

FOCUS

ECLAC CDCC IN THE CARIBBEAN



Food Security Issues For Caribbean Countries - Pg. 11

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FOCUS: *ECLAC in the Caribbean* is a publication of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC).

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Produced by ECLAC

Printed by: Print-Rite Limited

Online version: www.eclacpos.org/focus

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CDCC

Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee

In 1975, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) – then known as ECLA - established the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) as a permanent subsidiary body at the governmental level. The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean provides secretariat services to the CDCC.

The CDCC functions as an intergovernmental organization that 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, the environment, international trade and trade-in-service, information for development, statistics, small island developing States, science and technology, women in development, tourism, training, and assistance with the management of national economies.

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THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CARIBBEAN PERSPECTIVE

It was the eighth meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-8), convened from 24 April to 5 May 2000, that decided to request another United Nations General Assembly review of the implementation of Agenda 21 (the programme of action emerging from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 1992). The General Assembly's first review in 1997 (*Rio+5*) had yielded less than encouraging results. Finance, transfer of technology, and trade-related issues were cited as the most serious obstacles to the programme's successful implementation.

Agenda 21 had been adopted in the context of a global consensus and commitment at the highest political level to cooperation in the related spheres of environment and development. Accordingly, the setting for this review process, initially envisaged as simply Rio+10, was expanded into the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), towards ensuring that this exercise, as well as the decisions that it produced, would take place at the same level at which the original commitments had been made. The WSSD would convene in Johannesburg, South Africa; it was assumed that conducting this review in a developing country would bring its perspective to bear and prompt a fresh look at the relevant issues.

In determining the WSSD scope of discussions, the consensus was that Agenda 21 would not be subject to renegotiation. It was assumed that Agenda 21 was to maintain its role as the basic framework within which all the outcomes of UNCED would be reviewed and from which new challenges and opportunities that had emerged since that conference would be addressed. Ultimately, the review process should produce action-oriented decisions, together with a renewed political commitment to sustainable development.

The Summit was preceded by four meetings of the CSD-

10 (the Summit's Preparatory Commission), held between April 2001 and May 2002. Given the wide differences of opinion on the several complex issues involved, these sessions of the CSD-10 failed to complete their work. Meetings of the Subregional Groups and of the G77 therefore had to be convened on 23 August during the week prior to the WSSD. Informal negotiations on the Implementation Plan followed (24 to 26 August). The Summit was inaugurated, as scheduled, on 26 August 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, continuing through to the Heads of Government session, which convened over the period 2 to 4 September 2002.

Sustainable Development: The Blueprint

There was widespread agreement, especially during the latter phase of the CSD-10 process, that the essential blueprint for sustainable development had already been negotiated. It was outlined in Agenda 21; in the internationally agreed development targets set out in the Millennium Declaration and adopted by the Millennium Summit, New York, 6 to 8 September 2000; in the outcome of the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Doha, 9 to 14 November 2001; and in the Monterrey Consensus adopted by the (Summit level) International Conference on Financing for Development, Mexico, 18 to 22 March 2002. It was envisaged that the final documents adopted by the WSSD would reflect that blueprint and also identify concrete actions, having developed an appropriate framework in which to present the results-oriented sustainable partnerships that were expected to be formed by governments, civil society and business groups.

The outcomes of the WSSD are contained in The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation.

*The development of more effective,
democratic and accountable
international and multilateral
institutions is a precondition for
achieving sustainable
development goals.*

The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development

This political declaration reaffirms the commitment of the Heads of Government to advance and strengthen the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development at local, national, regional and global levels. Special attention is drawn to the areas of poverty eradication and human development as issues to be urgently addressed.

The history of international diplomatic discourse on sustainable development issues - from the Stockholm Conference (1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment), through to UNCED, the Doha Ministerial Conference of the WTO and the Monterrey, Mexico, Conference on Financing for Development - is traced.

A number of challenges to achieving sustainable development are then identified, including poverty eradication; changing consumption and production patterns; protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development; reducing the disparities between developed and developing countries; and issues relating to globalisation.

Within the section devoted to "Our Commitment to Sustainable Development", concern is expressed with respect to such issues as water, sanitation, energy, health care, food security and protection of biodiversity. Other elements highlighted include cooperation towards the provision of access to the financial resources, open markets, capacity building, transfer of technology, and human resource development "to banish forever underdevelopment."

While welcoming the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Declaration also urges that the agreed levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA) be observed by all developed countries and conveys an undertaking to pay special attention to the developmental needs of small island developing States and the Least Developed Countries. Other elements of the Declaration refer to the importance of creating stable partnerships with all major

groups; the role of the private sector, including the issue of accountability; the provision of assistance to increase income-generating employment opportunities; and an undertaking to strengthen and improve governance at all levels for the effective implementation of Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The development of more effective, democratic and accountable international and multilateral institutions is also emphasised as a precondition for achieving sustainable development goals.

The Plan of Implementation does not recognise that the basic elements that constitute the sustainable development problematique may have undergone radical change since 1992.

WSSD Plan of Implementation

In recommending that sustainable development be entrenched as the flagship concept to guide all United Nations activities, the Plan of Implementation identifies, very specifically, the issue areas that will have to be

addressed in order to fulfil commitments made at both WSSD and UNCED. The document itself is divided into some 18 substantive sections, which are organised to cover the following:

- Poverty Eradication and changing unsuitable patterns of consumption and production;
- Protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development (incorporating, *inter alia*, fisheries, oceans, seas, islands and coastal areas in the context of Chapter 17 of Agenda 21; agriculture; climate change; disasters; tourism; biodiversity; forests; mining, minerals and metals);
- "Sustainable development in a globalizing world" (addressing such issues as trade);
- The relationship between health and sustainable development issues;
- The sustainable development of small island developing States (incorporating, *inter alia*, issues related to freshwater; fisheries; the sustainable management of coastal areas, Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and the continental shelf; tourism; energy; and health);

- Sustainable development for Africa; as well as other regional initiatives covering Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia and the Pacific; West Asia; and Europe;
- Means of implementation;
- The role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Sustainable Development;
- The role of international institutions; strengthening institutional arrangements for sustainable development at the regional and national levels; and participation of major groups.

That these issues are the same as those addressed by the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States (BPOA)* and related documents, serves to re-emphasise that the WSSD was convened, not as a forum for the negotiation of new substantive issues, but in order to review progress made in the implementation of UNCED proposals and commitments; and to make recommendations and mobilise support for improved performance in the future. The Plan of Implementation pays less attention, however, to crafting a concise operational definition of, or definitional approach to, the sustainable development concept. Nor does it recognise, even, that the basic elements that constitute the sustainable development problematique may have undergone radical change since 1992.

A Caribbean SIDS Perspective

The issues raised in Section VII (*Sustainable development of small island developing States*) of the Plan of Implementation are quite familiar to the SIDS of the Caribbean subregion; these subjects relate to many of the basic concerns with which these countries have been grappling over the years. Recognition of the special status of small island developing States, with respect to both environment and development, is welcome. So too, is acknowledgement, once again, of the constraints to their more comprehensive implementation of the BPOA. Many of the issues highlighted relate broadly to

sustainable fisheries management; the delimitation and sustainable management of coastal areas and EEZs, including the continental shelf; as well as relevant regional management initiatives within the context of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the United Nations Environment Programme regional seas programme.



The inclusion of these particular elements in the Plan of Implementation accords with the initiative currently before the United Nations General Assembly on *promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development*, a fundamental aspiration among SIDS of the subregion. The endorsement by the WSSD of this type of initiative at precisely the time when the subregion is

rededicating itself in that direction is most opportune. Certainly, the incorporation of these elements into the WSSD Plan of Implementation may be properly adduced as part of the politico-legal justification for the Caribbean Sea initiative. Serving a similar purpose may be the decisions taken at the Summit on the need for the finalisation and early operationalisation of economic, social and environmental vulnerability, and related indices; energy; health; and water.

Several of the issues covered under the Plan's Section IX (*Means of implementation*) are related to concerns that have been articulated by Caribbean SIDS at the Subregional Preparatory Meeting of the Caribbean for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, convened in Havana, Cuba, 28 to 29 June 2001, and in wider international forums. Relevant areas of concern include financing of sustainable development; ODA; the need for a supportive international environment; trade issues in sustainable development; institutional strengthening, including human resource development; education; science and technology, such as in relation to early warning systems and mitigation programmes for countries affected by natural disasters; and public health issues, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic.

*Produced by the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (UNGCSIDS), Barbados, 1994.



The SIDS of the Caribbean may be pardoned for expecting that the explicit articulation of their concerns in the Plan of Implementation would attract the attention, and support, of the wider international community, even as the SIDS of the subregion have accepted primary responsibility for confronting their many challenges within the limits of their own resources.

Implementation of the SIDS POA: The Caribbean Model

Within the subregion a Caribbean Model for the Implementation of the SIDS POA has evolved. It comprises five elements:

1. A **SIDS Bureau**, comprising a small group of Ministers who have accepted the responsibility to politically oversee the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action;
2. The **SIDS of the Caribbean** subregion, which are serviced by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean;
3. A **Joint Secretariat**: comprising the Secretariats of both the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The former performs the operational and technical work (conduct of studies, dissemination of information, convening of meetings; reporting and acting as an intermediary between the SIDS Bureau and the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group). The latter undertakes political outreach in an effort to keep SIDS-related issues on the international political agenda;
4. A **Joint Work Programme** extrapolated from the Barbados Programme of Action and related international decisions; and
5. An **Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG)** comprising some two dozen regional or regionally based institutions, United Nations agencies,

regional Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Secretariat of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), among others.

With this Caribbean Model, the SIDS of the subregion already have available a mechanism through which the objectives of the WSSD Plan of Implementation may be pursued. The central role of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in this process has already been formally recognised by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).

Finally, of special significance to Caribbean SIDS is the WSSD endorsement of a formal proposal (tabled at the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly in 1999) for a full and comprehensive review, in 2004, of the implementation of the BPOA. This decision addresses the concern articulated at the special session that a periodical review of the BPOA and related international decisions was needed. Convening an international meeting on the sustainable development of SIDS – as recommended by the WSSD - would provide those States, as well as the wider international community, with an opportunity to revisit issues that had not been adequately addressed at the 1994 UNGCSIDS. It would also permit the analysis of those new issues and perspectives that have emerged since 1994, with due account being taken of conclusions reached at the special session and at the WSSD itself.



RENEWED PROSPECTS FOR TRADE IN SERVICES: SUBREGIONAL EXPERTS ASSESS CURRENT SECTORAL ISSUES

Trade experts examined the expanding role of the services sector within Caribbean economic development at a meeting convened in Port of Spain from 2 to 3 September 2002 by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. Participants' discussions were located within the context of trade liberalisation at both the multilateral and regional levels.

Since the 1980s, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has

included services sector research and dialogue in its work programme and hosted a series of workshops on this subject. The first workshop focused on transportation, insurance and financial services. This agenda was expanded in subsequent meetings to include technology, management consultancy and engineering services, telematics and transborder data flows. In each case, the workshop addressed individual service areas and their potential for export development.

More recently, the services sector has assumed even greater significance. Its increased importance can be attributed to the launch, in 2000, of the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations on the further liberalisation of trade in services. The diminishing prospects for trade in primary commodities such as sugar and bananas, together with stagnation in the manufacturing sector underscores the urgency of exploring the economic opportunities available from within the services sector. In the current context, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

has extended its focus on services beyond a narrow concern with trade per se to this sector's potentially wider role in development, as a vehicle for economic restructuring and transformation.



Growing role in GDP

Accordingly, in the meeting's introductory presentation, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean highlighted the growing importance of the services sector to most Caribbean

economies. It was shown, for example, that the contribution of services to GDP in the subregion ranged from 80% in Barbados to 57% in Trinidad and Tobago, and 28% in Guyana. With respect to employment, services accounted for 81% in the Bahamas, 63% in Trinidad and Tobago and 57% in Jamaica. Also, while the Caribbean was experiencing increasing deficits on its trade in goods during the 1990s, its trade in services was yielding larger surpluses.

This presentation suffered from the paucity of disaggregated data on the production of services, and was unable therefore to properly compare the performance of service industries with those in the manufacturing sector. The meeting discussed this inadequacy of the data on services that could inform the work of researchers, policy makers, private producers, and trade negotiators in the subregion. In this context, issues of data classification and collection also arose. Participants were concerned that the importance of data was not appreciated. The development of an educational strategy that would

sensitise respondents to data requests was deemed necessary.

Liberalisation of trade in services

The meeting also discussed issues relating to the liberalisation of the trade in financial, telecommunications, distribution, and educational services, particularly since these are among the areas in which developed countries are interested in gaining enhanced access to the markets of developing countries. Under the GATS, Caribbean countries have made limited commitments to market access in these categories of services. The following considerations must inform policy decisions on the liberalisation of services markets:

- the extent to which market access should be liberalised in specific services subsectors;
- the institutional and regulatory structures that should be put in place to facilitate the growth and development of services;
- the adequacy of modalities for negotiation at the hemispheric and regional levels; and
- the type of market access to developed countries that Caribbean countries should seek for their services exports.

Policymaking concerns – regulating financial services

The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean places particular emphasis on finance and investment - and consequently the financial services sector - in its work programme. Its presentation on this subject was placed in the context of the decline of export agriculture in the smaller economies of the Eastern Caribbean during the 1980s, which led to efforts to diversify the productive base. During this period, their focus fell on developing the services

sector (offshore financial services, in particular) because of the relative ease of establishing offshore financial centres (OFCs) and the success of such centres in countries like The Bahamas, Barbados and the Cayman Islands. During the following decade, however, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development began to question the viability of these OFCs, especially in light of the harmful taxation practices of several of these centres that had led to the blacklisting of some by the Financial Action Task Force.

Nonetheless, the meeting agreed that there would continue to be economic as well as legal justification for retaining this type of financial service. Globalisation and trade liberalisation would provide

added impetus to the development of offshore financial services. However, countries would have to address the deficiencies that had led to the negative evaluations of the OFCs. In addition, countries would have to assess the human resource requirements of the sub-sector as well as the regulatory and incentive framework. This would

apply not only to the offshore financial services subsector but to the financial services sector as a whole.

Recommendations were made - mostly regarding human resource management, and regulatory and institutional development - for sustaining the growth of the financial services sector. Participants identified human resource development as necessary to satisfy the demand for various skills, in keeping with global as well as industry-level changes. Equally important, it was felt, was the need to have an integrated approach to regulation and institutional development, since the clustering of services and the linkages between services subsectors would require crosscutting regulation such as between financial services and information and communication technologies.



CARIBBEAN SOCIAL STATISTICAL DATABASES PROJECT: TRAINING COMPONENT BEGINS

The first in a series of ECLAC/CDCC training workshops in evidence-based social policy formulation for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) will convene in Port of Spain from 29 to 31 October 2002. This training is being presented in two segments. The Port of Spain workshop will be conducted at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean; the second is scheduled for Jamaica in December 2002.

Senior technocrats who work in the field of social development, drawn from among social planners and senior statisticians in 13 Caribbean countries, have been invited to attend the Port of Spain session. Participants will be introduced to the workings of the Caribbean Social Statistical Databases and trained in evidence-based social policy formulation.

Training is to be supported by experts from the University of the West Indies and counterpart United Nations agencies.

This workshop is but one component of the project, "Development of Social Statistical Databases and a Methodological Approach for the Construction of the Social Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean", which the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has been implementing over the past 21 months. This project was developed in response to calls by Caribbean governments as well as the wider international body of policy makers, for improved access to sound social statistical data. Meeting these demands entails the creation of statistical databases as well as the development of a methodological approach for devising a Social Vulnerability Index (SVI).

Mandate for the project

This project's mandate has its foundation in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, which was agreed to by the United Nations World Summit for Social Development, held from 6 to 12 March 1995. In August 1999, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean submitted a formal proposal to the Dutch Government to fund the development of subregional social statistical databases and the construction of an SVI. Funds were made available in January 2001.

*This project is a response to the call
by Caribbean governments and the
wider international body of
policymakers for improved
access to sound social
statistical data.*

As the project's structure and content were being developed, based on the recommendations of regional experts, official support for its implementation and execution was being solicited within a variety

of subregional forums. The most significant of these interventions was the joint ECLAC-Caribbean Community (CARICOM) presentation made to The Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Council of Human and Social Development of CARICOM. Participants asked to be kept advised of the training schedule for subregional officials so that they could exploit this opportunity to its fullest.

In April 2001, at the eighteenth (ministerial level) meeting of the CDCC, member countries expressed their support for the social statistical databases (SSD) project. All governments represented at that meeting endorsed resolution 52(XVII), which recognised the importance of economic and social data to the planning and policy formulation process in CDCC countries.

The Process

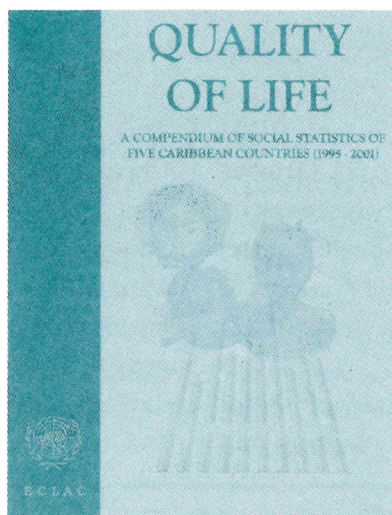
An ad hoc advisory committee, comprising statistical experts from the subregion, was formed to support the

project team in its work. Representatives of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Social Development Unit, then visited as many country statistical offices as possible in order to inform Directors of Statistics directly about the project and its objectives. Official visits were made to country statistical offices in The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, the Netherlands Antilles and Trinidad and Tobago.

Before embarking on the collection of data from countries in the region, the project team sought to understand the legislative constraints that might face Directors of Statistics in releasing particular datasets. The relevant legislation in most countries of the subregion made it clear that the Directors of Statistics would be free to release data as long as they were able to ensure the confidentiality of information concerning individuals. This requirement was met through binding contracts in which the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean promised not to release data relating to individual persons without the prior consent of the Director of Statistics in the countries providing the information.

It was also decided that data should be collected in their original format in order to spare countries the time-consuming exercise of converting information to meet formatting specifications.

While the responses to requests for data sets for the SSD project were varied, two distinct patterns emerged. Some countries showed immediate enthusiasm for the project and its objectives, accompanied by a readiness to share data, once adequate provisions were put in place for the protection of individuals' privacy. Others were more reluctant to part with the data sets. In such cases, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean therefore had to negotiate with the countries for the portions of the data sets that their respective statistical offices were prepared to share.



The project was given access to the Survey of Living Condition (SLC) data sets from the following nine countries: Barbados (1996-1997); Belize (1995); Grenada (1999); Guyana (1994); Jamaica (1990-1999); Puerto Rico (1999-2000); St. Kitts and Nevis (2001); Saint Lucia (1995); and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (1995). Labour Force Survey data sets were obtained from Belize (1993-1999) and Saint Lucia (1994-2000), while data sets for the Population Census 1990/1991 were obtained from all the countries of the English speaking Caribbean and Puerto Rico. The data collection process is an ongoing one, and the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean still expects to receive Population Census data sets 2000/2001 from at least three of its member countries.

Outputs

Aside from the SSD and the training workshop series, this project has yielded the Data Collection Systems for Domestic Violence study and the Compendium of Social Statistics, which published, analysed and assessed the social policy implications of SSD data. A brochure on the SSD databases has also been produced.

The other major project outputs are to be completed by December 2002. The Second Compendium of Selected Social Statistics will be based on a comparative analysis of past and current census data employed to assess changes in social conditions. Concurrently, a project website will be developed and a meta data dictionary, to support the databases, produced.



MANAGING THE FOOD SYSTEM: FOOD SECURITY ISSUES FOR CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Planning and policy

The economic vulnerability of Caribbean countries is being more and more exposed: preferential terms of trade for traditional export crops are being progressively eroded, while market preferences under new or revised trading arrangements are likely to disappear in the not too distant future, especially since contemporary trends in the negotiation of such arrangements point to reciprocity as its defining principle.

The implications of these developments for subregional economies, in general, and for food security, in particular, may be the single most critical policy situation facing the Caribbean countries today. Potentially lower foreign exchange earnings and government revenue, combined with a reduced capacity to supply food from domestic sources, and increased competition from cheaper imports, have prompted calls for urgent and far-reaching policy-options and measures at both the individual sector (food system) and economy wide levels.

The food system

A country's food system - the mechanism through which it meets its food and nutrition requirements - comprises agricultural production and processing, raw and manufactured import, transportation and distribution components. The management of these production supply, importation and distribution processes must be directed to guaranteeing food security (the satisfaction of a country's nutritional needs, regardless of source).

The capacity to import food is determined by a country's overall trade and current account balances and levels of indebtedness. Most Caribbean countries face increasing debt service relative to total exports of goods and services and have run current account deficits in recent years. Indeed, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as a whole has been struggling with an increasing trade deficit for foodstuff during the last two decades. At the

same time, countries have experienced a significant decline in food self-sufficiency between the early 1980s and the present. With few exceptions, food production has not been able to competitively respond to demand either in terms of volume or quality of produce. The agricultural sector, including agri-processing, is faced with low productivity and high costs and has found it difficult to defend itself against strong competition from cheaper imports.

These circumstances underpin the food policy issues that extend to:

Caribbean countries have among their priorities three national objectives: higher levels of food self-sufficiency; increased diversification of agricultural production and greater competitiveness for both domestic and export production.

- Reduced ability to purchase food due to declines in foreign exchange earnings from traditional export crops;
- Erosion and threatened loss of trade preferences for traditional export crops, the earnings of which are utilised for the purchase of imported food;
- Very high dependence on imported food and, more recently, uncertainty of food arrival associated with the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States;
- Growing incidence of pockets of poverty in many countries, suggesting that increased portions of the population may be encountering difficulty in procuring sufficient food;
- The possible relationship between the widespread consumption of imported food and the growing incidence, in the subregion, of such food related diseases as obesity, hypertension, cancer and diabetes; and
- An apparent overall decline in the productivity of land, labour and management in the agricultural sector, and a weakened capacity to supply food competitively.

Specific considerations

Member countries have among their priorities three national objectives: higher levels of food self-sufficiency;

increased diversification of agricultural production, including processed products; and greater competitiveness for both domestic and export production. In order to achieve these objectives, national food system policy must be based on the following strategies:

1. Creation of a macroeconomic, trade and sectoral policy framework in support of agricultural production growth, which would incorporate an appropriate structure of incentives, private sector participation, public investments in physical infrastructure and improvements of the institutional infrastructure.
2. Defence of access to traditional export markets in the short to medium term through cost reduction and product quality assurance, while exploring the long-term feasibility of sustaining the traditional exports sector.
3. Sustained promotion of non-traditional exports through the implementation of food safety and regional marketing strategies as well as ongoing research into production and sector expansion techniques.
4. Definition, identification and defence of sensitive industries.
5. Increased focus on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
6. Facilitation of increased intraregional trade, using such measures as joint venture investment and marketing programmes.
7. Development of new farming systems for food production (including crops for export). Such systems should utilise integrated technologies for livelihood diversification as well as integrated pest management, farm enterprises interaction, biotechnology and improved small farm competitiveness techniques. They should also aim towards increased system productivity and improved individual crop productivity.

Environmental Impact on the Food System

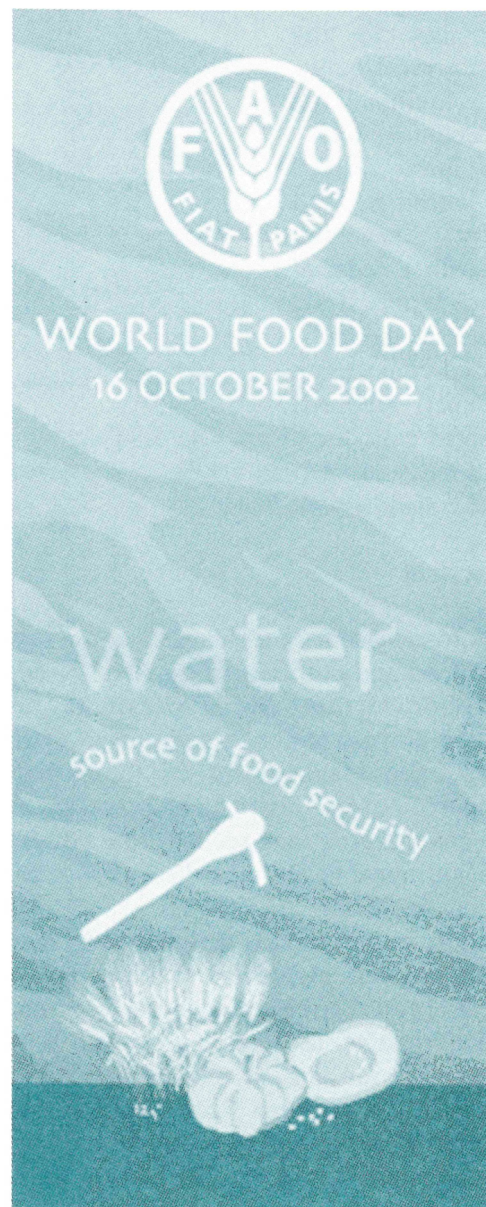
While the implementation of these strategies can have a positive, ongoing effect on the national food system, additional approaches must also be developed to address the potential impact of environmental phenomena. For example, Caribbean policy makers must grapple with the implications of global climate change and its likely

impact on subregional food systems. The possible decrease in precipitation, as has been identified in one climate change scenario, could threaten irrigation systems and might necessitate the introduction and growth of more drought tolerant crops.

The Global Environmental Change and Food Systems (GECAFS) Caribbean Project is one response to this challenge. The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean continues to support CDCC member countries in addressing food system policy issues through its participation on the Project committee, which is mandated to develop a research agenda for the Caribbean food system to respond to global climate changes.



For more information on GECAFS visit the Web site at: www.gecafs.org



NARROWING THE INFORMATION GAP: THE TRADE STATISTICS DATABASE ON CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

The Caribbean has in the past been the recipient of uncoordinated aid in areas directly relevant to the development of national policy. Accepting aid without first ensuring the existence of an implementation plan runs the risk of producing an embarrassing and potentially dysfunctional situation, particularly when such aid is received from donors who are extremely influential in the design of the database. As an example, the acceptance of incompatible hardware platforms sets the stage for fragmentation in data handling and use. The successful integration of data sets is sacrificed in favour of an IT solution that requires a long and steep learning curve and produces only one local expert. This person is embraced into the international community of experts in the particular software package and is likely to be lured from the subregion by employment offers from large firms that can offer attractive remuneration packages. The mid-term prognosis is that the recipient country will not be able to enjoy sustainability after the departure of the local expert.

Such a situation may occur in the area of trade, for example, where the absence of quality statistics on the performance of Caribbean countries may stall national policy development. The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has therefore established a trade and transportation statistics database to support CDCC countries in addressing this problem. The aim is to produce clean and comparable series across countries, with reporting in accordance with both the Harmonised System (HS) and the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Revision 3 of the United Nations. The data series as stored in the database begins in 1995 and ends in 2001. Data subsequent to 2001 will be added in annual updates.

The design of the database was suggested by the trade statisticians who, with Directors of Statistics in countries of the subregion, met at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in June 2001 to consider the type of data and analysis tools that would be needed to prepare trade and negotiation strategies. An examination of the software to house the databases and drive the queries showed that the popular and readily available database software packages could not satisfactorily handle a database of the projected size. Software that could address extremely large databases such as population census data would be the solution to the software search. In addition, the production of hard copy was viewed to be an expensive and inelegant solution in a time when Web access promises to eliminate the intervention of a statistical officer in the provision of data. Consequently, the software chosen must be capable of allowing the remote user to build a query - and therefore a table - of their choice without the intervention of a database administrator.

The database software that has been selected (*Redatam*) was developed by ECLAC to create and process hierarchical databases from censuses, surveys, vital statistics and other sources for local, regional and national analyses. It has been tested in applications that involve several millions of large data records and its design improved through several editions, making it now capable of delivering the analytic sophistication required by the trade database. The use of this software therefore confers on the database a distinct advantage over other solutions, particularly in the short to medium term. An even greater advantage is to the remote user, who can access data - up to the level of aggregation allowed to them in respect of any country included in the database - 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The official who has supplied data pertaining to a particular country will have access to the entire data set of that country, down to the most disaggregated level of data. Accordingly, they will be able to respond to queries of a high value-added nature in faster time.

Countries' concern for the confidentiality of their disaggregated data has also been addressed through the database design. Restriction of publication at that level on the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean Web site (www.eclacpos.org/redatam) ensures that there is no deflection of income-earning queries away from the national statistical offices.

Particular interest has been expressed in the database's capability, when combined with analytical tools such as those developed within the ECLAC system, to examine a country's competitiveness in trade. For the first time trade analysts and negotiators will be able to analyse their export performance to ascertain whether they are putting more or less effort in a declining market or whether they are increasing their market share in a developing market. Either of the two options could be valid if action were preceded by a strategy. The analysis allows such activity.

To date, several expressions of interest in the trade database and analytical facility have been communicated to the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. Trade experts have recognised the opportunity to converge around a software solution that would have validity in a number of other situations, thus reducing the length and slope of the learning curve. Two subregional seminars to showcase the database and its capabilities have already been convened; trade economists and negotiators have been invited to attend a third in early December 2002. Arising from this recognised need and growing interest, another aspect of ECLAC outreach work has been carved out.



ABSTRACTS OF SELECTED ECLAC/CDCC PUBLICATIONS: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2002

Economic Overview of Caribbean Countries 2001-2002

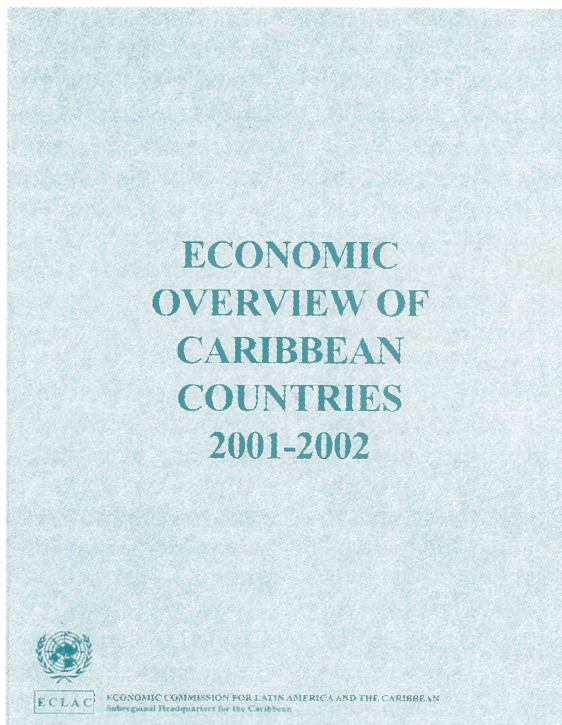
*ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 2002
LC/CAR/G.697*

Countries are organised into "Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)" and "Larger Caribbean Countries" groups for the purpose of this review. The document begins with an overview of general subregional trends in 2001. It then gives a more detailed assessment of economic policy issues and the performance of the critical sectors in each country. Prices, wages and employment, and then the external sector are addressed in subsequent sections. This overview considers the performance of subregional economies within a wider, global context, making specific reference to the effects of the United States recession and to the events in New York on 11 September 2001. A statistical annex is appended to this report.

Jamaica: Macro-Socio-Economic Assessment of the Damage done by Flood Rains and Landslides, May 2002

*ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 2002
LC/CAR/G.698*

This study was prepared to assess the damage caused by the flood rains that inundated Jamaica over the period 22 May to 2 June 2002. Both direct damage (losses to assets

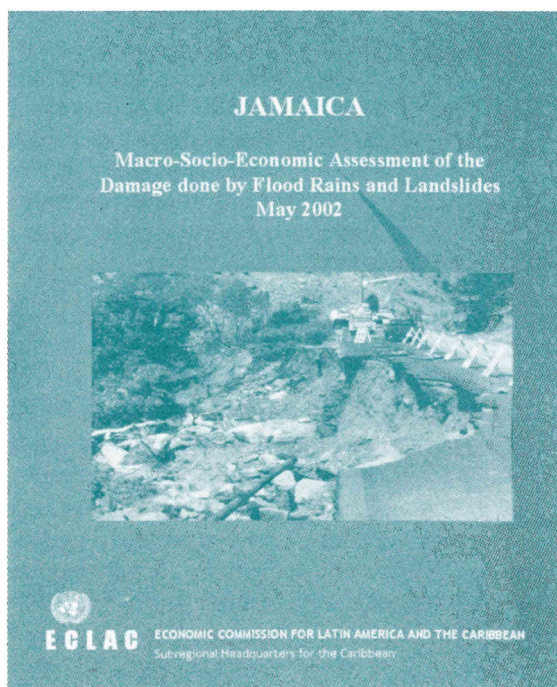


and stocks) and indirect damage (losses in income and production flow) to the social and productive sectors, the infrastructure and the environment are analysed; and their expected macroeconomic impact is considered. The study concludes with recommendations for a rehabilitation and reconstruction programme.

Report of Meeting on the Development of the Services Sector in the Caribbean

*ECLAC. Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 2002
LC/CAR/G.700*

This meeting of trade experts was convened to examine the expanding role of the services sector within Caribbean economic development. Presenters addressed the growth of the subregional services sector as well as, more specifically, the financial services, telecommunications and education subsectors. The meeting also considered problems relating to data collection and compilation for the measurement of service indicators; the implications of service markets liberalisation; and the need for tighter regulation of the financial services subsector.





UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

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