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SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN

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REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE

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PART I

LIST OF MAJOR DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following decisions and recommendations emanated from the discussions of the meeting:

Agenda item 5

- More direct action by ECLAC, particularly in terms of social and economic analysis and the development of relevant policy recommendations, as well as the strengthening of evidence-based policy formulation, are needed to address the issues of vulnerability and social cohesion in the Caribbean;
- In reforming social protection systems, the concept of solidarity needs to be retained to ensure social equity and broad access.

Agenda item 6

- Given the lessons of the past decade, the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action requires that subregional organizations, civil society and the private sector take responsibility for: identifying strategic issues and outcome indicators; establishing routine monitoring and evaluation systems; and promoting partnerships;
- A regional coordination mechanism was established to implement the Mauritius Strategy in the Caribbean region. The political oversight responsibility was assumed by the CDCC Session of Ministers, and the task of serving as secretariat was assigned to the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. A technical advisory committee, including all members of the Core Group that prepared the proposal for the regional coordinating mechanism, together with the participation of Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and UNEP, was asked to formulate terms of reference for the mechanism for its national focal points, and the structure and functions of the secretariat, within six weeks of the CDCC meeting.

Agenda item 7

- Information and communication technologies must be a tool for development;
- Member States of ECLAC will be invited to designate a member country to represent the subregion on the eLAC 2007 Monitoring Committee;
- ECLAC and CARICOM should finalize a joint proposal for presentation to the European Union concerning the funding of a regional project to advance the information society in the Caribbean.

Agenda item 8

- ECLAC was congratulated on its work over the past biennium, encouraged to take on the important issues in its programme for the current biennium and commended for the orientation of its draft programme of work for 2008-2009;
- ECLAC subprogramme 12, on subregional activities in the Caribbean, should be made more flexible in order to respond to the current needs of the subregion. Some of the items in the 2008-2009 work programme should be considered for execution in the current biennium, such as:
 - A study on the cumulative effects of natural disasters;
 - A study on social marginalization, crime and violence;
 - Benchmarking the information society - an approach to measuring the information society in the Caribbean.
- The ECLAC secretariat is requested to consider flexibility in expanding the analysis of the position of the associate members with regard to the economic and financial impact of either their inclusion or exclusion in regional trade integration processes;
- Social marginalization, in particular of the young male population, as well as crime and violence are important issues to be studied by ECLAC;
- The work on natural disaster assessments should be enhanced with activities focusing on disaster management and risk reduction;
- ECLAC should continue its work in providing support to the Association of Caribbean States in the preparation of a proposal for submission to the Sixth-first session of the United Nations General Assembly concerning the declaration by the General Assembly of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development;
- The memorandum of understanding between ECLAC and the University of the Virgin Islands should be implemented.
- The presentation by the Deputy Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico was welcomed. Coordination between the two ECLAC subregional headquarters should be continued and intensified, particularly in light of the fact that some members of the CDCC are covered by that office.

PART II

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

Place and date of the session

The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) convened the twenty-first session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) at the ministerial level in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 16 and 17 January 2006.

Attendance

The meeting was attended by representatives of the following CDCC member countries: Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The participating associate members were Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. The list of participants appears as an annex to this report.

Representatives of the following organizations of the United Nations system attended the session: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO).

The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), the Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC along with the Secretary of the Commission and senior staff from Santiago Headquarters, Port of Spain and Mexico subregional offices were in attendance.

Agenda item 1 - Opening statements

The representative of the United States Virgin Islands and outgoing Chair of CDCC, Dr. Carlyle Corbin, Minister of State for External Affairs welcomed the delegates and observed that a number of important developments had taken place since his Government had hosted the twentieth session of CDCC in 2004. Those events included the appointments of Mr. José Luis Machinea as Executive Secretary of ECLAC and Mr. Neil Pierre as Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, both of whom had made important contributions to the work of ECLAC and CDCC. He also expressed his gratitude for the work of the CDCC

Secretariat and especially of Mr. Arthur Gray, the recently retired acting Secretary of CDCC, for his dedication and commitment in promoting efforts to address the issues affecting small island developing States (SIDS).

Since the last CDCC plenary session, the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had been held in Mauritius following preparatory sessions at the regional level. He noted that CDCC had played a critical role in that process and requested its support in pursuing the Mauritius Strategy to Implement the Barbados Programme of Action in conjunction with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). He then went on to provide a comparative report on the experiences of SIDS of other regions.

Regional institutions continued to address a number of issues affecting the sustainable development of SIDS. Key topics in that regard included free and fair trade, the environment, energy supply and costs, and the impact of natural disasters. CDCC had a singular role to play in taking up those challenges because its work covered such a broad scope within the subregion.

In view of the pan-Caribbean significance of CDCC, the representatives might wish to consider adding the term “pan” to the name of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee in order to draw an important distinction between it and other subregional bodies.

ECLAC and CDCC provided the non-independent Caribbean countries with a crucial window for engaging the international system, and continued advocacy for an enhanced role for those countries should be a priority. It was important to remember that, when political support for the CDCC waned in the mid-1980s, the associate members had taken on the mantle of leadership and advocacy.

The outgoing Chair said that he felt it was an honour to pass on the leadership of CDCC to Trinidad and Tobago and looked forward to working with the new Chair in the year ahead.

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Mr. Jose Luis Machinea, expressed his appreciation to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for its hospitality and generosity in hosting the twenty-first session of CDCC, together with his gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Dr. Carlyle Corbin for his distinguished leadership during his tenure as Chairman of the CDCC.

He stressed the role of CDCC as a platform for the expression of a Caribbean identity within ECLAC and for expansion of associate member States’ international relations, as well as its role within ECLAC in promoting policy dialogue and international cooperation in the Caribbean.

While praising the efforts undertaken by CDCC since its establishment, he outlined some of the new challenges that CDCC was facing, along with priorities that should be addressed within the framework of the development process. The two primary challenges were:

1. To reinstate development as the first priority on the political agenda together with comprehensive, tailor-made strategies to respond to regional and national needs; and

2. To implement the various action plans adopted over the past decade at the series of international conferences and meetings convened by the United Nations system.

Eight specific priorities should guide the Commission's efforts to help Governments to meet those challenges in the coming years. Those priorities were:

1. Fostering complementarities and synergies between growth and equity, between competitiveness and social cohesion, between those elements and the consolidation of democracy, and between economic growth and environmental sustainability;

2. Strengthening the consensus regarding the importance of a healthy macroeconomic environment, good governance and the opportunities offered by globalization;

3. Improving the understanding of the complex interaction between economic and social problems;

4. Increasing productivity through structural change;

5. Promoting a meaningful form of special and differential treatment for small and vulnerable economies;

6. Incorporating the environmental dimension into the region's development agenda;

7. Strengthening governance institutions in order to improve the balance between the market and the State;

8. Supporting the CDCC member States in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In order to encourage the developed countries to provide support in meeting those challenges and building global partnerships for development, the countries of the region should adopt a common position on a wide range of issues.

In closing he underscored the favourable economic conditions in the region and called upon Governments to take advantage of those positive trends to strengthen the foundations for future growth through regional integration and international collaboration.

The representative of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Senator the Honourable Knowlson Gift, Minister for Foreign Affairs, welcomed all participants and expressed his confidence that the twenty-first session of CDCC would serve to reinforce the relevance and validity of this unique forum for Caribbean countries. In assuming the Chair of CDCC, he expressed his gratitude for the outstanding leadership of the outgoing Chair, the representative of the United States Virgin Islands.

CDCC served as a forum for intraregional dialogue, interaction and collaboration on development policies and initiatives in a very diverse subregion. It played a vital role as an umbrella organization that served as a link among the subregion, its partners in other regions and the United Nations system and as a mechanism for coordinating United Nations support for the Caribbean subregion.

The success of CDCC in fostering dialogue and collaboration between CARICOM and non-CARICOM member States and Cuba was one of its outstanding achievements. He praised the secretariat's work in providing policy advice and recommendations to Caribbean Governments, in assisting them in their preparations for and follow up of key international meetings and in furthering collaboration and integration both within the subregion and the region as a whole. The secretariat was also making valuable contributions in the area of disaster assessments and in the provision of studies on various development issues of critical concern to the subregion.

The international context was fundamentally different from the situation that existed when CDCC was established. In view of the types of challenges facing CDCC members in today's uni-polar world, the need for a vigorous CDCC was self-evident. As incoming Chair, he would urge the Caribbean to reinforce its commitment and investment in CDCC.

He suggested that the revised Constituent Declaration and Functions and Rules of Procedure of CDCC, adopted at the thirtieth session of ECLAC in 2004, provided the necessary tools to enable CDCC to respond to changing regional and international circumstances.

It was important to recognize the uniqueness of the Caribbean when shaping a subregional or national development agenda. The Caribbean identity of CDCC placed it in an ideal position to serve as a mechanism for linking subregional needs to international development efforts and for seeking tailor-made international support for the region. In that regard, he recommended that an appropriate adjustment should be made in the work programme for the biennium to permit the preparation of a study on strategies to reverse social vulnerability.

In referring to recently convened international meetings on information and communication technology (ICT) and sustainable development, he emphasized the need for the subregion to take advantage of the new potential offered by ICT and called for the establishment of a regional mechanism for coordinating the implementation of the SIDS programme of action in the Caribbean.

Agenda item 2 - Election of officers

The Bureau was elected as follows:

Chair: Trinidad and Tobago

Vice-Chairs: First Vice-Chair - Barbados

Second Vice-Chair - Aruba
Third Vice-Chair – United States Virgin Islands

Rapporteur: Suriname

**Agenda Item 3 - Adoption of the agenda and
Agenda Item 4 - Procedural matters and organization of work**

The following agenda for the twenty-first session of CDCC was adopted:

1. Opening statements
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Procedural matters and organization of work
5. Social protection and the Millennium Development Goals: A Caribbean perspective
6. Follow-up to the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action (including discussion of the “Caribbean Sea Proposal”)
7. Implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society
8. The ECLAC programmes of work for 2004-2009, including the draft proposal for subregional activities in the Caribbean, 2008-2009
9. Adoption of decisions and resolutions
10. Date and venue of the thirteenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee
11. Other matters
12. Closing session.

**Agenda Item 5
Social protection and the Millennium Development Goals:
A Caribbean perspective**

A representative of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) gave a presentation on the globalization of the healthcare industry and opportunities for developing countries in that area, particularly with respect to the possibility of providing offshore healthcare services as the costs for such services continue to rise in developed countries. Contributing factors included the movement of healthcare providers and facilities to less costly locations, the growing willingness of patients, particularly the elderly, to go abroad for more affordable and timely treatment, the fact that healthcare systems in the subregion were up to international standards and their geographical proximity to developed countries. The subregion’s tourism infrastructure also complemented the establishment of hospitals and clinics catering to patients from abroad by providing post-procedure recovery facilities. The example of Jamaica and the United States was used to illustrate how opportunities in the provision of health services by countries in the region could be harnessed. Although some constraints on the establishment of offshore healthcare did exist (such as barriers to the movement of professionals, the non-

portability of health insurance in developed countries, the need for standardization and accreditation systems, as well as multilateral trade arrangements) they were not insurmountable.

A representative of the ECLAC Secretariat outlined the central ideas to be analysed in the principal substantive document being prepared for presentation at the forthcoming ECLAC session, to be entitled *Shaping the future of social protection: access, financing and solidarity*. Access to economic, social and cultural rights needed to be improved through the use of public policy mechanisms, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of resources assigned to the social protection sector should be increased. The demographic transition in Latin America and the Caribbean, the severity of unemployment and the structure of the labour market, which included a large informal sector, posed numerous challenges for the system. These factors had a significant impact because financing for social protection was based upon employment contributions.

The two-tier segmentation of the health sector discriminated against the poor and elderly, and policies that would open up access to all persons, regardless of their social and economic circumstances, were therefore needed.

Pension system reform was necessary in order to avert insolvency. While various options were available, reform in the Caribbean had largely been confined to parametric adjustments. In particular, contributions should be linked to benefits, and access for the elderly must be broadened. This issue called for further policy research regarding solidarity funding and regulation of the sector. The development of a societal covenant in relation to social security benefits was also needed.

A representative of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean gave a presentation on scaling up the strategies for social development and the way forward for Caribbean SIDS which included an overview of social development and progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the Caribbean SIDS, together with a profile of poverty in the region. The available data for measuring such progress was often insufficient because of differences in methodology and timelines. Consideration should also be given to disaggregating indicators by sex and including specific indicators to measure forms of inequality that were particularly relevant to the Caribbean.

Given the Caribbean's ecological fragility and its susceptibility to natural disasters, the preservation of environmental sustainability remained a key objective. In addition, the development of a comprehensive subregional strategy for the implementation of the Goals could be of particular benefit.

Policies providing for the inclusion of social vulnerability analyses in poverty reduction strategies were needed in order to foster social cohesion. Recommendations in that regard included strengthening the culture of evidence-based policy formulation in the social sector, continuing work on the construction of a social vulnerability index, undertaking further policy research to integrate gender equity issues in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment initiatives, and incorporating gender equity indicators into policymaking processes.

The presenter from the University of the West Indies, in his comment on the presentations, emphasized that one of the central issues raised in all three presentations was the exclusion of large segments of the population from the mainstream development process and economy. Economic and social justice for excluded persons should be ensured by creating a mosaic of policies for building capacity for effective citizen participation. The conceptual framework of social vulnerability allowed for a more proactive approach to policy formulation and management. Whether globalization would lead to improvements for those outside the global economic system or whether it would lead to increased marginalization of the subregion and increased impoverishment of its people remained to be seen. In relation to opportunities for developing countries to provide health services, the Caribbean should use its location to create a global market. However, the potentially exploitative nature of transnational corporations' operations should be taken into consideration.

The representative of Guyana said that the global development agenda appeared to have shifted to one of peace and security at the expense of development per se. Because of its vulnerability, the Caribbean must find new niches in order to be able to compete, yet, paradoxically, the region was exporting much-needed skilled human resources. In combination with the negative effects of HIV/AIDS, this was having a devastating effect on the youth of the subregion, while the Governments' ability to provide comprehensive social protection in the midst of natural disasters, increased debt burdens, the erosion of the trade-related tax base and the move from traditional stay-over tourism to cruise tourism was questionable. Given existing national capacity constraints, more direct action by ECLAC, particularly in terms of social and economic analysis and the development of relevant policy recommendations, was required. The Millennium Development Goals alone would not bring about development; emphasis needed to be placed on the international financing of development. The subregion should also build strategic alliances with development partners in order to address social cohesion and protection issues and provide financing for trade and investment funds.

The representative of Cuba said that in his country social security was conceived of as a comprehensive system encompassing job security, the workplace, labour conditions, income, instruction and training, representation, responses to economic crises and natural disasters, and priority assistance for mothers and their children, persons with disabilities, older adults and all people requiring it. A full 100% of the Cuban population enjoyed social protection. More than 1.8 million citizens received monetary benefits, in-kind assistance and services under the social security system. Of that group, 1,464,049 were retirees and pensioners, and another 395,821 were beneficiaries in other categories. He made the distinction between globalization imposed and globalization that will allow the region to grow. In this respect he stressed the importance of regional cooperation and the pooling of resources benefiting sustainable development. In the last 10 years alone, over 10,000 Caribbean nationals suffering from ophthalmologic pathologies had traveled to Cuba for treatment under *Operación Milagro* (Operation Miracle) at no cost. In addition, 3,000 Caribbean students were studying medicine, engineering, physical culture and other specializations in Cuba, and over a span of more than 30 years now, more than 4,000 young people from the area had graduated from Cuban schools. On another front, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) facilitated integration in both the social and economic sectors. He noted that the data on Cuba, as quoted in the presentation by the representative of CRNM on "Globalization of the healthcare industry. Opportunities for developing countries,"

was cited as being drawn from a document published in 2002 by the World Bank, an institution to which Cuba did not belong. He stressed that the paper's proposals would limit opportunities for market-oriented actions and failed to reflect the above-mentioned cooperation initiatives aimed at fostering the well-being of the people of the subregion".

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC congratulated Guyana on assuming the presidency of the Rio Group. He furthermore said that, rather than confining the Commission's efforts to academic research, now was the time for policy action. The Millennium Development Goals must be seen as a roadmap. The failure of developed countries to fulfill their pledge to increase development aid to the equivalent of 0.7% of their GDP was lamentable. In point of fact, four times more was spent on agricultural subsidies than on development aid. The current weakness of social protection systems lay in their dependency on employment contributions, which had the effect of excluding large segments of the population working in the informal sector and the unemployed. The result was low system coverage and problems in terms of equity and access. The current lack of solidarity needed to be addressed in order to create a more equitable system. He drew attention to the report on progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was a joint publication of the agencies of the United Nations operating in Latin America and the Caribbean, spear-headed by ECLAC and which contained a full analysis on this subject for the countries of the Caribbean.

Agenda Item 6 - Follow-up to the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action

The Secretariat presented the "Status report on activities of the core group established at the Caribbean Regional Meeting to Follow-up Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy" (document CDCC21/2006/11) and the "Report on the Caribbean Regional Meeting to Follow-up on Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy" (document CDCC-21/2006/9 (LC/CAR/L.65)) in connection with this item.

The panellist from the University of the West Indies stated that the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action had progressed very slowly over the past 10 years. A number of key philosophical, theoretical, strategic and practical issues needed to be addressed in planning the way forward. Sustainable development should be approached within the context of specific types of economies and their current stages of development, which could be divided into the categories of "over-developed", "underdeveloped" and "sustainably developing" economies based on the sustainability of their per capita consumption and their generation of pollution.

It was important for subregional organizations (including the University of the West Indies), civil society and the private sector to take responsibility for implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action in three areas:

- Supporting Governments in fleshing out the theoretical and strategic policy framework, which would include the construction of outcome indicators;

- Establishing systems for routinely monitoring progress over the remaining nine years; and
- Ensuring the participation of all stakeholders in a biannual review of its implementation from 2007 onward.

The representative of the CARICOM Secretariat, in presenting the "Draft Caribbean Subregional Work Programme for Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy" recalled that one of the recommendations emerging out of the Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting to Review the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS was for the CARICOM Secretariat, in cooperation with other subregional institutions, to formulate the position to be maintained by the Caribbean subregion in the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005) based on the national assessment reports it had received and taking into consideration the concerns of the associate members of ECLAC.

The draft action plan drew upon comments from Caribbean States and relevant agencies and upon the contents of selected documents. Its overall objective was to build the capacity of the public and private sectors in Caribbean SIDS to facilitate policy development in the 23 thematic areas covered by the plan in accordance with the Mauritius outcome document.

The current draft action plan thus provided a framework for activities related to Agenda 21, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. It also focused on the capacity to apply best practices under the umbrella of existing institutional arrangements and recognized the importance of enhancing national ownership to strengthen development as reflected in a programmatic approach. On that basis, the draft action plan could be used to develop both a donor strategy and an investment programme which would provide scope for bankable sources of financing.

The Chair of the Core Group formed to consider the establishment of a regional coordinating mechanism on the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action in the Caribbean then presented a report on the outcome of the Group's deliberations. The representative of Saint Lucia furthermore stated that the regional coordinating mechanism needs to be country driven whereby involvement of all stakeholders was crucial for its implementation.

The representatives of Barbados and Guyana indicated their support in principle for the proposed objectives and structure of the regional coordinating mechanism and inquired about specific technical and financial details. The representative of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) indicated the willingness of his organization to utilize that mechanism for programme evaluation purposes. The representative of Jamaica also supports the establishment of the regional coordinating mechanism in principle but stressed the importance for the identification of national focal points.

There was some discussion on the methodology of financing as well as queries regarding the structure of the secretariat for the proposed regional coordinating mechanism and on its coherence with other initiatives being pursued in coordination with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The meeting requested that the Core Group expanded to include UNEP, and reconvene before the close of the CDCC session in order to consider two issues: the composition of its technical advisory committee and possible modalities for financing the work of the mechanism's secretariat.

Agenda Item 7 - Implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society

The representative of the ECLAC Headquarters outlined some of the recommendations tabled at the Tunis phase of the Summit and pointed the way forward for Latin American and Caribbean countries. One of those recommendations was that a regional mechanism should be established for the implementation of eLAC 2007 and that Ecuador, Brazil, El Salvador and a member country of CARICOM should serve as the regional focal point. It was his view that the CARICOM country should be selected in the course of the current CDCC session, and that view was endorsed by the Secretary of the Commission. Another recommendation had been that ECLAC should provide technical cooperation and should establish a collaborative portal to facilitate the coordination of the working groups defined in eLAC 2007.

An overview of the ECLAC programme on the information society was provided. The initial findings of that programme indicated that the road towards information societies in developing countries involved significant structural differences from that of developed countries, together with a number of major constraints. Standards should be promoted in order to develop knowledge transfer among countries and enable information interoperability. A need existed to build the capacity and to arrive at estimates regarding the beneficiaries of the ICT revolution and its economic and social impacts from a development perspective. It was equally important to build stronger institutional capacities to monitor national plans and regional activities. Public policies oriented towards extending ICT use must be cross-cutting and must be coherent in order to ensure that ICTs were used to build better public and private institutions and hence a better society.

A representative of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean then briefed the delegates on the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva in 2003, as a backdrop for the discussion of the second phase of the Summit, held in Tunis in November 2005. During the Geneva phase, the requirements that needed to be met in order for countries to create an information society had been outlined, and access and connectivity issues had been analysed in depth. A comprehensive stock-taking exercise had been undertaken by countries prior to the Tunis phase in order to assess progress in implementing the Geneva Plan of Action. In the case of the Caribbean, that exercise had been conducted by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean.

Issues raised at the Tunis phase of the Summit had included the implementation of the Digital Solidarity Fund and Internet governance. It had been emphasized that countries should strive towards ICT-enabled development strategies which would boost literacy, enhance the

capacity of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, improve governance and access to government information, and assist in disaster mitigation.

A project on the Caribbean Information Society had been designed to support implementation of the plan formulated at the Summit, however obtaining funding for the project remained a challenge. In the meantime, the Caribbean Document Centre had been retooled to cope with the demands of the information society, and was now known as the Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre (CKMC). A knowledge management strategy had been developed which resulted in a number of communication and research efficiencies in the organization. CKMC stood ready to collaborate with countries in their efforts to develop an information society.

The representative of Trinidad and Tobago, in response to the two presentations stated that ICT must be a tool for development. She outlined her Government's views regarding the Summit outcome, as well as what should be done at the regional level and how Trinidad and Tobago could collaborate in that process. In that connection, reference was made to Trinidad and Tobago's Fast Forward Plan, to be implemented by 2008, together with some of the projects contained therein.

Challenges confronting Caribbean countries, she noted, included the problems posed by telecommunication costs, human capacity, the brain drain and a lack of coordination at the technical level. Accurate measurement and indicators were also extremely important, as evidence-based policies were needed in order to attract assistance from the international community.

The representative of the ECLAC Secretariat noted that a consultant had been appointed to the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean on a short-term basis, in order to support the implementation of eLAC in the subregion. The consultant then observed that information technology (IT) should not be regarded as a commodity but as a tool for human development, hence the need to ensure the placement of high quality hardware, infrastructure and training at the national level.

The representative of the Dominican Republic stated that his Government placed great emphasis on the inclusion of all sectors of society in the development of a national IT strategy. His Government also saw the importance of using IT to improve competitiveness.

The representative of Barbados stated that his Government had prepared a national strategy for ICT. Given the influence that the Internet could have on the national community, his Government also advocated the development of a subregional policy for Internet governance.

**Agenda Item 8 - The ECLAC programmes of work for 2004-2009,
including the draft proposal for subregional activities
in the Caribbean, 2008-2009**

The Secretary of the Commission provided an overview of the major achievements of ECLAC during the 2004-2005 biennium and gave the highlights of the ECLAC programme of work for 2008-2009. Special mention was made of the set of studies on social protection conducted for the issue paper to be presented at the thirty-first session of the Commission. She also mentioned the inter-agency work done in monitoring the progress made towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals, which resulted in a publication that has been widely circulated and downloaded from the ECLAC web page.

She described the Commission's work on natural disasters, as attested to by reports published for Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti and Jamaica. Hurricane Stan had also made it necessary to take action in Mexico and Guatemala. Such regional integration was exemplified in the study entitled "The Impact of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) on the Member States of the OECS regarding the Chapter 7 of the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas".

Some of the priority themes for the coming years were the consolidation of macroeconomic stability; improvement of the region's linkages with the international economy, including the promotion of meaningful special and differential treatment for small and vulnerable economies in international trade arrangements; enhancement of social cohesion; equity and human rights; increasing the productivity potential of the region's economies; and increasing the incorporation of the environmental dimension into the regional development agenda.

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean delivered a presentation on the work programmes for 2004-2009. He highlighted the limited availability of extrabudgetary funds and the high vacancy rate. Nevertheless, the Subregional Headquarters in 2004-2005 undertook a large number of outputs (192) with a small staff. In spite of those limitations, the rate of completion was 96%. The staff had undertaken 207 missions, responded to 90 technical assistance requests and had set up the Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre.

Major accomplishments included the disaster assessments conducted in Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Grenada, Jamaica, Haiti and Guyana. The Subregional Headquarters had also conducted training workshops to familiarize 189 persons with the ECLAC natural disaster assessment methodology. The work on natural disasters was undertaken jointly with the Subregional Headquarters in Mexico.

Five intergovernmental meetings and 13 expert group meetings (with a total of 655 participants) had been held. In addition, the office structure had been reorganized and a new partnership approach had been launched. In addition, the Subregional Headquarters had undertaken 17 training workshops for 475 persons in social, statistics and natural disaster impact assessments.

Lessons learned during the 2004-2006 biennium included:

- Fewer and more strategic outputs should be undertaken;
- The relevance of outputs should be increased;
- Partnerships needed to be strengthened in order to maximize resources and impacts;
- Disaster risk reduction should figure as a central part of the work on natural disasters;
- A new substantive focus on ICT and knowledge management should be added;
- A multidisciplinary approach should be promoted through cross-unit collaboration on studies and technical assistance.

The current focus of the 2006-2007 programme included the following activities:

- Analysis of the fiscal impact of trade liberalization;
- Studies on economic trends in the Caribbean;
- Analysis of sustainable development from a human rights perspective;
- Studies on water resources management;
- Follow-up of the implementation of global commitments emanating from international conferences;
- Collection, dissemination and use of social statistics in social policy formulation;
- Review of gender politics in the subregion;
- Assessment of poverty reduction initiatives in the region.

He then outlined the major guidelines for the strategic orientation for the 2008-2009 work programme by area. Within the area of economic development, the Director highlighted the following concentrations.

- Development of a programme of activities and preparation of studies on economic forecasting and modeling;
- Enhanced publication of the economic survey of the Caribbean;
- A study on structural changes in the Caribbean and linkages between the services sector and other economic activities;
- A study on costing the Millennium Development Goals;
- A study on the impact on Caribbean countries of global, hemispheric and regional trade arrangements;
- A study on fiscal policy regimes in the Caribbean;
- A study on objectives, instruments and transmission mechanisms for monetary policy in the Caribbean.

In the area of environment and technology, the director stressed the following goals of the work programme:

- A study on the development of biotechnology in the Caribbean;
- A study on energy issues in the Caribbean;
- A study on disaster risk reduction;

- A study on the cumulative effects of natural disasters;
- Support for the implementation of the SIDS Plan of Action.

In the area of statistics and social development, the Director drew the participants' attention to the following objectives:

- Publication of a biennial Caribbean development report;
- A report on the use of databases of social and gender statistics in the development of policies and programmes;
- A study on planning for social policies aimed at poverty reduction;
- A study to identify critical issues in the provision of social security for particularly vulnerable populations;
- A study on social marginalization, crime and violence;
- A study on progress in the implementation of programmes of action on population and development;
- A study to identify the linkages between gender inequality, poverty and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
- Further development of the social vulnerability index for SIDS.

In the area of knowledge and information management, programmed outputs included:

- Benchmarking the information society - an approach to measuring the information society in the Caribbean;
- Monitoring of advances in information and communications for development;
- Promotion of the Subregional Headquarters' work in the area of knowledge management.

The Director then identified a number of issues that were to be addressed, including:

- The need to obtain feedback on progress and inputs for direction and relevance;
- The importance of strengthening the staffing table in certain areas, particularly ICT for development, disaster risk reduction and programme oversight;
- A stronger partnership approach that would facilitate the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources to support strategic areas;
- Better forward planning of outputs to ensure targeted outcomes and internal cross-collaboration;
- Greater focus on regional training and capacity-building initiatives for the public and private sectors;
- Increased emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of outputs.

The tools proposed for use in addressing these needs included:

- A new compliance and management tool being piloted for use in programme planning and oversight;
- Ongoing client feedback forms;

- Internal and external evaluations;
- Efforts to build strategic partnerships with the Caribbean Development Bank, European Union, Inter-American Development Bank and the International Development Research Centre, which had been identified as potential partners, and with other regional partners and international agencies;
- Use of existing ECLAC tools for training and capacity building (i.e., CAN, MAGIC, disaster impact methodology);
- Enhancement of statistical databases (Caribtrade, social statistics and ICT databases) to inform policy and measurements;
- Enhanced dissemination of outputs.

The Deputy Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico focused on activities dealing with Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Puerto Rico. He also provided an overview of the general activities of the Subregional Headquarters, its activities at the country level and areas of collaboration between it and the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean.

Some of its general activities were the preparation of the annual economic survey, which included Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti; technical cooperation missions in response to country requests that had not been anticipated in the work programme; and the assessment of damage caused by natural disasters, in some cases in coordination with the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean.

Possible areas for collaboration between the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico and the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean included:

- Disaster evaluation and risk management;
- Haiti's long-term economic development strategy;
- Central America's experience with the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), its implications and possible lessons for Caribbean countries;
- Central American-Caribbean economic integration;
- Tourism development.

The Population Affairs Officer with the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean delivered a short presentation on the General Assembly high-level dialogue on international migration and development scheduled for the middle of September 2006. Her presentation covered challenges in the area of migration for the Caribbean, the purpose of the high-level dialogue, preparations for the high-level dialogue at ECLAC and at United Nations Headquarters, and the work programme on population for the coming three years.

In response to the presentation of the work programme, the representative of Cuba observed that although it was true that the two expected accomplishments of the programme for the biennium 2008-2009 were valid, it was no less true that this should be understood in the context of the Caribbean basin and consideration should be given to proposals, such as the agreements between Cuba and CARICOM, the integration initiatives by the ACS and ALBA which is already in place in the energy, health and education sectors.

It should be borne in mind that the ECLAC work programme was elaborated some years in advance and should be adaptable to the emerging realities, both in the subregion and the wider Latin American and Caribbean region. He noted that there was an approved programme for 2006-2007 in line with what the countries of the region expressed two years ago. Now the questions should be asked if it were possible to make the current work programme better aligned with current realities? Were financial resources available to address these realities through the execution of projects of direct benefit to the countries? He noted that if the CDCC was created and the constituent text revised to respond better to present circumstances, why not elaborate a CDCC programme more directly related to cooperation and integration and less to analysis and studies?

The representative of Aruba mentioned the ongoing negotiations among the countries of the subregion with regard to Economic Partnership Agreements and the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the economic and financial impact that the associate members' inclusion or exclusion from those processes would have on their economies.

The representative of Trinidad and Tobago mentioned social vulnerability and the importance of ensuring that the social vulnerability index would include four dimensions of vulnerability, with some emphasis on youth and crime. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) brought up the two additional dimensions of marginalization and of gender violence. The representative of Barbados called for a greater emphasis on disaster management in the work programme and enquired whether contributions were being made by ECLAC for the General Assembly review of the HIV/AIDS programme. He stressed the important need for further and urgent work to be done on the Caribbean Sea as a special area for sustainable development. The representative of the United States Virgin Islands asked ECLAC to revive the Memorandum of Understanding between the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean and the University of the Virgin Islands. He also said that activities should be carried forward for the associate member countries in the work programme for 2008-2009.

In response to the concerns expressed by the representative of Cuba, the Secretary of the Commission referred to the time frame within which the programme of work was formulated and observed that it was established by the General Assembly. With respect to the issue of flexibility, the United Nations was striving to increase its flexibility. Results-based budgeting was moving in that direction. It was difficult, however, to enhance flexibility when increases in financial resources were negative when it came to the regular budget. She appealed to the CDCC member States, especially those actively engaged in the Fifth Committee, to help ECLAC to exercise that flexibility. She also observed that the Mauritius Strategy was an appropriate framework for coordination of the activities of the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean and the Subregional Headquarters in Mexico.

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean said that any activity or output adopted at the session became a CDCC work programme item. He also observed that the presence of a representative of the Subregional Headquarters in Mexico at the CDCC session was intended to bridge the gap of collaboration between offices. In regard to the question of the inclusion of non-independent countries, he noted that the ECLAC document entitled "The Cotonou Agreement - selected issues, effects and implications for Caribbean

economies”, had a section devoted to issues relating to the non-independent countries and that the intention was to deepen that analysis in future work..

With respect to the observations made by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, he advised that ECLAC had begun its analysis of the available census data on youth. Work in that area was also provided for in the work programme for 2008-2009 and could be brought forward to 2006-2007. On HIV/AIDS, a study had been completed for inclusion in the most recent edition of *The Social Panorama*, as well as an assessment of the gender aspects of national HIV/AIDS programmes. ECLAC was collaborating with the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) on issues relating to the Caribbean Sea, and the two institutions had agreed to convene a meeting on the subject during 2006.

The representative of Jamaica underlined the need for a number of items planned for 2008-2009 to be brought forward to 2006-2007. The representative of IICA mentioned the importance of rehabilitating the agricultural sector and suggested various areas, including science and technology, for collaboration with ECLAC.

The representative of Guyana thanked ECLAC for its quick and effective response to the request it had made for a disaster assessment and commended ECLAC for undertaking work on risk reduction. In terms of the work programme, he highlighted the areas of science and technology for development and, in particular, water resources management. He asked that the issue of the Caribbean Sea be treated with urgency and be given a sufficient level of consideration.

The representative of UNDP congratulated ECLAC on its achievements in 2004-2005. ECLAC had collaborated in numerous initiatives undertaken by UNDP in the Eastern Caribbean, such as the disaster assessment in Grenada and its work on social vulnerability.

The representative of UNEP discussed its particular focus on sustainability and the environment. UNEP supported the use of regional coordination mechanisms and many of the issues on which it was working overlapped with themes included in the agenda of CDCC.

The representative of UNESCO outlined that organization’s five priority areas of work and discussed the possibility of collaboration between UNESCO and ECLAC with respect to social and human sciences for the sustainable development of SIDS. One of the main objectives of such an initiative would be to build a solid social sciences infrastructure that would assist stakeholders to align their national development strategies with the Mauritius Strategy. A vehicle for social research also needed to be created in order to articulate informed perspectives in the context of the implementation of national strategies for sustainable development. With respect to the Caribbean, he suggested that the strategy should revolve around the theme of upgrading coastal resources for development, with the following outcomes:

- (i) A research programme in which both academics and politicians would participate;
- (ii) The introduction of a policy outreach agenda that would include a policymaking dialogue, public awareness and capacity building; and

(iii) A close working relationship and collaboration between UNESCO and the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat in their common areas of interest.

The representative of the Dominican Republic underscored the valuable role played by United Nations sister agencies and other ECLAC offices in the discussion of the ECLAC subregional activities in the Caribbean. He highlighted the need to strengthen the work on social indicators and small and medium-sized enterprises, and noted that some of those topics were already being addressed in cooperation with the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico. His Government also advocated measures to strengthen research and analysis regarding the situation in Haiti.

The representative of CARICOM commented on the relevance of the work programme of ECLAC to the subregion and on the technical assistance provided to member States despite existing constraints. CARICOM was interested in further collaboration, specifically with respect to ICT, knowledge management and environmental issues related to the sustainable development agenda.

There was a need to focus on the area of culture as an important component of the sustainable development agenda, particularly in view of the declining importance of traditional production activities. CARICOM viewed that initiative as an integral component of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy process. CDCC could examine the economic value of culture and the diversity of its outputs in order to enhance the tourism sector, marketing and research. This subject could be approached within the context of the Mauritius Declaration, and CARICOM would be willing to collaborate in such an undertaking. CDCC should be encouraged to examine culture and its place in the 2008-2009 work programme as part of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Following queries by some delegations regarding the status of the Caribbean Sea Initiative and of cooperation between ACS and ECLAC in that regard, the representative of ACS informed the Committee that, as had been agreed some time ago, collaboration between ACS and the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean was continuing, with ECLAC playing a leading role in providing technical assistance and ACS focusing on the political dimension. More recently, through a contribution from ECLAC, a consultant had been engaged to produce a study which would serve as the basis for the report by the ACS Secretary General as requested in General Assembly resolution 59/230.

The representative of ACS highlighted the fact that the fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of ACS, held in Panama City in July, had reiterated the fact that the Caribbean Sea was a common patrimony and had pledged to continue working towards its recognition by the United Nations as a special area in the context of sustainable development.

The decision taken at the Summit to instruct the Ministerial Council to include that topic as a permanent item on its agenda would be a crucial step in converting the Caribbean Sea Initiative from a merely declaratory instrument to an effective tool for obtaining the assistance

necessary to effectively assume sovereignty over waters, which, in the case of some Caribbean nations, were more vast than their land areas.

In light of the mandate issued to the Council by the nations represented at the Summit, the Secretariat would suggest in its report to the 11th Meeting of the Ministerial Council, that the Council instruct the Secretary General to present a new draft resolution to the 26th Meeting of the Executive Board of the Ministerial Council concerning the following possibilities:

1. Creation of an intergovernmental advisory group for the Caribbean Sea Initiative. Such a group would adopt the same guidelines as those already established for the Technical Advisory Group, but its participants would include official delegations with multidisciplinary (legal, scientific and political) expertise and would have the authority to issue recommendations to the Ministerial Council. The new group would implement the recommendations of the Technical Advisory Group, whose meetings must resume;

2. Drafting of amendments to the current resolution on the promotion of an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development, with a view to reintroducing the elements that had been left out in the course of the negotiating process in recent years;

3. Formulation of a new draft report to the United Nations on which basis a clear and definitive United Nations General Assembly resolution would be formulated.

The representative of Trinidad and Tobago commended the Secretariat upon the establishment of the Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre and drew attention to the need to develop an effective system for measuring ICT development in the region. The representative also called upon the ECLAC Caribbean Subregional Headquarters to support the inclusion of Trinidad and Tobago in the "Red Clara" network.

The Secretariat informed the participants that ECLAC and UNDP were in agreement as to the need to increase inter-agency coordination in order to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in the Caribbean. ECLAC was in the process of sharing its databases in order to improve monitoring in that connection despite the fact that the various agencies involved had different mandates. The Secretariat expressed full agreement with the need seen by the Trinidad and Tobago delegation to develop measurement mechanisms for ICT and knowledge management.

In the area of social cohesion, a number of specific studies on such topics as gender and HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean had been incorporated into the work of the Social Development Division at ECLAC headquarters. Activities related to the Kellogg Foundation project constituted another area of collaboration. With regard to issues of vulnerability, six areas of work had been identified: analysing the macroeconomic impact on fiscal and other policies; providing guarantees for the population living below the poverty line, which were viewed as an important component of any social covenant; increasing the employability of the workforce; reducing the informal sector; identifying different types of social protection needed by the existing population; and participating in democracy.

In response to concerns regarding ICT and knowledge management issues in the work programme, the Secretariat acknowledged that political will and an appreciation of the diversity of knowledge were needed. The Secretariat also noted that information exchange was important in order to develop the architectural structure for knowledge management.

The Secretariat informed the delegates that it would begin preparing a Caribbean development report to supplement the studies on economic and social factors. The key priority themes to be identified ought to provide inputs for the *Social Panorama* and other publications.

On the question of the Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre (CKMC), the Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean noted that this transformation occurred following internal discussions and extensive consultations with regional bodies. The further development of CKMC would be undertaken in two phases: the first would focus on identifying key areas of work and key expertise, while the second would involve the establishment of an electronic facility for the provision of external access, including access to the Caribbean Digital Library, and the development of standards and procedures for access and quality control.

Agenda Item 9 - Adoption of decisions and resolutions

The representative of Suriname commended the Secretariat on its work in convening and conducting the session and proposed that the Bureau should finalize the draft report of the session for distribution to the participants by 20 January 2006. Member countries were to be invited to send comments to the Secretariat by 27 January 2006. The final document would then be circulated to member countries by 30 January 2006. The meeting considered and approved 5 resolutions which are included in this report.

The representative of the United States Virgin Islands sought a point of clarification regarding the draft work programme for 2008-2009. He reminded the participants that it was customary for the work programme to be reviewed and adopted as part of the final report. He requested that the Secretariat allow time for Governments to submit their comments for inclusion in the final report of the session.

The Secretariat agreed with the point of clarification, and the participating delegations accepted the proposal that comments should be submitted on the work programme within the same time frame as the session report.

Agenda Item 10 - Date and place of the thirteenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee

The participants agreed that the Secretariat should consult with the Chair and member countries to decide on a date and venue for the next meeting of the Monitoring Committee.

Agenda Item 11 - Other matters

There were no matters raised under this agenda item.

Agenda Item 12 - Closing session

The representative of Montserrat, speaking on behalf of her delegation, the representatives of the associate member countries (AMCs) and all the other delegates in attendance, thanked the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat for an excellent meeting and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for its hospitality and good will. She looked forward to continued collaboration.

The Secretary of the Commission expressed her congratulations to the delegates for the amicable atmosphere in which the session had been conducted. The revitalization of CDCC was clearly taking shape, as evidenced by the commitment and hard work of all the delegates in attendance. She took the opportunity to draw attention to the solid working relationships existing within the ECLAC system as it strove to provide support to the member countries of the subregion. She also noted that the stature and number of officers and staff members from ECLAC headquarters that had taken an active part in the session attested to just how serious an effort the entire ECLAC system was making to adapt the overall ECLAC programme of work to the realities of the subregion.

She congratulated the representative of Guyana upon that country's appointment to chair the Rio Group, which she saw as a promising sign in terms of future prospects for building bridges between Latin America and the Caribbean. She went on to express her appreciation for the inputs provided during the course of the meeting from delegates who possessed vast experience with the workings of the General Assembly and of the United Nations reform process. In closing, she encouraged the countries to send delegations of the highest level to the forthcoming session of ECLAC, to be held in Montevideo, Uruguay, in March 2006. She then thanked the ECLAC team in Port of Spain for organizing the session and expressed her heartfelt thanks to Senator the Honourable Knowlson Gift, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for so graciously hosting the session.

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the session and commended the delegates who had worked so tirelessly to give shape to a regional coordinating mechanism. He noted that the establishment of the regional coordinating mechanism was an achievement that could not be underestimated. He wished to add his thanks to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for their untiring efforts and support in convening the twenty-first session of CDCC, and to the Staff of ECLAC for their hard work in making the meeting a success.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, speaking on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that the twenty-first session of CDCC had reaffirmed its

validity. The issues discussed, including social vulnerability, the Millennium Development Goals, the World Summit on the Information Society, the regional coordinating mechanism and the review of the ECLAC programme of work were all of the utmost importance. For the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the honour of being elected to serve as Chair of CDCC provided an excellent opportunity to identify greater synergies in relation to the issues confronting the region, especially in view of his country's current position as Chair of CARICOM. He challenged CDCC to continue to work assiduously and to capitalize on the expertise available in the subregion in carrying out its work. As Chair of CDCC, he looked forward to having a full complement of staff to conduct its work and to some degree of flexibility within the work programme. In closing, he thanked all the participating delegations for making this twenty-first session such a resounding success.

PART III
RESOLUTIONS OF THE SESSION

62 (XXI) Assistance to CDCC associate member countries

The Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee,

Recognizing the historical, political and socio-economic realities of the associate member countries, the particular needs of their peoples and the importance of their greater integration into the international community, as part of the Caribbean subregion, in order to properly attend those needs,

Recalling resolutions 21(X) and 24(XI) on a programme of assistance for small island developing countries, in which CDCC called for, inter alia, the facilitation of access for its associate members to programmes and activities of the United Nations system with the aim of identifying areas within the system that could provide technical and other assistance in the furtherance of their development process,

Further recalling resolution 27(XII), whereby CDCC created a standing open-ended working group of non-independent Caribbean countries, as well as resolution 33 (XIII) on measures in support of the working group,

Noting resolution 37(XIV), by which CDCC requested support in carrying out an analysis of the criteria for non-independent Caribbean countries' participation in the United Nations system; in initiating contacts with the governing councils of the United Nations specialized agencies/technical organs to determine modalities for including non-independent Caribbean countries in their respective work programmes; and in working towards the inclusion of provisions extending observer status to CDCC associate member Governments in relevant meetings, programmes and activities of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other organizations of the United Nations system,

Also noting the inclusion of several of these activities in the 2006-2007 budget of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean,

Reaffirming the ongoing need for a coordinated effort to continue to promote and expand the participation of the associate member Governments in the wider United Nations system,

Aware of the decision of the Economic and Social Council in 2005 to take no action on ECLAC resolution 598(XXX), in which the Commission requested the establishment of necessary mechanisms for the participation of associate members of regional economic commissions in the work of the Economic and Social Council and in its subsidiary bodies,

Noting that seven of the ten eligible Caribbean Governments have achieved associate membership in CDCC,

1. Expresses appreciation for the completion of a portion of the mandate contained in the above-mentioned resolutions, while recognizing that other aspects have not yet been undertaken;

2. Also expresses its support for the implementation of ECLAC resolution 598(XXX), requests the Economic Commission to disseminate an information note on the background of the resolution at its thirty-first session and urges the Economic and Social Council to reconsider the matter at its 2006 session;

3. Decides to create the Working Group of Associate Member Countries of CDCC to replace the previous Working Group of Non-Independent Caribbean Countries, and requests the Secretariat of the Economic Commission to seek the necessary resources to implement fully the mandate on assistance to the associate member Governments contained in the relevant resolutions of CDCC;

4. Requests the Secretariat to report to the CDCC Monitoring Committee at its 2007 session on the implementation of the present resolution.

**63 (XXI) Temporary mechanism for regional follow-up of the Tunis phase
of the World Summit on the Information Society
and the eLAC 2007 Action Plan**

The Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee,

Recognizing the benefits to be derived from using information and communications technology to promote the development of the Caribbean in general and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in particular,

Cognizant of the need to ensure full participation by Caribbean countries in the implementation of the eLAC 2007 Action Plan adopted in Rio de Janeiro,

Conscious of the importance of participation in the temporary regional follow-up mechanism for the implementation of eLAC 2007,

1. Recommends that CDCC and CARICOM finalize, with the European Commission and other possible donor agencies, the agreement to fund the Caribbean activities related to the follow-up of eLAC 2007 and the World Summit on the Information Society;

2. Decides to appoint, from among CDCC members, a regional focal point for the temporary regional mechanism for the implementation of eLAC 2007 following consultations among CDCC members.

64 (XXI) Policy research in the area of social vulnerability and alienation

The Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee,

Noting with concern the new and emerging challenges that confront our societies, rendering them in a sense borderless, particularly with regard to their youth, and eroding resilience in the face of growing social vulnerability and alienation,

Noting further that, in addressing social ills, past experience has demonstrated that lasting solutions are not to be found in paradigms that bear no cultural resemblance to our unique way of life and perspective and that strategies and solutions which spring from within our societies and acknowledge and respect both our cultural diversity and historical sameness are needed,

Recognizing and appreciating that CDCC, with its antecedents firmly rooted in our subregion's psyche and development efforts, and its links to the United Nations system, is an appropriate institutional mechanism for tailoring solutions and responses relevant to our local circumstances while drawing on the support and services available from within the wider United Nations system,

1. Encourages the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean to continue its efforts in the area of policy research aimed at reducing the vulnerability of the small island developing States (SIDS) of the Caribbean;

2. Also encourages the Secretariat to support, through the mobilization of the necessary resources, the continuation of:

- (a) The construction of a social vulnerability index for Caribbean SIDS;
- (b) Encouragement for the inclusion of vulnerability analyses in crime and poverty reduction strategies;
- (c) Technical assistance for the reduction of social vulnerability in disaster assessment and risk reduction; and
- (d) Policy research in the area of social vulnerability and alienation.

65 (XXI) Establishment of a regional coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy

The Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee,

Recognizing the continuing importance and relevance of Agenda 21, the Barbados Programme of Action, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation and their principles to the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS),

Reaffirming that sustainable development remains primarily a national responsibility,

Recognizing the increasing vulnerabilities of the small island developing States of the Caribbean and their consequences with regard to the availability of resources and opportunities to pursue sustainable development,

Considering the advantages that are afforded by effective cooperation and a sharing of resources within the Caribbean subregion,

Recognizing that the effect of such cooperation can be maximized by the formation of a regional coordinating mechanism to promote the most efficient and effective use of the available human and natural capital,

Underscoring the need for this mechanism to take into account the contributions of regional and global processes that recognize the work of SIDS, including the decisions made by the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean at their fifteenth meeting held on 31 October to 4 November 2005, and the University Consortium of SIDS,

1. Agrees that the establishment of the regional coordinating mechanism should be guided by the recommendations of the Core Group and, in particular:
 - i. That the ministerial forum of the CDCC will serve as a ministerial council to provide oversight in directing the work of the regional coordinating mechanism, in collaboration with existing subregional intergovernmental processes;

- ii. That a technical advisory committee should be established to assist the regional coordinating mechanism in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy within the Caribbean subregion;
 - iii. That a secretariat should be established at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean with identified arrangements for sharing responsibilities with the subregional intergovernmental secretariats and with appropriate arrangements for sharing resources,
2. Requests the Caribbean SIDS and ECLAC, in collaboration with other organizations, to mobilize the necessary resources to support the implementation of the Caribbean SIDS programme while utilizing the opportunities provided by existing processes both regionally and globally,
3. Agrees, with immediate effect, to the formation of a regional coordinating mechanism for sustainable development in the Caribbean.

66 (XXI) Support for efforts in natural disasters

The Caribbean Development Cooperation Committee,

Noting the frequency of natural disasters, the impact which these natural disasters pose to Caribbean societies, the negative cumulative effects of such disasters on government resources, and the diversion of those resources from development priorities and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals,

Noting further the challenges which small Caribbean States face in addressing their development efforts in the light of natural disasters,

Recognizing and appreciating the assistance that ECLAC has provided to member and associate member countries in estimating the socio-economic damage and losses to their societies following natural disasters,

- 1. Encourages the Secretariat to continue providing assistance to member and associate member countries;
- 2. Requests that the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean extend its work in disaster assessment, in close cooperation with CDERA and other relevant regional institutions, to include risk reduction with the objective of strengthening the resilience of the people and societies.

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