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Port of Spain, 11 September 2024

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2025¹

Subprogramme 12: Subregional activities in the Caribbean

¹ From the *Draft programme of work of the ECLAC system, 2025* (LC/PLEN.37/3), adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC.

SUBPROGRAMME 12: SUBREGIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CARIBBEAN

Objective

The objective to which this subprogramme contributes is to strengthen the sustainable development processes in the Caribbean, in the economic, social and environmental dimensions, and to enhance the subregion's cooperation with Latin America.

Presentation

As small island developing States (SIDS), countries of the Caribbean face significant challenges that constrain their ability to achieve sustainable development. These include high debt levels, low economic growth, finance constraints, declining export capacity, high unemployment (particularly among women and youth), high vulnerability to exogenous events, the varied impacts of climate change—notably extreme weather events—and environmental degradation. All these challenges are of an existential nature for Caribbean countries. The fundamental task, therefore, remains that of building long-term resilience to respond effectively to these obstacles.

Another major constraint is the high public debt and increasing debt service cost in the countries of the subregion, exacerbated in recent years by the impact of COVID-19. In the aftermath of the pandemic, there has been increased focus on promoting social and economic recovery, building resilience and deepening the economic integration of Caribbean economies. The subregion will need to attract the requisite resources to stimulate investment and growth. A substantial injection of long-term, low-cost financing will be needed to improve liquidity and ease the pressure on budgets with narrowed fiscal space, so to help countries address the ongoing threat of climate-related and other exogenous events, while responding to the expanding social needs of their populations. The Caribbean Resilience Fund proposed by ECLAC can play an integral role in reducing high debt, increasing opportunities for financing resilience, facilitating investment in the green and blue economy, promoting growth and competitiveness, while supporting social welfare initiatives.

Science, technology and innovation, including digital technologies, have assumed a pivotal role in the subregion's development, especially in the wake of the pandemic. Governments, the private sector, and other key development stakeholders will need to prioritize strategies to strengthen knowledge creation, including regional and domestic scientific, technical and innovation capacities.

Expanding and strengthening the use of digital technologies will also be crucial to progress toward the SDGs, particularly given the increased reliance on technology for governance, commerce, communication, education, and decent work, especially now that the world of work is increasingly receptive to teleworking arrangements. Work will also be undertaken to assess and promote the design of public policies for more effective and inclusive use of digital technologies and the provision of public services that facilitate resilience-building in a post-pandemic era. In this effort, special attention will be given to persons who are most vulnerable, including persons living with disabilities.

Support will be provided for member States to support resilience building through the redesign of trade, industrial and climate-related policies to further promote intraregional and extra-regional trade and investment. In addition, support will be given to innovative strategies to facilitate the recovery of the tourism industry in the subregion and promote youth employment through skills development and entrepreneurship. Exploration of measures to determine how best to harness the skills and resources of the Caribbean diaspora will be undertaken to assist in the economic recovery of the subregion. Economic diversification will be assessed through further exploration of opportunities in the agriculture, tourism and creative industries. Greater attention will also be given to promoting and supporting mainstreaming

of the gender perspective, gender equality and women's empowerment, tackling increasing threats of gender-based violence and defending their right to decent work.

To address the continuing challenge of data deficiency in the subregion, priority attention will be given to strengthening statistical legislation and infrastructure and expanding capacity for data collection and analysis, particularly in areas such as environmental data; the multisectoral impact of climate change; the informal economy; and the production of gender-disaggregated data, including time-use in paid and unpaid work.

Subregional and national action will continue to be framed by global platforms that advance sustainable development in SIDS, within the wider context of the SIDS Sustainable Development agenda including the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs, the SIDS 2024-2034 Plan of Action and following on the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS, Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Agreement on Financing Sustainable Development and the New Urban Development, with a view to ensuring that activities under the subprogramme continue to support sustainable growth and development for both members and associate members of ECLAC. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening the institutional infrastructure of Caribbean States, with a view to enhancing governance, integrated policy planning, and monitoring and reporting for the SDGs, the Caribbean SIDS ten-year review of the SAMOA Pathway and other sustainable development platforms. Relevant responses to and lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic will be integrated into all activities as necessary.

Strategy

Responsibility for implementation of the subprogramme rests with the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. Activities implemented under the subprogramme will focus on the following subject areas: 1. Caribbean development and cooperation; 2. Economic development and integration; 3. Digital development; 4. Social development; 5. Statistics; and 6. Climate change, SIDS and disaster risk management. Therefore, the main contributions to the 2030 Agenda under this subprogramme will be related to SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17.

The subregional headquarters will provide technical assistance and advisory services to member States, upon request, and conduct training activities, seminars and workshops for knowledge-sharing and the exchange of best practices and lessons learned. It will work closely with Caribbean development partners—including the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) institutions, other subregional intergovernmental organizations and international donor institutions—and in coordination with the United Nations country teams in the Caribbean to inform policymaking in the subregion, including through the provision of advisory and technical cooperation services.

The strategy is built on five pillars. First, activities under the subprogramme will be implemented in close cooperation with the substantive divisions and other subregional and national offices of ECLAC, in the context of the “Caribbean first” strategy launched by the Commission, and in collaboration with the wider United Nations development system. Second, as the secretariat for the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), the subregional headquarters will ensure that the work remains relevant to the subregion's needs. Third, the activities will facilitate the Caribbean's engagement in the follow-up to global conferences and frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SIDS 2024-2034 Plan of Action and following on the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS, the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and the Addis Ababa Agreement. The COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery strategies will be integrated into these development platforms. Fourth, the multidisciplinary response to the development needs of the countries will include: (i) promoting sound fiscal management, trade and

industry development; (ii) promoting wider application of digital technologies as instruments for sustainable development; (iii) strengthening institutional infrastructure and refining monitoring mechanisms for more effective oversight and coordination of implementation of global agendas; (iv) emphasizing the role of social development, including mainstreaming the gender perspective and youth engagement throughout the work of the subprogramme; (v) addressing climate change, environment and natural resources management and disaster risk management; (vi) strengthening the statistical capacity of Caribbean countries; and (vii) supporting efforts to develop a multidimensional vulnerability index to enable access to concessional finance and to review criteria for graduation from middle-income status.

Special attention will be paid to supporting national efforts to secure access to both short- and long-term resources according to the vulnerability of each country. These resources will be used to support the recovery of Caribbean economies in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and disasters that have occurred. Fifth, in fulfilling its think tank and thought leadership role, the Commission, through its subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, will continue to undertake research and analysis and promote strategies for sustainable development and disaster risk management, paying particular attention to post- COVID-19 growth and development. The visibility of its work will be enhanced through a vibrant outreach programme.

The main beneficiaries under the subprogramme will be government authorities and officials from the region's countries, civil society entities, academic and private sector institutions, and subregional entities.

Activities

Subject area 12.1: Caribbean development and cooperation

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Intergovernmental meetings

A meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC).

2. Other substantive activities

Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts, information kits

- (i) Four issues of the *FOCUS* magazine.
- (ii) Twelve issues of *The Hummingbird* newsletter, covering matters such as digital, economic, environmental, social and statistical development.

3. Intermediate activities

Contribution to substantive servicing of selected activities of the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political and Peace building Affairs (DPPA) on issues related to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Subject area 12.2: Economic development and integration

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Ad hoc expert group meetings

- (i) A meeting on a selected area of economic development in the Caribbean.
- (ii) A meeting on regional integration in the Caribbean.

2. Recurrent publications

- (i) *Economic Survey of the Caribbean, 2025.*
- (ii) *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of the Caribbean, 2025.*

3. Non-recurrent publications

- (i) A study on a selected area of economic development in the Caribbean.
- (ii) A study on regional integration in the Caribbean.

4. Other substantive activities

Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts, information kits

A policy brief on a selected area of economic development in the Caribbean.

5. Advisory services

Provision, upon request, of technical cooperation and advisory services to countries on macroeconomic policies and regional integration.

6. Training courses, seminars and workshops

Cooperation with government entities, academic institutions, international organizations and regional bodies to develop or support training activities in areas relating to trade, regional integration or economic development in the Caribbean.

7. Technical cooperation projects

It is expected that a project will be ongoing on the post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery of tourism-based economies in the Caribbean.

8. Intermediate activities

Contributions to the annual editions of the ECLAC flagship publications *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*, *Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean*, and *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean*.

The implementation of operational activities, including advisory services and training activities, will be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

Subject area 12.3: Digital development

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Ad hoc expert group meetings

A meeting of experts to discuss a selected area of digital development in the Caribbean.

2. Recurrent publications

A study on a selected area of digital development in the Caribbean.

3. Other substantive activities

Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts and information kits

A policy brief on a selected area of digital development in the Caribbean.

4. Advisory services

Provision, upon request, of technical cooperation and advisory services to countries on digital development.

5. Training courses, seminars and workshops

Cooperation with government entities, academic institutions, international organizations and regional bodies to develop or support training activities on a selected issue on digital development in the Caribbean.

6. Intermediate activities

Provision of inputs for ECLAC databases on ICT indicators, including integrated follow-up to the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society and the Digital Agenda for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC).

The implementation of operational activities, including advisory services and training activities, will be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources

Subject area 12.4: Social development

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Ad hoc expert group meetings

A meeting of experts to examine selected population and development issues in the Caribbean.

2. Non-recurrent publications

A study to examine selected population and development issues in the Caribbean.

3. Advisory services

Provision, upon request, of technical cooperation and advisory services to countries on social and population development and gender affairs in the subregion.

4. Training courses, seminars, and workshops

Cooperation with government entities, academic institutions, international organizations and/ or regional bodies for the development of training activities on youth engagement in sustainable development in the Caribbean.

5. Intermediate activities

- (i) Inputs for the *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean* and the annual report of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- (ii) Contribution to substantive servicing of selected activities of the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC.
- (iii) Contribution to substantive servicing of selected activities of the Division for Social Development of ECLAC

The implementation of operational activities, including advisory services and training activities, will be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

Subject area 12.5: Statistics

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Ad hoc expert group meetings

A meeting of experts to discuss a selected area of statistics for sustainable development in the Caribbean.

2. Non-recurrent publications

A study on a selected area of statistics for sustainable development in the Caribbean.

3. Other substantive activities

Technical materials

Updating and maintenance of databases on selected statistical indicators.

Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts and information kits

A policy brief on a selected area of statistics for sustainable development in the Caribbean.

4. Advisory services

Provision, upon request, of technical cooperation and advisory services to countries on statistics and statistical development in the subregion.

5. Training courses, seminars and workshops

Cooperation with government entities, academic institutions, international organizations and/or regional bodies to develop training activities related to production, analysis, and dissemination of social and demographic statistics in the Caribbean.

6. Intermediate activities

Inputs for the *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean*, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean*, and for the annual report of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The implementation of operational activities, including advisory services and training activities, will be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

Subject area 12.6: Climate change, SIDS and disaster risk management

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Ad hoc expert group meetings

- (i) A meeting of experts on selected areas of climate change and disaster risk management in the Caribbean.
- (ii) A meeting of experts to examine issues related to SIDS and the SDGs in the Caribbean.

2. Recurrent publications

A study to examine issues related to SIDS and the SDGs in the Caribbean.

3. Non-recurrent publications

A study on a selected area of climate change and disaster risk management in the Caribbean.

4. Other substantive activities

Technical materials

Updating and maintenance of the science and technology related database in the Caribbean.

Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts and information kits

A policy brief on a selected area of climate change, disaster risk management in the Caribbean.

5. Advisory services

Provision, upon request, of technical cooperation and advisory services to countries in environmental development, natural resources management, disaster preparedness, and disaster risk management.

6. Training courses, seminars and workshops

Cooperation with government entities, academic institutions, international organizations and regional bodies to develop or support training activities on one or more environmental development, disaster risk management or resilience-building issues relevant to the Caribbean.

The implementation of operational activities, including advisory services and training activities, will be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.