carrying through the preparatory work and the conduct of the session was possible only because of strong logistical support from ECLA Santiago, and ECLA Mexico, combined with considerable financial, physical and organizational contribution of the host government. The resource limitations of the Office that were harshly revealed still exist.

The first session of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) laid out a full work programme for the Caribbean Office. This work programme is presented as Annex 3 of the report on the session, document E/CEPAL/CDCC/8/Rev.1. The activities that have since been undertaken by the Office within the framework of the programme are reported according to that classification.

Up to the time of preparation of this report no work had been initiated in the sections C - The Industrial Sector, E - Public Health, G - Tourism, J - Coastal Area Development.

A. Technical Co-operation among Caribbean Countries

First efforts were devoted to pursuing the means for implementing the CDCC decision on promotion of collaboration among the Universities and other Research Institutions by way of a meeting of Rectors of Universities of the Caribbean. This initiative sponsored by the CDCC is to be implemented in close collaboration with the United Nations University. Some basic preparatory arrangements have been mapped out for this meeting which would discuss science and technology, the production and processing of foodstuffs, and education and its relation to development. The date for holding the meeting is still to be decided.

B. The Agricultural Sector

A second issue of the Compendium of Agricultural Statistics for Caribbean countries is about to be released. It is a new, revised and amplified version of the first, which includes for the first time data on areas and production collected directly from the relevant official sources in the countries of the sub-region. An effort was made to publish statistics on fisheries. This series will serve as a basis for future studies on demand for food, and agricultural raw materials for agro-industries, within the broad framework of possibilities of specialization and complementation.

Within the context of the integration of the agricultural sector, the Office maintains a close watch on the workings of the Agricultural Marketing Protocol and other instruments designed to promote production and development in this sector. As a follow-up action to the study Critical Evaluation of the Performance of the East Caribbean Common Market (ECCM) Countries under the Agricultural Marketing Protocol (AMP) and the Guaranteed Market Scheme (GMS) (ECLA/POS 74/16) the Office was requested by the Council of Ministers of ECCM countries to participate with ECCM agricultural technicians in a study of the proposals. As a result of those deliberations, the recommendations of the study slightly modified by the agricultural technicians were presented to the ECCM Council of Ministers meeting in Antigua, 19-22 November 1975. The report was accepted and the Ministers agreed that the main recommendation to set up the AMP Liaison Group "be given early attention by ECCM Governments, since it was aimed at creating the control base for all AMP matters and so introduce a management system which is so vital to the successful monitoring of the AMP and GMS".

In the same line of activities the Office participated fruitfully in the discussions of a CARICOM Working Party on AMP. Inefficiency in operation of the price mechanism was considered to be one of the main constraints to development of trade under the AMP. The discussions within the Working Party led to the formulation of a new pricing system. The Office was also requested by the ECCM Secretariat to participate in the discussions on the Food Plan and Food Corporation, with agricultural technicians and officials of the ECCM countries, to help make recommendations

to the Eleventh Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the ECCM as to the position of the ECCM countries in respect of those matters.

Besides preparation of reference materials in response to specific requests by Governments and inter-governmental institutions, the Office carried out a mail survey in the CARICOM countries to gather information on Associations of Agricultural Producers and Dealers in main agricultural and livestock products, with a view to bringing them closer together for concerted actions at regional and extra-regional levels. This survey is to be extended to the other CDCC countries. As a result of considerable response to this survey the information is being compiled for publication.

D. The Social Sector

Up to the end of the period under review, the ECLA Office for the Caribbean has had to limit its work in the social field mainly to Community Development. In this respect, it was possible to continue with technical assistance to member governments, especially those of the less developed countries, up to December 1975. This work has been directed mainly towards Rural and Community Development, Local Government and Youth Development. Two seminars (Coordination for Integrated Development in Antigua, October 1975, and Local Government and Community Development in St. Vincent, August 1975) were organized at the suggestion and with direct participation of this Office. Trade Centres and Voluntary Organizations in Trinidad and Tobago were evaluated and suggestions formulated accordingly. A specific request of the Montserrat Government has led to field and documentary research on this country, and the Office has put forward a preliminary report on Mobilization of Community Interest and Efforts for Agricultural Development in Montserrat, which is being circulated for comments.

Two macrosociological studies by Consultants have been completed. They initiate reflections on the characteristics of Caribbean Societies and help the formulation of global policies. Versions for restricted circulation have been distributed under the respective titles: Social Structural Change in the English-Speaking Caribbean and Social

Structural Change in the Spanish and French-Speaking Caribbean.

Consideration is being given to a wider distribution of these studies.

During the period under review, a small unit for Social Development has been constituted in the Office. Its major report has been the one on Montserrat referred to earlier. This Unit has participated in most regional meetings on subject matters related to its substantive area, while preparing background information for the elaboration of the forthcoming Report on World Social Situation and for the ongoing codification of social structural changes in the sub-region. Furthermore, it has offered some support to studies being realized by teams based at Santiago.

Since November 1975, further research by this Unit became closely linked to the implementation of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee's (CDCC) work programme. Since the Unit has very few ongoing projects, it devoted some substantial part of the second half of the year in putting forward elements for decision-making related to meeting the CDCC mandates.

F. Education and Culture

Initial efforts have been devoted to articulating some of the projects that would be necessary to implement this portion of the work programme.

H. Transport, Communications and related services

Since the separation of the UN Regional Adviser Ports and Harbours in June 1974, work has been suspended pending appointment of an Economic Affairs Officer (Transport). Some limited support has been given to the CARICOM Secretariat in carrying forward the pilot project at Trinidad and Tobago in implementing ECLA Proposals for Collection and Processing of Regional Ports and Shipping Statistics (ECLA/POS 74/4). This consisted mainly in evaluating the results of the preliminary enquiry and amending the Ship Visit Report form so as to make it more suitable for wider application in Caribbean countries.

I. Marine Resources

The CDCC authorised that work be undertaken in this area which would include adequate development of fisheries, environmental protection, and promotion of co-operation among Caribbean countries of a nature to assist them to protect their basic rights and essential economic interests in relation to the resources of the sea. As a first step towards dealing comprehensively with these matters, efforts have been directed to the convening of a Specialist meeting, at expert level, on the Law of the Sea, for a date still to be scheduled.

K. Regional Co-operation

In addition to collaborating with the CARICOM countries in analysing problems arising out of the efforts towards intensifying the economic co-operation process, the Office responded to specific request for studies which would facilitate the taking of decisions on closer collaboration with the Caribbean Community.

Assistance was given, upon request, to the Government of the Republic of Haiti in relation to its application to Full Membership in the Caribbean Community and Associate Membership in the Caribbean Common Market. At the first stage, a staff member visited Haiti to collect basic material necessary for the preparation of the Dossier that country wishes to submit to CARICOM. Preparation of this document entitled "Dossier for Presentation to the Caribbean Community and Common Market" was concluded with the assistance of three economists sent by the Government of Haiti upon the Office's request. In addition, several months of work went into studies of some of the implications of Haiti's accession to CARICOM, including a comparative study to appraise the revenue effects which would result from the adoption of the CARICOM Common External Tariff (CET). A summary of the findings of this analysis has already been submitted to the Government of Haiti. Other studies are still to be concluded.

These activities were undertaken within the authorizations of the CDCC work programme as follow-up to the initial studies in 1974-1975.

L. International Trade

Although work was restricted by inadequacy of staff, some research continued into trends in intra-area trade and development of this trade. A draft paper on intra-area trade in tobacco was updated, as work on this had been suspended for more than one year. The main activity however consisted of consolidating material for support of Latin American region studies conducted at ECLA headquarters.

M. Natural Disasters

In response to appeal by the Government of Grenada, the Office for the Caribbean was required to make an evaluation of the rainstorm damage of 9 November 1975. Field work and preparation of the report was carried out during the month of December. The report Evaluation of Damages caused by Grenada Rainstorm and Implications for Economic Development Programmes, ECLA/POS 75/9 (E/CEPAL/CDCC/9) was submitted at the end of December, and subsequently circulated to CDCC members and other ECLA member states.

CO-ORDINATION WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Close co-ordination was maintained with the inter-governmental bodies, particularly the CARICOM and ECCM Secretariats. Specific responses to their requests included, in the case of the CARICOM Secretariat, briefing and orientation of newly recruited Statistician, and assistance in preparing a CARICOM External Trade Statistics Digest; and discussions concerning the UNDP/CARICOM Regional Statistical Development Project. In the case of the ECCM Secretariat, there was consultation concerning the UNDP/ECCM Regional Statistical Project; and investigation into the feasibility, costs, timing, etc. of having the revised ECCM Common External Tariff printed in Trinidad and Tobago by the Central Statistical Office Printery.

Staff members were also consulted by personnel from UNCTAD/GATT/ITC on the subject of ITC ongoing projects in the CARICOM region, and by OAS project personnel regarding their regional finance and capital markets project being conducted in collaboration with the Caribbean

Development Bank (CDB). Similarly, the views of the Office was sought in the planning of the UWI/UNICEF Seminar on Social Legislation relating to the needs of the child, and by Commonwealth Secretariat project personnel regarding their shipping studies.

Throughout the whole period covered by this report there were discussions with, and in many cases briefing of, staff members, consultants and project personnel from other United Nations bodies. The subjects covered included extensive discussions with the Vice-Rector (Planning and Development) of the United Nations University regarding the preparatory phases for, and organization of the proposed meeting of Heads of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutions; discussions with UNDP Georgetown in connection with the Regional Statistical Development projects; the UNDP Regional Physical Planning Project at St. Lucia on a wide range of subjects pertaining to the ECCM region and the wider CARICOM area; and representative of the UNDP Regional Bureau regarding projects in the Caribbean.

A series of discussions were held with the World Food Programme relating mainly to background data in support of the Supplementary Feeding Project for Vulnerable Age Groups in Antigua. Also, there were discussions with UNCTAD Official regarding UNCTAD/UNDP Insurance and Re-insurance projects, with ITU personnel regarding communications facilities for water surface transport, and with the Executive Secretary a.i. of the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD) regarding establishment of a CLAD sub-centre in the Caribbean to serve mainly the English-speaking countries, and the holding of a seminar on the Administration of Multinational Integration scheduled for mid-1976.

Considered from the standpoint of numbers of visits and cumulated man-weeks involved in the course of a year, this area of consultation by numerous bodies and institutions has grown to be a significant activity. In some cases it has been a seeking of ECLA perception of the realities and priorities of the Caribbean sub-region, in others a seeking of advices on broad approaches that may be acceptable or unacceptable to governments and the inter-governmental bodies, and in a few instances a seeking of ECLA endorsement or co-sponsorship for project activities.

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

Office personnel participated actively in the following meetings:
Tenth West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference (Guyana, 5-11 April 1975);
Twelfth Meeting of Officials on Agricultural Marketing Protocol (St. Lucia,
20-24 April 1975); Fifth Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the
Caribbean Development Bank (Barbados, 25-30 May 1975); CARICOM Ministerial
Conference on Oils and Fats (Grenada, 16-17 June 1975); Meetings of Regional
Agricultural Planners and Standing Committee of Ministers for Agriculture
(Belize, 23-27 June 1975); Seminar on East Indians in the Caribbean
(Trinidad, 25-28 June 1975); Meeting of Planners on Agro-Industry (Jamaica,
30 June 1975); CARICOM Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Common Market
Council of Ministers (Jamaica, 29 June-11 July 1975); Meeting on the Law
of the Sea (Barbados, 18-20 August 1975); Regional Employment Seminar of
the Commonwealth Caribbean (Jamaica, 10-13 September 1975); Workshop on
Social Legislation relating to the Family and Child in the Caribbean
(Trinidad, 22-26 September 1975); Preparatory Mission in connection with
the First Session of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee
(Guyana, 28-30 September 1975); Caribbean Regional Symposium on Employment
Strategies and Programmes (Barbados, 29 September-10 October 1975); Common
Market Council of Ministers Meeting (Guyana, 6-12 October 1975); Meeting
of Customs Officials on ECCM Common External Tariff (Antigua, 20-24 October 1975);
First Session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (Trinidad,
20-24 October 1975); Regional Symposium on the Implementation of Social
Development Policies in the Caribbean (Jamaica, 11-14 November 1975);
Special ECCM Council Meeting (Antigua, 18-22 November 1975); Meeting of
Working Party on the Agricultural Marketing Protocol (Barbados, 23-28 November 1975);
Heads of Government Conference (St. Kitts, 7-11 December 1975); Seventh
Common Market Council Meeting (Guyana, 22-25 January 1976); Discussions
on CARICOM Food Plan and position of ECCM Countries (Antigua, 4-8 March 1976).

