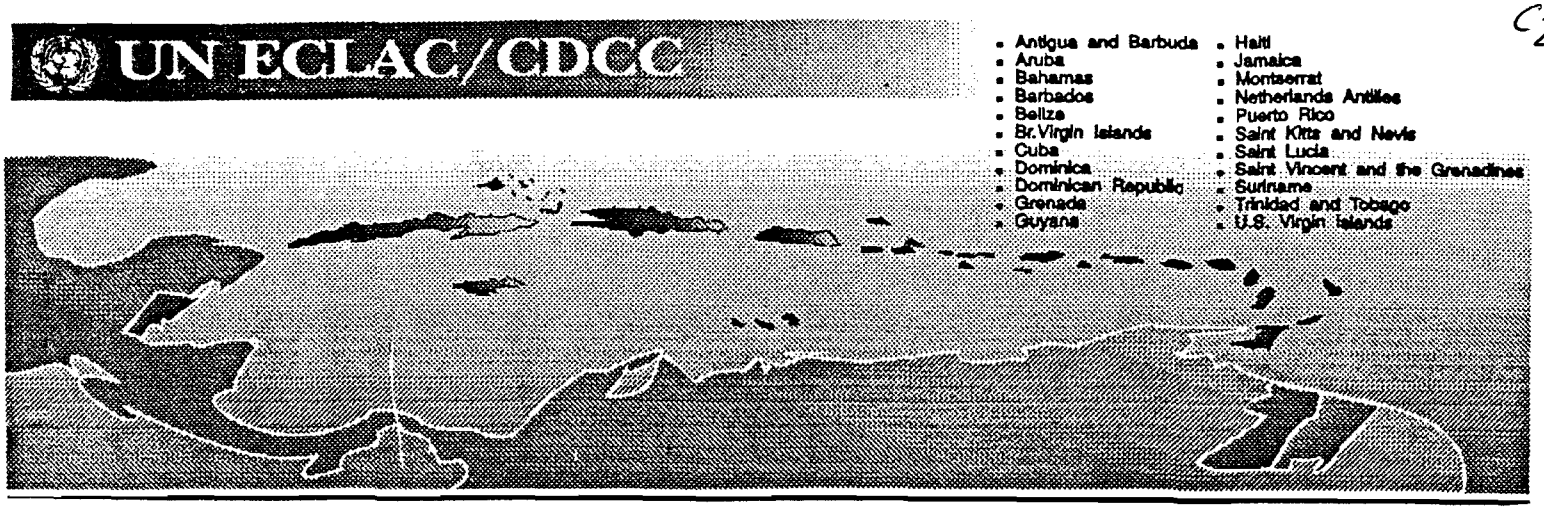

Ninth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee
of the CDCC
10-11 May 1999
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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REPORT OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE MONITORING COMMITTEE OF THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE (CDCC)

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

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PART ONE

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

Place and date of the meeting

The ninth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) was held at the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 10-11 May 1999.

Attendance [1]

The meeting was attended by the following CDCC member countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Participating associate members were: Anguilla, Aruba, the Netherlands Antilles and the United States Virgin Islands.

Agenda item 1:
Welcome remarks

In opening the meeting, the Director of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat expressed her distinct honour in welcoming delegates to the meeting. She recalled the decision taken at the seventeenth session of the CDCC to convene annual meetings of the Monitoring Committee and biennial meetings of the CDCC. She noted that the year 2000 would mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of that body and suggested that the eighteenth session of the CDCC which would convene at the ministerial level in the year 2000 be used as the means through which the CDCC could be retooled and refocused to deal with the challenges facing the region at the start of the new millenium. She also noted that it was the first time that delegates from so many countries were in attendance at the present forum, and expressed the hope that perhaps the revitalization of the CDCC was already underway.

Agenda item 2:
Formal opening of the meeting

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the session. He looked forward to a profitable exchange of ideas and a successful meeting.

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[1] The list of participants is annexed to this report.

Agenda item 3:
Procedural matters and organization of work

The Director welcomed the Bureau of this meeting, which was as follows:

Chairman: Trinidad and Tobago

First Vice-Chairman: Aruba

Second Vice-Chairman: Cuba

Rapporteur: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

The agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. Welcome remarks

2. Formal opening of the meeting

3. Procedural matters

4. Overview of activities of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain, 1998 – 1999

5. Commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the CDCC:
   i) The CDCC into the New Millennium : Review of the achievements of the CDCC in the Context of its evolving Regional and Wider International Environment
   ii) Identification of issues critical to the region's development for consideration at the eighteenth session of the CDCC, 2000

6. Events to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the CDCC

7. Implementation of the ECLAC/CDCC work programme for the 1998 - 1999 biennium

8. Issues related to the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST)

9. Status of regional implementation of Global Action Plans:
   i) The Small Island Developing States Programme of Action (SIDS POA);
   ii) International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD);
   iii) World Summit for Social Development (WSSD);
   iv) Fourth World Conference on Women

10. Other matters:

    i) World Conference on Science, Budapest, Hungary, 26 June – 1 July 1999

11. Date and venue of the tenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee

12. Closure

Agenda item 4:
Overview of activities of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain, 1998-1999

The Director suggested that the main issues for discussion over the two-day period would be:

(a) Revitalization of the CDCC;

(b) Challenges facing the Caribbean; and

(c) A report on the activities of the secretariat over the period March 1998 to April 1999.

The Director expressed optimism as regards recapturing the dynamic spirit that characterized the early period of the existence of the organization, ensuring that it was adequately prepared to deal with the newer challenges facing the subregion. She emphasized the need for the CDCC to carve a niche for itself. She reaffirmed the commitment of the secretariat to make a substantial contribution in the onward march towards development in the Caribbean and stressed the need to keep the CDCC active through commitment and support on the part of its member countries. On the eve of the new millenium, it was fitting that there be some reflection on the status of the CDCC as an intergovernmental body in the context of these changing times, and the approaches necessary to ensure its strategic refocusing and redirection.

In reporting on the activities of the secretariat over the preceding year, the Director evaluated the extent to which some commitments had been successfully discharged and the future work programme activities necessary to complete the biennium successfully. In that regard, the areas of concern which had been highlighted in the previous year were outlined, together with the commitments that had been undertaken by the secretariat to address them. Those areas of concern were the following:

(a) The flagging attendance at CDCC meetings;

(b) The issue of relevance of the work programme;

(c) The lack of sufficient coverage of Caribbean countries in ECLAC documents;

(d) The need to provide more attention to operational activities, i.e. the need to provide more assistance at the national level, and to increase the visibility of the secretariat.

The Director presented a summary of accomplishments of the secretariat and an account of measures undertaken in the following areas:

- Relevance of the work programme;
- New projects;
- Economics;
- Trade;
- Increasing visibility of the office;

- Coverage of data;
- Follow-up to global summits;
- Social issues;
- Science and technology;
- Training;
- The Non-Independent Caribbean Countries (NICCs)
- Cooperation and collaboration;
- New trends.

The presentation ended with a reaffirmation of the resolve of the secretariat to discharge successfully the activities of the second half of its work programme, articulating and translating development policies and strategies into meaningful and relevant actions that would adequately serve the needs of the subregion. The Director's speech was circulated to the meeting and appears at Annex 1.

Agenda item 5:
Commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the CDCC

(i) *The CDCC into the New Millennium*: Review of the achievements of the CDCC in the context of its evolving regional and wider international environment

The secretariat presented a working paper entitled *The CDCC into the New Millennium: A Proposal for its Revitalization*. The presenting officer emphasized the context in which the paper was prepared, namely, to provide the basis for the presentation of a proposal for the reorientation and revitalization of the CDCC in light of the acknowledged decline in its activism and effectiveness. The subregion needed a mechanism by means of which the numerous and complex challenges of the contemporary international and regional environment could be met in the context of retaining the richness of the Caribbean identity. That was the role envisaged for the CDCC.

The document reviewed the nature, objectives and purposes of the CDCC, including its relations with other organizations, as enshrined in its Constituent Declaration.

The secretariat informed that in an attempt to review the evolution of the CDCC it had interviewed a number of observers, all of whom had had the most intimate contact with the organization over different periods of its existence. The rationale for the revitalization of the CDCC advanced by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat took into account those perceptions and fell into three main categories: political, institutional and environmental.

The secretariat reminded the meeting that the Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean had in effect launched the revitalization of the CDCC at its seventeenth session in Aruba, on 15 May 1998. The Director had advanced an approach to revitalize the CDCC that was centred around the restoration of the "dynamism, optimism and enthusiasm" which had constituted the central elements of the organization's ethos during its early years.

The secretariat stressed that the operationalization of the thinking on the revitalization of the CDCC depended on the support of the membership of the CDCC. Without ownership of the idea and process by CDCC member countries, no real progress could reasonably be expected. It followed,

therefore, that in advancing the initiative, the first action contemplated by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat was to persuade the membership of the validity and overall relevance of the rationale.

The document recalled the vitally important function of the CDCC as a forum that allowed the discussion of specific concerns of smaller Caribbean States aimed at the preservation of their identity. It facilitated the exchange of experiences among its membership, recognizing that each member had a related, but nevertheless unique, range of problems. The CDCC provided access for a number of non-independent countries and territories to a regional intergovernmental organization in which full recognition was given to their concerns and their general participation. Political commitment was the critical enabling factor that would ensure the desired return to dynamism and it was suggested that the year 2000, the year of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the CDCC, might be identified as the occasion on which such commitment might be sought.

The document also advanced a range of actions to be undertaken by the CDCC that needed to be supported by political commitment while simultaneously inducing such commitment. Some of the proposals outlined were:

- The development and delivery of a work programme that catered to the priority interests of all member States and which was flexible enough to incorporate elements not envisaged at the time of its formulation;

- To enhance its relevance and visibility, the CDCC should make strenuous efforts to amplify its technical cooperation endeavours;

- Cooperation and collaboration with other intergovernmental agencies, including forms of collaboration that demonstrated the benefit of working together for a common purpose;

- To provide a forum for the reflection of national interests and concerns in regional positions;

- To play a lead role in the proactive identification and articulation of those interests and concerns and also their representation at the extraregional or global level, as appropriate;

- The restoration of "training" relevant to the needs of member countries as an activity of the CDCC secretariat in the context of a structured outreach programme;

- Provision of information directly at the national level to those groups in need of strategic information;

- Active participation in the formulation and management of regional projects as well as in the identification of funds for their implementation;

- Systematic data collection at the regional level; and

- The self conscious and systematic propagation of information by the secretariat on its recent, current and projected activities through press releases, interviews and other modalities.

The document posited that the successful pursuance of those objectives would involve, inter alia, a reorientation of the work programme of the CDCC, streamlining of its operations and processes to introduce an increased degree of flexibility towards "timely response" and redeployment of the secretariat's resources: human as well as financial.

In the ensuing discussion, the meeting agreed that the CDCC was an integral part of the life of the subregion and, as such, it would be necessary to examine the contents of the document in more detail. Member countries would submit their comments on the paper and proposals to the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat by July 1999. Delegates observed the need for a second meeting at which those comments would be further explored.

The meeting recommended that as a first step towards the revitalization of the CDCC, the Constituent Declaration should be reshaped so as to make it more relevant to the new and changing needs and interests of the Caribbean subregion.

The meeting agreed that the future of the CDCC depended on the political will of the governments of the subregion, which might be enhanced and enforced by the CDCC's demonstration of its relevance through its work programme.

The meeting expressed the view that the CDCC, by virtue of its membership, provided a rather unique forum for deliberations on issues of vital interest to the subregion. It was smaller than the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in terms of membership, yet larger than CARICOM. Its distinguishing feature was that it provided, with the exception of Belize, Suriname and Guyana, a forum for the discussion of issues related to the insular Caribbean. It was suggested that if the CDCC could be responsive to a selection of the critical issues affecting the region and institute them in its work programme, thereby carving its own niche, the organization would be regarded not only as being relevant but also vital to the subregion.

Noting the distinction between the work programme of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean and that of the CDCC, it was clarified that both were combined in a common work programme, which was approved by CDCC member countries at ECLAC sessions. As a rule, the work programme is presented to member States for their consideration and adoption.

(ii) Identification of issues critical to the region's development for consideration at the eighteenth session of the CDCC, 2000

The secretariat presented a discussion paper on some of the issues affecting the membership of the CDCC. The purpose of the paper was to provoke discussion and subsequently refine it into a document to be presented on the occasion of the eighteenth session of the CDCC in the year 2000 at the ministerial level. It indicated that the topics in the discussion paper were merely illustrative in nature. Delegates were invited to introduce any other areas that they considered relevant to the future development of the subregion. The issues presented by the Director were the following: governance, sustainable development, environment, trade and development, social equity, science and technology

and information use and management. The seven topics were presented under the following headings: Issues, Opportunities, Challenges, The Way Forward.

Following the secretariat's presentation, comments were invited from the delegates on the topics.

On the subject of **Governance**, one delegate observed that the Caribbean Community had presented a Charter of Civil Society that had taken into consideration the issue of governance in the Caribbean subregion. The Charter, however, had assumed the concurrence of the private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The Charter was, therefore, not "owned" by the regional citizenry and therefore had been given little attention. In addition, certain philosophies and economic concepts were taken as given within Caribbean societies. Among those were the view that the private sector:

- was the "engine of growth" ;
- possessed better managerial capacities than government institutions;
- had a social consciousness which considered the welfare of the population as its ultimate goal; and
- had in fact a "human face" and bound itself to certain moral and ethical principles by which civil interactions were governed.

The delegate further stated that the Charter had also accepted uncritically the value system of the free market, and that all actions taken in accordance with the rules of the free market would invariably produce certain beneficial results. Nevertheless, most governments of the Caribbean, although they accepted the concept, were never prepared for the type of collaboration with the private sector that was necessary and had never functioned within such an economic environment. That situation had contributed to a crisis in governance.

The secretariat took into account the view that sufficiently widespread discussion might not have gone into the preparation of the Charter. It expressed the view that in the Caribbean where the Westminster system of government with the system of representative government based on Members of Parliament (MPs) had been adopted, the development of such a situation might have been foreseen. The MPs were not always in a position to effectively articulate the ideas, attitudes and ideals of the citizenry, so that a considerable degree of alienation had also developed between the people and their elected representatives as well as with the system of representative government as a whole. The secretariat stressed that in any system of governance, ownership of the governance process by the citizenry was essential to its effective functioning and acceptance in a context of legitimacy.

The meeting commented on the possible relationship between the activities of transnational corporations and governance. It was observed that the influence of those institutions and the market itself could lead to the erosion of the ability of governments to make choices based on considerations relating to the national economy and the welfare of the people. Should governments not be seen as serving the interests of the electorate they would encounter considerable difficulty in galvanizing support for their programmes, plans and policies or indeed their very existence.

The secretariat responded that there was already a significant body of evidence that confirmed that policies in areas critical to the economic survival of countries were in fact being determined outside the confines of the governments and citizenry of the Caribbean nations.

One delegate commended ECLAC for bringing the issue of governance to the fore, pointing out that because of its rather sensitive nature, its relevance was often downplayed in discussions. He informed the meeting of a United Nations initiative on governance that would be held in Saint Lucia shortly after the current meeting. He noted that, with respect to Anguilla, the Government of the United Kingdom had recently announced a new policy of devolution of power from the United Kingdom Government to an elected Government of Anguilla. The view was also expressed that within the Caribbean there were many different types of governance systems, for example, the NICCs and independent nations. Since there were countries that enjoyed only a limited ability to decide their programmes or foreign policies, in the context of the focus of the CDCC, the delegate considered those limitations as constituting a governance deficit.

The secretariat drew the attention of the meeting to the issue of offshore banking, which many Caribbean islands were actively considering as an alternative area for revenue generation. It observed that certain islands were being viewed as centers for money laundering, and in fact statements were being issued internationally to that effect. That was viewed as constituting an issue of governance. The offshore banking activity seemed to be one of few foreign exchange earning possibilities for the islands. If this activity was legitimate but was discontinued because of propaganda, their ability to provide for the welfare of their people would be compromised. The situation resulting therefrom could lead to the questioning of the legitimacy of the government.

The meeting observed that issues relating to governance were being opened in aid agreements as a pre-condition to funding. That could possibly have serious implications for the people of the region, since many Caribbean nations sought aid from those institutions. Delegates also noted that the limited capacity of Caribbean governments to handle or manage natural disasters needed to be addressed in the context of a discussion on "government", especially in a region which was prone to storms, earthquakes or volcanoes. The ability of governments to function in such times needed to be assured.

Bringing discussion on this aspect to a close, the Chairman expressed the view that it was not to be perceived as a political issue, but rather as a tool for development of the Caribbean peoples.

In the discussion on **Sustainable Development,** one delegate pointed out that while the sustainable development issue was contained within the Plan of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS POA), the Plan pre-supposed inter alia the ownership by the islands of their domestic resources. That did not necessarily reflect the actual situation, since ownership was being increasingly eroded within the Caribbean. That view was endorsed by the secretariat which informed the meeting that it had begun to address the issue in one of its projects, which sought to determine the rate of land loss to non-nationals, specifically in the tourism sector. Delegates noted the issue of offshore cays being developed by non-nationals for tourism. That practice had resulted in the use of the islands' natural resources with no benefit accruing to the citizens.

The Chairman expressed the view that a unique situation had developed in the Caribbean, where islands were being advertised as being private so that visitors felt no attachment or responsibility to the country of which the islands in question constituted an integral part.

The meeting observed the need for governments to develop the capacity to manage information technology on the subject of disaster preparedness. The technology of information management was urgently needed for countries to develop responses to present events and trends.

The ECLAC Director stated that in many instances, the human and other resources of the SIDS had not been sufficiently mobilized or focused towards the goal of sustainable development. There was still scope for regional SIDS to mobilize internal resources much more fully.

One delegate suggested that there might be a role for ECLAC in teaching the governments of SIDS and the populations methods of managing their natural resources.

The Chairman made a plea to the delegates that social capital, which was often ignored, should be used as the basis for any envisaged development. Governments should be careful to ensure that strict controls were applied. Further, the subregion should have full knowledge of the implications of its actions and remain in possession of its patrimony that should be kept in trust for future generations.

The discussion linked the issues of **Trade and Development** and the **Environment**. One delegation noted that the secretariat document under review had not mentioned the nexus between the environment and poverty. That delegation urged that the secretariat focus on a clearer examination of the challenges, such as trade, before the Caribbean countries could discern possibilities for a solution to their trading problems. An assessment of the Caribbean's ability to compete in a globalized market was needed.

The secretariat responded that the Caribbean countries with the exception of the Bahamas had participated in the discussions leading to the WTO agreement and were members of the organization. The secretariat, however, was organizing appropriate forums to ensure that the rules were understood and that the Caribbean could take advantage of the agreement. Inefficient production methods within the Caribbean and protected markets had caused distortions in the domestic economies. In responding to the imperatives of free trade, certain dislocations, such as unemployment, would have to be tolerated in the short term. The secretariat was of the opinion that the subregion could compete globally. Niche markets, however, should be identified for non-traditional commodities, particularly agricultural. Regional collaboration was also required in the areas of technology transfer, quality control mechanisms and the ability to negotiate. The secretariat further clarified that Caribbean countries needed to acquire comprehensive information on products with much more technical expertise in the commodities being negotiated than at present in order to progress from negotiating markets to negotiating commodities.

The meeting recommended that more attention be given to trade in services with concomitant identification of the subregion's comparative advantages.

The upcoming General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) 2000 was also recommended as an issue to be examined.

In commenting on the subject of **Information Use and Management**, the meeting observed the generally low level of exploitation of information technology that obtained in most Caribbean countries and urged governments to increase their capacity to use new technologies to their advantage.

Agenda item 6:
Events to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the CDCC

The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, secretariat to the CDCC, suggested that the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations be commemorated at the next CDCC meeting at the ministerial level in the year 2000. The event should:

(a) Trace the evolution and history of CDCC and its redefined role in the context of changing times;

(b) Serve as a forum to speak to challenges that smaller economies would face in the new millenium.

The Director reiterated that the present meeting should be used as a forum to brainstorm with respect to suggestions as to the type of event that should be planned for the anniversary and the design of the event itself. She also proposed that special committees be formed to deal with matters, such as logistics, entertainment and substantive issues. The Director presented several suggestions that had been discussed within the secretariat. They included the following:

- To invite drafters of the Constituent Declaration to form a planning committee;
- To have someone from another commission identify progress in economic and social issues and challenges being faced in the new millennium;
- To invite a representative from the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS);
- To publish a record of research, and a summary of this research, done by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean;
- To invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations and distinguished regional personalities, such as Nobel Prize winners.
- To produce a video or slide presentation showing the changing face of CDCC over the last 25 years;
- To have extensive media coverage and public relations activities as a build-up to the event;
- To request the involvement of governments, providing short videos to them for dissemination by Government Information Services;

- To stage a cultural event under the patronage of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; and, if possible,

- To plan a series of public lectures.

In the discussion that followed, a number of participants expressed their support for the recommendations advanced by the secretariat and raised additional matters for the consideration of the meeting. The meeting recommended that there should be a cultural orientation to the celebrations, given the fact that culture was the unifying element among the Caribbean States. The CDCC countries could be promoted not only within the subregion, but internationally as well. Secondly, the meeting reiterated that a relatively high level of political representation was necessary at the commemorative ministerial meeting in order to bring impetus and meaning once again to the CDCC.

The participants advised the secretariat that in planning for the event the objectives and design of those activities should be clearly signaled and the financial implication given due consideration. A process of sensitization was necessary since the CDCC was currently not a high priority for many member governments. In general, a collective notion was needed with respect to how the activities should be designed to make a specific input with a specific objective. The event should reflect the CDCC as an indigenous organization dedicated to meeting the challenges facing the subregion.

The meeting agreed that the different events should be hosted in separate member capitals so that countries could feel more involved in the process and participate more fully.

In the discussion on the date and venue of the next CDCC meeting, participants recommended that the twenty-fifth anniversary event should be held on its own, thereby allowing for maximum focus on the organization and its twenty-five years of service to the subregion.

The Chairman proposed that the secretariat produce a document by the end of July 1999, including a budget for the entire event, to be circulated among members for their perusal and subsequent comments.

Agenda item 7:
Implementation of the ECLAC/CDCC work programme for the 1998-1999 biennium (January 1998 - May 1999)

The secretariat presented a report entitled *Implementation of the ECLAC/CDCC work programme for the 1998-1999 biennium (January 1998- May 1999).* The document outlined the activities undertaken by the secretariat in pursuance of its work programme and updated the meeting on the activities outstanding for the 1998-1999 biennium.

The studies that had been funded by a project of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands were discussed. One delegate requested the secretariat to explain the following:

(a) The non-appearance of the quarterly newsletter *The Associate* since 1997; and

(b) Clarification of the status of the study entitled *An assessment of the NICCs participation in the programmes and activities emanating from the programmes of action of the United Nations World conferences in the economic and social fields.*

The secretariat clarified that a decision had been taken to terminate the preparation of the quarterly newsletter since it had been brought to the attention of the secretariat that a similar document was being produced by another organization. That activity had been funded through extrabudgetary resources.

The meeting was informed that in light of the events surrounding the ICPD +5 Review, the year 2000 Round of Censuses and the characteristics of the migratory patterns in the NICCs, a special issue of the newsletter was being produced. That issue would highlight the effects of sustained immigration to the Cayman Islands; the impact of immigration on the British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten and the United States Virgin Islands; and on the preparation of the NICCs for the Year 2000 Round of Censuses.

The meeting was also briefed on the status of NICCs' activities in the United Nations world conferences.

The secretariat reiterated to the meeting that the work programme of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat was approved at the ECLAC sessions. In that context, the importance of member countries' attendance at those sessions was stressed since their presence was needed to support elements of the ECLAC/CDCC work programme, and ensure their passage to the work programme in light of limited resources of ECLAC.

Agenda item 8:
Issues related to the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST)

The ECLAC Director presented information on aspects of the operation of the CCST that led to the interim suspension of all its activities by ECLAC. The Director recalled that when she assumed duties in August 1997, all CCST accounts and activities had been frozen. That action had been taken by ECLAC Headquarters in Santiago because of serious concerns regarding the operations of CCST as a result of a team mission to the Port of Spain office during the summer of 1997. Shortly after assumption of duties, the Director had requested a meeting with the Chairman of the CCST, through the Secretary of CCST, for the purpose of discussing the relationship between CCST and ECLAC and arriving at modalities for overcoming the then existing problems. Arising from that meeting was a commitment by ECLAC to prepare and present a report detailing the administrative options that were available to guide and give formal structure to the relationship and support by ECLAC to CCST. That commitment had been honoured by ECLAC within two months. The Director presented that report to the Council at its fifteenth Plenary Session in Trinidad and Tobago in December 1997. The CCST had been given a choice of the following options:

(a) Become a fully autonomous body, hosted by a regional government but maintain collaboration with ECLAC;

(b) ECLAC would continue to perform secretariat functions for CCST but with more formal arrangements; and

(c) Embark on a phasing-out period at the end of which the CCST would be a completely independent body responsible for its own funding and activities.

The Council had undertaken to provide an official response to ECLAC in time for the CDCC technical meeting in March 1998 for ratification by the CDCC ministerial meeting in Aruba in May 1998. No such report has been presented by the CCST to date.

At the sixteenth Plenary Session of the CCST in Barbados on 10-11 December 1998, the Director noted the urgent need for the Council to provide official response to the mentioned document.

The Director reported that the Executive Committee had taken the unilateral decision to open a separate account to receive project funds. No notice had been given of this intent. At the Plenary held in Barbados in December 1998, the matter of the opening of the special account had been the subject of intense discussion. ECLAC had previously written the Council after consulting with Headquarters and the Department of Legal Affairs, New York, and had conveyed the ECLAC position that the account was unauthorized within the context of the existing relationship between ECLAC and the CCST. That position had again been reiterated in the opening address of the Director to the CCST Council.

In March 1999 ECLAC had written to the Executive Committee of the CCST to query the status of the account after having reason to believe that it was operational. Subsequent events, which revealed the activation of the account and which put into more focus the incompatibility of the operation of that account by CCST and its relationship with ECLAC, had prompted ECLAC to order a complete suspension of all CCST activities until discussions could be held between ECLAC and CCST to work out a modality of operation. To date, the CCST had not responded to the request for a meeting. The decision to suspend ECLAC support for CCST was taken because of the incompatibility of the operation of the account with the existing relationship between the CCST and ECLAC.

The CCST Chairman stated that what had developed was a difference of view on the applicability of the CCST Statutes. He questioned that if the Statutes of the Council were not in force, what terms of reference, in fact, would guide the Council. The Council had tried previously to hold a consultation with members on the ECLAC brief but had been unable to do this. The opening of the account by the CCST had been cited as the reason, communicated to him, for the suspension of CCST activities. He explained that some organizations had indicated that they could not give funding to a United Nations agency. That had led the CCST to open an account to receive those funds. He further stated that the Council had experienced difficulties in drawing down project funds that it had attracted. That had led to the Council having to return project money to donors. The CCST Statutes allowed for the establishment of a special account to accommodate project funding.

The secretariat clarified that it had written to the CCST Chairman in November of 1998, notifying him that the opening of that account had contravened United Nations financial rules as the institutional arrangements governing the relationship between CCST and ECLAC precluded the opening of a separate account in the name of CCST, at a time when ECLAC was responsible for providing all of CCST's operational costs of well over $269,000 per annum. The same advice was again delivered to CCST at its meeting in Barbados in December 1998. The secretariat recalled that

at the CCST meeting in Barbados in December 1998 there had been a lengthy discussion on the validity of the CCST Statutes. The CCST had been established almost 19 years earlier with a view to becoming a fully autonomous body. However, that autonomous body had not yet emerged.

The secretariat pointed out, further, that:

(a) With respect to the OAS projects, over 86 per cent of all project funds had been expended. The project was supposed to have been implemented over a one-year period, however, the OAS released the greater part of the funds late, allowing for implementation of the project over a shorter period. Given that fact, and the fact that over $612,494 had indeed been expended, the secretariat felt that the rate of implementation had been highly successful and that ECLAC had contributed significantly to its success;

(b) The secretariat pointed out that the majority of the remaining funds were not expended because the CCST had wanted to issue contracts to government officials, in contravention of United Nations rules. The secretariat had requested alternative names so as to get the work completed. The CCST had not responded;

(c) The CCST had itself recognized the inoperability of its Statutes and had, for a long time, been calling for their review in the light of their lack of reference to the ongoing institutional context in which the CCST continued to operate.

Given the importance of the matter to all concerned and the fact that no change concerning the status of CCST *vis a vis* ECLAC could be made at the present meeting, the Chairman of the Bureau proposed that representatives of the CCST and ECLAC meet as soon as possible, following discussions between CDCC representatives and their CCST counterparts. The proposal was acceptable to the Chairman of the CCST who indicated that, as a prior step, consultations would be held with the CCST membership.

Agenda item 9:
Status of regional implementation of Global Action Plans

(i) The Small Island Developing States Programme of Action (SIDS POA)

The secretariat stated that cooperation and agreement on priorities were important among Caribbean SIDS, and that the island States also attempted to come to grips with the international relationships that existed in the external environment in order to secure their objectives.

One delegate from a non-independent Caribbean country stated that the NICCs felt excluded, especially at the Seventh Meeting of the CSD in April where they had expected a greater degree of involvement in deliberations. There was also the expectation that much more time would have been devoted to preparation for the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to be held in September 1999 to review the SIDS POA.

One delegate advised that the Caribbean SIDS should remain in contact with the AOSIS and other SIDS regions in the interest of fuller preparation for the Special Session of the General Assembly. At that Session it should be noted that donors would need to focus their assistance within

the framework of the SIDS POA. The discussion of the Caribbean Sea as an area for special management needed to be given some time for discussion at the Preparatory Committee scheduled for early September 1999.

The discussion ended with the secretariat reminding delegates of the following:

(a) The necessity of having SIDS convene a meeting to formulate positions in advance of the five-year meetings;

(b) The need for regional collaboration;

(c) The desirability of the presence of NICCs at ambassadorial briefings; and

(d) The need for SIDS to be clear on what was expected at the United Nations General Assembly. That included the way forward for the ensuing five years.

(ii) and (iv) International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Fourth World Conference on Women

The secretariat reported on both these events as the issues were interrelated. The secretariat referred to the upcoming World Conference on Women and the PrepCom Meeting due in March 2000. On both the ICPD and the WCD, efforts were being made to sensitize the Caribbean to the implication of those conferences and efforts were in train to collect data relevant to these issues. However, there remained the problems of:

(a) The non-collection and presentation of data disaggregated by sex; and

(b) The lack of reliable demographic and social data.

The secretariat reported that in relation to the ICPD, it had provided governments in the subregion with technical assistance in the preparation of their national reports. It had, in addition, completed a Draft Subregional Review and Appraisal Report on the Implementation of the ICPD POA, which had been approved at a technical level meeting in November 1998.

The secretariat facilitated the attendance of a member of the NICCs, in its own right and not as a member of any other delegation, to the Hague Forum and provided technical assistance to governments which were in attendance at the final PrepCom, which was held in New York in the final two weeks of March. The secretariat observed:

(a) The problem of non-attendance by countries at various forums which resulted in a loss of opportunity to speak out on issues, such as the transshipment of toxic waste.

(b) That the issue had in fact been raised by one of the NICCs at the level of the European Union, and support was also forthcoming from the G77.

Delegates were reminded that the Special Session of the General Assembly would take place at the same time as the Heads of Government of CARICOM Meeting, which would be held in July, and therefore it would require special briefings of those who would be in attendance at that forum.

The secretariat reported on the Fourth World Conference on Women. The review process had recently begun and the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat had planned to host three technical level meetings to assist governments in the preparation of their national reports and in the completion of the Review Questionnaire, sent out by the Division for the Advancement of Women. This would be followed by a Caribbean ministerial meeting to be held in September, in preparation for the eighth Regional Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Women to be held in January 2000, the final PrepCom for the Review of the FWCW-POA and the Special Session of the General Assembly which would take place in June 2000.

The secretariat was commended on work that it had done in the area of women and development. One delegate observed that the influence of a country as an "observer" to some international meetings should not be discounted.

The Chairman requested all delegates to urge their governments to send representatives to PrepComs on those issues.

(iii) World Summit for Social Development (WSSD)

The representative of the secretariat advised that preparation for the Subregional Meeting to Review and Appraise the Implementation of the WSSD/POA included the compilation of a background paper. Questionnaires had been sent out to the various countries encouraging governments to respond in a timely manner, to the aforementioned documents on such important issues as data collection at national levels; and commissioning special studies on WSSD core issues of poverty eradication, employment creation and social integration. She urged delegates to relay the importance of obtaining timely responses to those documents and indicated that generally there had a been a good response from island States. She outlined the need to collect as much data and information as possible on the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action to allow the subregional meeting, scheduled for September 1999, to produce a comprehensive input to the United Nations General Assembly.

The Chairman endorsed the need to send in to the ECLAC office the requested information.

Agenda item 10:
Other matters

(i) World Conference on Science, Budapest, Hungary, 26 June-1 July 1999

The representative of the secretariat introduced the matter of this conference not as a situation to discuss technology, per se, but rather to discuss the implications of science and technology in the world today, which had tremendous implications for issues as critical as trade and sustainable development. A meeting had been convened in Santo Domingo in March 1999 to negotiate the Caribbean position. The secretariat ended by urging all present to send representation to the summit because of the importance of science and technology to SIDS.

Agenda item 11:
Date and agenda of the tenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee

The meeting heard varying suggestions on the format which this meeting should take and the most appropriate forms to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the CDCC. Accordingly, the ECLAC Director suggested that delegates give the matter some thought and forward suggestions to the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat for consideration. The delegates concurred.

Closing remarks

The Chairman closed the meeting, expressing his gratitude to the secretariat and to the participants for having made the ninth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC a success.

PART TWO
LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The meeting made the following recommendations:

Agenda item 5

1. As a first step towards the revitalization of the CDCC, the Constituent Declaration should be reshaped so as to make it more relevant to the new and changing needs and interests of the Caribbean subregion.

2. The secretariat should focus on a clearer examination of challenges facing the subregion, in order to assist in the identification of appropriate solutions.

3. An assessment of the Caribbean's ability to compete in a globalized market should be undertaken with a view to enhancing the subregion's competitiveness and, more generally, to determining the modalities for its effective insertion into the international market place. To that extent, the secretariat should develop a refined body of proposals for consideration at the eighteenth session of the CDCC.

4. More attention should be given to trade in services with concomitant identification of the subregion's comparative advantages.

5. The issues surrounding the forthcoming GATS 2000 should be examined by the secretariat.

6. The meeting observed the generally low level of exploitation of information and communications technologies that obtained in most Caribbean countries and urged governments to increase their capacity to use those technologies to their advantage.

Agenda item 6

7. There should be a cultural orientation to the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of the CDCC, in recognition of the role of culture as the unifying element in the Caribbean States.

8. The secretariat should develop draft proposals, including a budget, and submit them to the member States for comment.

9. The Chairman proposed that the secretariat produce a document by the end of July 1999, including a budget for the entire event, to be circulated among members for their perusal and subsequent comments.

10. In deliberating on the date and venue of the next CDCC meeting, participants recommended that in order to raise the profile of the CDCC, the twenty-fifth anniversary event should be held at a time different from the sitting of the meeting of the Committee of the whole of ECLAC.

Annex 1

ADDRESS MADE BY MS. LEN ISHMAEL, DIRECTOR, ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN AT THE OPENING OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE MONITORING COMMITTEE

Introduction

Honourable Chairman, Delegates and Colleagues, it is my pleasure to present to you my report detailing secretariat activities over the year since we last met. In presenting my report I will evaluate the extent to which we have successfully discharged some of the commitments which we made in this forum last year, the degree to which we have met our responsibilities under the work programme, and our plans for future work which will allow us to complete the biennium successfully. This report covers the period March 1998 - April 1999.

The last year was a period of challenges and solid achievements for the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. We started the year mindful of the need to be as relevant as possible to the developmental challenges facing the region and to undertake a much more proactive stance on issues as they emerged. This necessitated a shift in the modus operandi of the organization, away from a 'reporting' of events after they had happened, to one which put us more functionally coupled to the realities and issues as they emerged, a move designed to put us back on track as a policy oriented "think tank" providing critical thinking on issues of strategic importance to the region, as they emerged. In the process, we have had to reshape both our institutional image and focus.

In the last year too, we took major steps in redirecting our financial and human resources towards those areas of economic, social and sustainable development where we felt we were equipped to make the biggest impact. We remained constrained however by the number of vacancies, about five in all, within our complement of professional staff. We were however extremely fortunate to appoint Mr. Arthur Gray as the Senior Regional Economic Adviser, with responsibilities for several areas of vital interest, including assistance with CDCC matters, coordination of SIDS-related activities, external relations, and disaster response. Mr. Gray brings an array of special skills to this office, and takes over from Mr. Trevor Harker, an economist who has made significant contributions to this region, and to this office, during his association with ECLAC which spanned well over 19 years. I wish to recognize as well the invaluable contribution of Ms. Asha Kambon over the last 8 months who was brought in to assist with Women and Development Affairs while the post was being processed. That post together with those of the Economist/Sustainable Development Officer and Associate Economist are in the final stages of processing; advertisements have gone out for the posts of Senior Economist and Population Affairs Officer. Hopefully we will start the new biennium with a full complement of staff and able to considerably enhance the delivery of services to the subregion.

The shortage of staff placed an inordinate amount of pressure on some units within the organization. Despite this, I am extremely proud to report that our accomplishments over the last year have been impressive. New ground has been broken in many areas, staff have been deployed across the region consulting on and supervising projects, over 33 publications were

completed, several projects finalized and regional meetings held, and, in the process, the overall visibility of the office has been greatly increased. These we will discuss in a more substantive manner under the appropriate agenda item later on during this meeting.

Issues for discussion

I would like to spend the next few minutes addressing some of the concerns which we shared last year, and the commitments which I undertook as the incoming Director at the time.

1. CDCC

The first concern discussed was that of the flagging attendance at CDCC meetings. Last year, in my inaugural speech to this body, I promised to keep the flame of CDCC alive, in the spirit of those who had in the past devoted inordinate energies to first carving the niche for this forum, and then keeping it vibrant and alive. While we have experienced some difficulties in the past, one senses the emergence of a new mood of resilience and resurgence, and I would like to think that we are on the threshold of the revitalization of which we speak. With your commitment and support this hope will be transformed into reality.

While CDCC was vibrant and aggressive in fulfilling its mandate to further the goals of regional integration during the halcyon years, times have changed, and new actors have emerged on the regional stage. It seems rather appropriate that, on the eve of the new millennium, we pause and reflect on the status of CDCC as an intergovernmental body in the context of these changing times, and the approaches necessary to ensure its strategic refocusing and redirection.

In preparation for this review, we canvassed the opinion of many persons in the region who could be considered part and parcel of the institutional memory of CDCC. We must admit that there were those who espoused the view that CDCC has outlived its purpose. But those were the minority. There were many others who firmly believe that the CDCC is sufficiently unique, special and different to continue to play an important role in the evolving fortunes of this region. I will highlight only two of the reasons being given for this optimism and leave the substantive discussions for later on during the morning under the appropriate agenda item .

(i) A forum for discussing issues specific to the insular Caribbean

In the first place,

CDCC is viewed as a forum for engaging in discussions and cooperative efforts in areas specific to the insular Caribbean. While there is the view that perhaps the role of CDCC has been eclipsed by both the leadership role of ACS in the wider Caribbean integration movement, and that of CARICOM, CDCC, however, by virtue of its membership which is larger than CARICOM, allows for the true expression of the wealth of the Caribbean identify in a rich tapestry of languages, cultures and histories. Being smaller than ACS, CDCC provides a rather unique forum for deliberations on issues which are vital to the interests of the insular Caribbean.

The utility of a forum to discuss issues specific to small island States is no way more vividly reflected than the fact that this need was viewed sufficiently critical by small islands themselves, that they successfully lobbied for their own global platform - that of the Small Island Developing States Plan of Action, otherwise known as the SIDS POA. It is also no accident, that it was CDCC which was requested by member States to assume the role of operational Secretariat for Caribbean SIDS, a role which it has held for the last 5 years, and one which has received regional and international recognition and credibility.

(ii) An organ for sharing lessons of experience

Secondly,

CDCC is also viewed as a modality for sharing and exchanging lessons of experience around the region. One of the issues raised continuously is the inadequacy of mechanisms to assist with the exchange of information on policies programmes and strategic approaches which have been tested and either succeeded or failed across the region. The regional scope of CDCC allows the body to transfer information and lessons of experiences from one member state to another, on a wide range of issues, including trade, fiscal reform, social policy planning and sustainable development options. The sharing of this type of intelligence can significantly reduce the potential for costly mistakes. These experiences are reflected in the reports produced by this office, in the information transmitted during official missions and in the technical assistance given at the national level.

The office, for example, has just completed a report documenting the experiences of five Caribbean countries in dealing with issues pertaining to fiscal reform. A subregional meeting in which these experiences were shared, entitled "The Fiscal Covenant: Strengths, Weaknesses and Challenges" was held in Trinidad in November of 1998, and was replicated in December at the national level, in Jamaica.

(iii) Information flows

The weakness of information exchange in the region is demonstrated in other areas as well. The lack of efficient flow of information between some capitals and ambassadors to the United Nations, for example, is a concern which is well known.

Cognizant of the pivotal role played by our Ambassadors to the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the European Union (EU) in the world of external relations, and the need to keep them well-informed on issues as they emerge, last year we formalized a system to provide briefings on critical developmental issues to the subregion's ambassadors which is proving to be successful. In 1998, I undertook three briefings of CDCC Ambassadors to the United Nations. These sessions are meant to either brief them on issues about to be deliberated at the United Nations or to ensure that they are informed of critical issues on which a common position would be of benefit to the subregion's interests. A briefing session was also held with the Ambassadors to the OAS and those to the EU, using official visits to both Washington and Belgium as an opportunity to share information. This is an initiative which we intend to continue.

This office also plays an important role in providing statistical and other types of data and information to the region. In 1998, this office continued to provide much-needed, otherwise unavailable advisory services to and statistical information on the subregion. The *Selected Statistical Indicators of Caribbean Countries Vol. XI 1998"* as well as a document entitled *National accounts of Caribbean countries - Methodologies, sources and quality ... a comparative Caribbean study* were prepared and disseminated.

Our web site (www.eclacpos.org) is now functional and full of Caribbean-relevant information. The site is attracting favourable comment and requests have been generated from as far away as China. The Documentation Centre has also begun to establish a Virtual Library with links to information on the web about the social and economic development of the Caribbean. It has also established a forum on the web for discussions of interest to information and database managers in the subregion.

2. Other areas of concern

Other concerns regarding CDCC aired in the past by delegates in this and other forums, have referred to: the issue of relevance of the work programme, the lack of sufficient coverage of Caribbean countries in ECLAC documents, the need to provide more attention to operational activities - in other words, to provide more assistance at the national level, and the need to increase the visibility of this office. Permit me a few minutes to inform you of some of our strides in this area.

Relevance of work programme

In attempting to ensure a greater degree of responsiveness of the work programme to critical issues faced by the region, two of the main challenges which we faced were the need to devote more resources to providing strategic intelligence to member States, as and when needed, despite the fact that our work programme is formulated several years in advance of the biennium within which it is actually implemented and also the need to devote more resources to providing technical assistance at the national level rather than completely at the regional level, our usual point of entry.

We have attempted to meet both these challenges by using official missions to each country as the vehicle with which to formulate, with government, a programme of technical assistance tailored to the needs and priorities of each country. In this way this office has recently completed a comprehensive audit of the development planning process in Saint Lucia. The Physical Planning Unit and the Development Control Authority were comprehensively analyzed, and a report presented to the Prime Minister in October of 1998. On the basis of this, the Government of Saint Lucia is considering a new organizational structure to enhance planning efficiency in the country. We have also, in the process, submitted an entirely new draft Physical Planning and Development Control Draft Bill to the Prime Minister for consideration. A similar request for planning assistance has been received by the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis and this office is in the process of reviewing the legislation pertaining to planning in that country.

Official visits have also catalyzed the delivery of technical assistance to other countries as well. One such project, for example, includes "An analysis of the agro-industrial and manufacturing firms of Guyana, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica, in response to the changing rules which now govern trade and the need to provide information and assistance to member States to enable their firms to be more competitive on the global market. Another project: *An analysis of the trade impacts of the proposed new highway between Guyana, Suriname and Brazil* has been completed and delivered to the Government of Guyana.

With respect to the last two projects, staff went out by small plane to visit first-hand the remote southern border of Guyana, and traveled by foot and maxi taxi to interview firms for the study analyzing the degree of competitiveness of the agro-industrial and manufacturing firms in three countries. This with a view to ensuring that our knowledge of the region which we are meant to serve is first hand and intimate.

New projects

We have broken ground in new areas as well. Concern about the lack of information on the rate at which land is moving from local to foreign ownership prompted implementation of a project entitled *The impact of tourism on land use land ownership and the land market.* Studies have been completed for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tobago. We are in the process of initiating this project in the British Virgin Islands. As a complement to this process, given the pressures to accede to the dismantling of barriers to trade, and the obvious implications for the acceleration in the movement of land ownership from the local market, we are also undertaking a comparative analysis, at the regional level, of the Aliens Landholding Acts with a view to identifying the gaps in the ability of these various Acts to protect the national best interest. A regional meeting will be called to discuss not only the results of both sets of inquiry, but also to propose public sector policy responses.

Economics

The secretariat has established itself as an important contributor to the body of knowledge on economic affairs of the subregion through discussions and research on emerging economic and fiscal trends that impact on subregional and national economies. Included among our economic publications were the following two documents: *Review of global economic developments (with comments regarding their impact on Caribbean policies - 1997);* and *Summary of Caribbean economic performance in 1997.*

Trade

International trade is one of the most important economic activities in the subregion. The World Trade Organization (WTO) rules governing aspects of trade exert profound influence on the economic fortunes of member States. As a result, a significant amount of the work programme is devoted to issues of trade. Among those technical studies dealing with subregional trade which we produced were: *Intra-CDCC trade in the 1990s*; and *Trade and environment in the context of the World Trade Organization.* Our quarterly newsletter *External*

Sector Briefing Notes continues to provide timely information on global and hemispheric economic issues.

As a member of the Tripartite Committee, with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the OAS, the secretariat continues to provide technical support to the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) Consultative Group on Smaller Economies, and participates in meetings. In 1998 three reports were produced by ECLAC as technical support to the Consultative Group. The most recent report produced by this office was entitled *Trade Liberalization and Fiscal Planning: Implications for smaller Latin American and Caribbean Countries*. This report highlighted issues pertinent to the OECS, and was submitted to the March 1999 meeting of the consultative group.

In responses to requests from Ministries of Trade and Private Sector groups in the region, for direct assistance to better understand the workings of global market, issues pertaining to trade, trading blocs, competitiveness and standards, we are developing a one day workshop which will be taken throughout the OECS. The workshop will cover issues pertaining to the FTAA, WTO, competition policy, and the establishment of bureaux of standards.

During my recent official visit to Antigua and Barbuda, agreement was reached on a portfolio of assistance to that country which will include the undertaking of a project to analyze the impacts of migrants on the socio-economic, cultural and demographic profile of the country, a subject which was the focus of intense scrutiny and debate during the recently held elections. Assistance will also be provided in planning, training with respect to FTAA negotiations, and support for public sector reform programmes, among other things.

Mr. Chairman, honourable delegates, the point which I am seeking to make is to reaffirm the commitment of this office to ensuring that the full weight of the resources at our disposal is used in support of activities in the region which can assist in making a difference at both the regional and national levels.

Increasing visibility of the Office

Another concern raised during my address last year, was the extent to which the very valuable contribution of the work of this office to the development of this region is not sufficiently well published and therefore not as visible as it should be. To that end, it is now a matter of policy to invite the press to briefing sessions prior to the undertaking of major meetings, press releases are sent out prior to missions, the quality of the presentations of our publications have gone through a significant upgrading and different modalities are being used to ensure a wider dissemination of all publications directly to those to whom these resources will prove to be most helpful. In the process we are attempting to develop an image of this organization, not as a "think tank" somewhere out there, but one which is very much intimately connected with the developmental challenges of this region.

The issue of coverage of data

Together with our Headquarters we are working on modalities to ensure that there is more of a comprehensive insertion of Caribbean affairs and data into all ECLAC publications, a point of much sensitivity raised by delegates in numerous forums over time. The Executive Secretary is himself taking a leadership role at Headquarters in this regard. One of the difficulties which we face in this office, is the fact that the subregion which we serve is fairly large, with over 23 member States, more than half of the membership of ECLAC. Despite the information age, and all of the best intentions, requests for data which we make to our member States are not always responded to with alacrity. This means that quite often, as was the case last week, officers must physically travel to individual countries to get the data which is needed. This is a drain on the resources of this office which could be more productively spent on delivering technical assistance.

3. Other work programme issues

Follow-up to global summits

This office continues to play a pivotal role in the process leading to the preparation for global summits, the process of their review and the implementation of various plans of action. As the operational secretariat for the SIDS POA in the subregion, a major challenge this past year was to promote the use of the SIDS POA as a framework for developmental activities in the subregion, and to pursue a number of activities in support of the review of the SIDS POA in September 1999.

A document analyzing the progress to date of implementation of activities under the SIDS POA was prepared, adopted by the region, and submitted to the CSD as input into the recently concluded Seventh Meeting in preparation for the Review by the General Assembly. Apart from the subregional report noted previously, among the more important contributions in this area was publication of the book *"Implementation of the SIDS POA - Caribbean Perspective*, which identified the status of implementation of all chapters of the SIDS POA for 14 countries.

Several meetings of the SIDS Bureau were held as well as the Interagency Group, a group of over 20 agencies which together have undertaken to implement a joint work programme under the SIDS POA. Discussions regarding the importance of the SIDS POA were also held at the ACP Headquarters in Brussels with members of the EC.

The pivotal role being played by this office in keeping the flame of the SIDS POA alive was publicly recognized by several donors at the recently concluded SIDS donors meeting held in New York a few months ago.

In 1998, work was also undertaken with respect to preparing reports and convening a subregional meeting to discuss the status of implementation of ICPD+5. This subregional position was contained in a report entitled: *The Caribbean subregional review and appraisal report on the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action*, and was used in the preparation of the Latin American and Caribbean

Appraisal and Review document which was submitted to Headquarters for the General Assembly review next month.

In starting an initiative to conduct subregional reviews prior to the regional review process, this office is dealing with another of the concerns raised previously, the perception, on the part of some delegates, of a lack of sufficient attention given to Caribbean issues by the Commission. As a matter of policy, this office will now convene subregional meetings and prepare reports prior to the review of all the global summits with the singular objective of deriving consensus on a Caribbean position and ensuring that Caribbean voices are clearly articulated in the formulation of all Latin American and Caribbean reports. This approach is already well underway as we prepare for the reviews of both the Beijing and Copenhagen Summits to be reviewed by the General Assembly in the year 2000. Several preparatory review meetings are being hosted by this office during the coming months. There are however, resource implications, since there are no funds in the regular budget to undertake subregional meetings on the scale needed.

Social issues

The well-being of this subregion's people is at the centre of the development paradigm around which the work programme of this office evolves. Consequently, issues pertaining to poverty, gender, migration and the socio-economic impacts of migration continued to absorb much of our time. During the last year, in collaboration with the CDB, ECLAC assisted the Government of Belize with both the process of national consultations and the formulation of a national action plan for the eradication of poverty. Migration, both intraregional and extraregional, continues to have major impact on the socio-economic development of most of the countries in this subregion. In response to the need for pertinent information on which to base public sector social policy, the secretariat published two studies dealing with the impacts of migration -*The contribution of remittances to social and economic development in the Caribbean* and -*The impact of immigration on Caribbean micro-States: Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, United States Virgin Islands.* These and other studies on migration and the labour market in Antigua and Nevis, will form the basis for a subregional meeting on migration in 1999.

Science and technology

ECLAC has performed the role of secretariat for the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST) for almost 20 years. In 1998, the Council convened 11 meetings around the subregion, and implemented a number of projects, including two US$700,000 projects devoted to training primary school teachers in the teaching of science and technology and on processing and preservation of fresh foods.

Training

The office provided training to improve national skills in integrating population issues in development planning and strengthen the linkages between population, social and economic programmes in 12 countries. We also made available, through the CCST, a staff member to

train one person from each of 13 Caribbean countries in the establishment and development of national symbiosis web sites from national institutions involved in food technology and biotechnology. "Simbiosis" -The Information System Specialized on Biotechnology and Food Technology, is sponsored by the OAS and countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and seeks to connect persons and organizational centres with interest in biotechnology, food technology and related areas.

The non-independent territories

I wish to make note of the projects and programmes with special relevance to the NICCs. In the past, the approach adopted by this office in dealing with issues pertaining to the NICCs was to identify special projects to address their specific needs. Given the fact that what the NICCs want is closer ties with the region in which they share a geographical space, and in order to deepen the integration process it is probably more prudent to adopt a modality which integrates the NICCs more functionally into the work programme. Consequently, over time, a subtle shift has taken place in addressing some of the special needs of the NICCs, and in that process, the NICCs are now much more functionally integrated in the work of this office than ever before.

The NICCs have been included in a study on the socio-economic impacts of migration with a focus on the islands of the British Virgin Islands and St Maarten. This project is now being expanded to include Nevis and Antigua, and will form the basis for a regional meeting to discuss the implications for public policy. The most recent edition of *The Associate* has been devoted to an analysis of migration in the United States Virgin Islands, St Maarten and the British Virgin Islands. A study will be prepared which will examine the obstacles to trade between the Netherlands Antilles, Aruba and CARICOM. The study on the implications of tourism on land use and land ownership has been expanded to include the British Virgin Islands. These initiatives, among others, allow for a cross comparative analysis of the experiences of both our Non-independent and independent members, while at the same time setting the stage for discussions on public policy on a regional basis.

Several member countries of the NICCs participated in the various seminars and meetings hosted by the secretariat during 1998 as well as in projects and programmes of the office.

I have undertaken official visits to the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. Planned visits in March and April to Montserrat and Anguilla were deferred due to the conflict in schedules with those of some government officials. However visits to both countries have been scheduled to take place over the next four weeks, and missions to the British Virgin Islands and United States Virgin Islands are planned for shortly thereafter. It is my intention to use these official visits as a means to formulate the delivery of technical assistance to the NICCs within the range of services provided for under the work programme of this office.

At this meeting I had hoped to be in a position to present you with the completed outputs of the so-called NICCs project. While all the outputs namely: *A Study on the integration of Non-Independent Caribbean Countries (NICCs) in technical programmes of the United Nations*

system and other intergovernmental bodies, a special edition of *The Associate* and the Country Profiles have all been completed, they are in the final stages of publication and were not ready for delivery in time for this meeting. Within the next few weeks they will be forwarded to you.

Cooperation and collaboration

And now finally a word on our own approach to cooperation and collaboration with other organizations in this region. Given the reform process currently underway system-wide at the United Nations and dwindling sources of donor assisted project funding, collaboration and effective cooperation with other agencies and organization, are going to be the only means by which we can effectively discharge our full mandate to member States. In keeping with our own philosophy of collaboration as a means to strategically harness the resources available to the region, we started 1998, with a Strategic Planning Meeting held in January, where we presented our work programme to some 25 agencies also working within the region. This was an effort to reduce the potential for overlap and duplication of effort, and to identify those areas of potential collaboration. This simple rationale was met with a fair amount of enthusiasm from our colleagues and was followed in April by a meeting for Information Coordinators and Database Managers to ensure collaboration on respective information needs. However, we are finding out that effective collaboration requires patience, follow up and sustained effort for success. This is one of our challenges as we move forward.

However, there were many successes in this area which we can point to as well. Highlights included ECLAC's collaboration with the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) in the formulation of a study on the macroeconomic, social and environmental effects of Hurricane Georges on the economy of Saint Kitts and Nevis completed in November 1998; with the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) on a number of studies related to trade; with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) secretariat and the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) in hosting a regional meeting to put in place a comprehensive framework for undertaking the year 2000 Round of Censuses; with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in engaging in a regional workshop to both review the status of implementation of the ICPD POA and to guide the subregion in fully implementing the POA over the next five-year period; with over 20 agencies in following up on activities related to implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS POA) and with the United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean Area (UNIC) and other United Nations sister agencies in undertaking activities in support of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. Continuing the philosophy of collaboration, official visits were exchanged with CARICOM, followed by a joint ECLAC/CARICOM meeting in June, attended by six staff members from that secretariat and headed by the CARICOM Secretary-General, to identify further areas of possible collaboration. Our staff continues to be involved in providing technical support to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Trinidad and Tobago to the GEF Small Grants Programme.

A few weeks ago we convened an interagency meeting at which we presented to our colleagues our plans for the convening of a subregional meeting to review and appraise the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development. We also presented a budget which identified the costs involved in both preparing for and convening the meting, and invited

other agencies to co-host this meeting with us. This has met with resounding success. The same approach has been used successfully in our attempts to respond to our mandate to follow up, within the subregion, on the status of implementation of the Women's Summit. Collaboration and cooperation are going to be key elements in our strategy to mobilize resources in the region, to undertake the work which must be done.

New trends

As we move into the latter part of this biennium there are some new areas of engagement which I would like to mention briefly. We have been concerned about the regularity with which this subregion is being buffeted by storms in recent time, and the lack of competence within this office to deploy the ECLAC rapid assessment methodology in assessing the macroeconomic assessment of events such as hurricanes, and the recent ravages of El Nino on the economies of our members. We have initiated a training programme for staff in this office, and are working on pulling together a pool of funds to allow staff to be deployed immediately in the aftermath of such an event to assist members with their recovery efforts.

We have a new project underway to develop a manual which elaborates on the experiences of hotel plants across the region in the use of environmentally-sensitive technologies, and another funded through the GEF, undertaken jointly with UNDP and several local communities in which we are evaluating the impact of turtles on the socio-economic well being of local communities. We will report on these and other newer initiatives at our meeting next year.

Conclusion

And now to conclude. In 1998 funds were devoted to upgrading staff skills in a number of areas including language training, computer skills upgrading and supervisory and management techniques. A staff retreat devoted to inter personal communications skills was also held in Tobago, in April. Another retreat is currently being planned.

And, last year, for the very first time, the Port of Spain office expended almost the entire budget which had been allotted to this office. Several budget lines were fully expended, particularly those related to travel, consultancies, temporary assistance and publications among others. This was the result of careful planning for the use of resources in support of activities of this office early in the biennium. At the end of this year, we expect to have fully expended the entire budget for this biennium.

However, even as we acknowledge our achievements for 1998, we are aware that the challenges of the second half of our work programme biennium awaits. We nonetheless look forward to continuing the process of articulating and translating development policies and strategies into the sorts of actions, nationally, regionally and internationally, which puts the well-being of the subregion's people first, and in so doing radically increase the relevance of our organization to the needs of the region which we are meant to serve.

Annex 2

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