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### About us

Issued on a monthly basis, The Hummingbird offers insights into the latest projects, publications, technical assistance missions and research carried out by ECLAC Caribbean. In addition to these, sneak previews are provided of the most salient upcoming events, alongside enriching followups to previously covered issues. With a view to featuring a variety of facets of Caribbean life and lifestyle, The Hummingbird also zooms in on cultural activities and landmark occurrences through an eye-opening regional round-up.

#### **EDITORIAL TEAM**

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Cover Image: Chairman of Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Addresses General Assembly

Please see our contact details on the back cover of this newsletter.

## International Days

### 10 November

World Science Day for Peace and Development

#### 14 November

World Diabetes Day

#### 21 November

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

#### 25 November

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

## **Upcoming Events**

#### 2 December

Workshop for the use of a tool for balancing the supply and use tables (SUT)

#### 17 December

Online Course: "Use and interpretation of trade indicators, including Input-Output analysis"







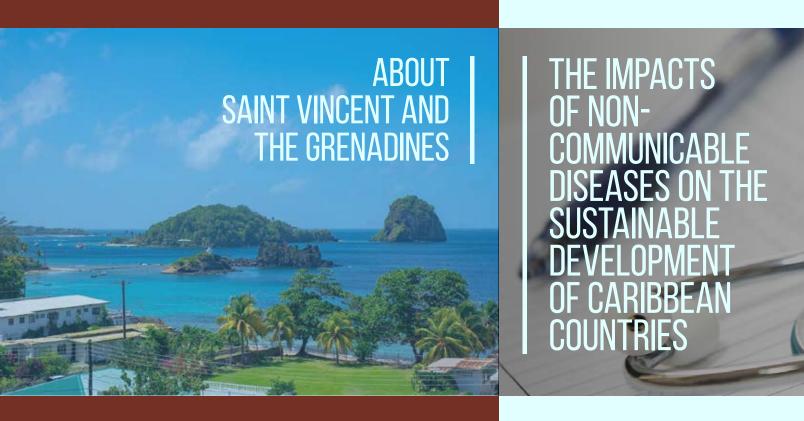
#### **ECLAC Caribbean**

Posted Nov 4

Country representatives convened at the 20th Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the #Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee. More information: https://bit.ly/3mGZicz

Twentieth meeting of the **Monitoring Committee** of the Caribbean Develpment and Cooperation Committee

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Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) is a multi-island state comprising 32 islands and cays, including integrally the main island of Saint Vincent known for its volcanic landscapes and the smaller Grenadine Islands, popular for their harbours ideal for yachting, their secluded white sand beaches and beautiful reefs. Some of the Grenadines are inhabited: Bequia, Canouan, Mayreau, Mustique, Palm Island, Petit Saint Vincent, Union Island and Young Island.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, a parliamentary democracy, is a dynamic member of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). This small island developing state (SID) has also distinguished itself as one of the smallest countries elected to hold a nonpermanent seat on the Security Council of the United Nations. SVG will complete its tenure on 31 December 2021. No stranger to punching above their weight, SVG's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Rhonda King, recently also served as President of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves last year led his party once again to triumphant success at the polls, securing an unprecedented fifth consecutive term to form the government of SVG. Camillo Gonsalves, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology currently serves as the distinguished Chair of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC). ■

An ECLAC Caribbean study, prepared earlier this year, was once again brought into focus during the seminar on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs).

The study reported that the high prevalence of NCDs in the Caribbean underscored the need for sustained efforts to control these diseases and their risk factors. Such efforts are envisaged in several global, regional and national frameworks that exist to address the problem of NCDs, including the economic burdens that they pose to countries around the world.

In the Caribbean, the Heads of Government have long articulated the vital relationship between health and development, a perspective that aligns well with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's commitment to ensure that individuals fulfil their potential in a healthy environment.

NCDs constitute a major burden of disease with a significant economic impact, especially in low- and middleincome developing countries. Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) show that ischaemic heart



disease, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), all of which are NCDs, represented the top three leading causes of death in 2019.

Six of the top 10 causes of death worldwide in 2019 were also NCDs, accounting for more than 23 million deaths. This represents only a portion of more than 36 million people who die annually from all NCDs (equivalent to 63 per cent of global deaths). Of this number, 14 million people die prematurely between the ages of 30 and 70 with low- and middle-income countries accounting for 86% of the burden of these premature deaths (WHO 2013).

In the Caribbean, NCDs caused between 57 per cent (Haiti) and 83 per cent (Barbados) of all deaths (WHO 2018). The risk factors of alcohol consumption, tobacco smoking, physical inactivity, and obesity that are common to NCDs are prevalent in the subregion and rising in some countries. Of particular concern is the high rate of childhood obesity which the CARICOM Heads of Government have recognized as "the greatest threat to the health of

future generations".

Although future healthcare cost is expected to rise, public expenditure on health remains below the recommended level of 6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Caribbean, ranging from 0.8 per cent of GDP in Haiti to 4.4 per cent in Barbados (ECLAC 2020).

The effects of NCDs are especially alarming when taking into consideration the ageing of the population and the high and rising rates of childhood obesity in the Caribbean. In light of these challenges, ECLAC Caribbean recently published a study which makes a case for a renewed focus on addressing NCDs, given their potential to constitute an even greater burden in the future.

The report continues to demonstrate the alarming societal effects of NCD's on the subregion by giving the example of Jamaica from 2011-2012. During this time the National Health Fund (NHF) in Jamaica paid individual benefits amounting to US \$30.65 million for subsidies to cover medication costs for

individuals with NCDs, representing 7.63 per cent of Government Expenditure on Health for 2011.

The study concluded that the current labour productivity of the Caribbean has room for improvement. The combination of a future work force burdened by the morbidity associated with NCDs and their risk factors and healthcare and social security systems, saddled with the burden of diseases from the preponderance of senior citizens with chronic NCDs, may be a challenge for most Caribbean small economies. Policy makers are therefore advised to consider closely the economic costs of ignoring the effects and impacts of NCDs. ■





20th ECLAC Monitoring Committee meeting focusses on

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN



epresentatives from 14 Member States and 10 Associate Member countries gathered virtually for informative discussion on how to strengthen economic resilience and accelerate recovery in the subregion, during the 20th meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), biennially convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).



## 20th ECLAC Monitoring Committee meeting focusses on strengthening economic resilience in the Caribbean

The CDCC, a permanent subsidiary body of ECLAC holds regular sessions every two years, in which Ministers meet, and resolutions are agreed on to determine the focus of the Secretariat's work, in line with priority areas of development needs identified by the Member States. In the intervening years, meetings of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC are held to review the progress being made on the agreed resolutions and the work of the Commission for the benefit of the Caribbean. This year, the meeting of the Monitoring Committee was attended by five Latin American members of the Commission, as well as specialists from subregional and international organizations and other experts.

The meeting was inaugurated by ECLAC Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, Christian Guillermet-Fernández, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, the country currently chairing the Commission, and the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Camillo Gonsalves, Chair of the CDCC.

Participants discussed strategies needed to support post-pandemic recovery through greater regional solidarity and integration. Through riveting presentations, accounts of which can be found later in this issue of The Hummingbird, they addressed the multidimensional challenges which Caribbean States continue to face and that define their

vulnerability. Also discussed were innovative solutions on financial, technological and institutional matters for the subregion.

ECLAC presented a preliminary working document for review, entitled 'Reckoning with COVID-19: pursuing a people-centered recovery and more resilient future for the Caribbean'. Participants were also presented with a report of the implementation of ECLAC's programme of work in the Caribbean for 2020.

Bárcena indicated that the meeting offers the subregion's countries the opportunity to reflect on the most pressing development issues. "ECLAC is fully committed to implementing the 'Caribbean First' strategy.



## We are facing a protracted health disaster that reveals the structural inequalities of Latin America and the Caribbean.

- Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC Executive Secretary

We are doing everything we can to ensure that the Caribbean's needs and interests have a prominent place in our work," she stressed.

She added that the international community agrees that the threat of climate change to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is unquestionable. According to Bárcena, "That is why some of the most resounding voices that have demanded moral and strategic leadership on climate action at the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26) came from the Caribbean."

In her presentation of the document on the post-COVID-19 recovery in the Caribbean, Bárcena underscored that the Caribbean faced a triple crisis, unleashed by high debt, climate phenomena and aggravated by COVID-19, which causes growing economic and financial distress. "We are facing a protracted health disaster that reveals the structural inequalities of Latin America and the Caribbean", she indicated.

With regard to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), she noted that the Caribbean was one of the subregions with the highest prevalence of NCDs, and that the pandemic had strained health systems and exposed systemic limitations for managing public health emergencies such as pandemics.

She added that ECLAC's projections pointed to the Caribbean growing 4.1 per cent in 2021 and 7.8 per cent in 2022. Employment and real household income would not return to prepandemic levels in the short or medium term, which would lead to lower standards of living for several years.

"We are observing 'one crisis upon another crisis' in the Caribbean. We urgently need a vulnerability index that would enable us to better understand the multidimensional nature of the problems that the subregion faces. To build a new future, the Caribbean needs to strengthen food security, promote economic diversification, strengthen disaster management, improve social protection, and bolster the health infrastructure to respond to COVID-19", Bárcena explained.

CDCC Chair Gonsalves called for not looking back in pursuit of a past status quo, but instead looking forward, with history as a guide and not as a destination. "We must accelerate regional integration and not pause integration within the Caribbean region", he declared.

"COVID-19 has been one of the worst economic times in the individual histories of the countries in the Caribbean region. Many of the tourismdependent countries in the Caribbean have been economically battered in a way that is unprecedented, even without contemplating challenges related to debt and to the existential threats prompted by climate change and the impacts of disasters, such as this year with the eruption of the La Soufrière volcano in my country", he reported.

The Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean,

Diane Quarless, delivered a report on the 2020 programme of work for the Caribbean which detailed the activities undertaken in the subregion during the previous year. She emphasized the response to the impact of COVID-19, in particular to further the design of ECLAC's Caribbean Resilience Fund which would be launched in 2022 - with the aim of promoting the economic recovery and investment in adaptation and economic transformation, while also exploring measures to promote Caribbean States' debt relief strategies.

Bárcena further reinforced the notion that the CDCC is the quintessential intergovernmental body of the Caribbean and indicated: "We will continue to push for productive diversification, for green and blue economies, to advance on finding financial solutions and move towards a vulnerability index to replace GDP per capita as a tool for measuring development, while also moving towards information technologies and sustainable transportation. And we will continue our efforts to collaborate with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and all the subregional organizations that are working in the Caribbean".

At the conclusion of the meeting, delegates approved holding the 29th session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) in Suriname, following an alphabetical rotation scheme among member countries; they did not set a specific date beyond establishing that it would take place prior to ECLAC's 39th session (to be held in 2022). ■



## CARIBBEAN'S PANDEMIC IMPACT FURTHER CHALLENGED BY HIGH PREVALENCE OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The high prevalence of diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes and cancer in Caribbean countries is exacerbating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which hinders the subregion's progress towards achieving sustainable development.

This warning was made by policy makers, representatives of international organizations and relevant specialists, attending a virtual seminar on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in the Caribbean, on 4 November 2021. The seminar was organized by ECLAC ahead of the 20th meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC).

Presiding over the event were ECLAC's Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, and Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Camillo Gonsalves, the chair of the CDCC. The moderator was Diane Quarless, Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean.

In her presentation, Executive Secretary Bárcena explained that "Not only does the COVID-19 pandemic continue to rage in the Caribbean, it is one of the subregions of the world with the highest prevalence of noncommunicable diseases." She referenced data from the World Health Organization (WHO), which shows that NCDs are the main cause of death in the subregion's countries.

Bárcena further explained that in each Caribbean country, more than half of all deaths annually could be attributed to NCDs, which also contributed significantly to disability. "The pandemic has aggravated the risks that people with noncommunicable diseases face, and not only do they continue to be at greater risk of dying or suffering severe illness from COVID-19 infection, but they have also been affected by interruptions in health care due to services being overburdened."

She therefore called for accelerated vaccination efforts. So far, the rate of full vaccination in the Caribbean averaged 35.2 per cent, with considerable variation among countries. This percentage, she noted, was below the global rate (39.0 per cent) and that of Latin America (47.5 per cent). She also raised the issue of production of vaccines.

"The entire region of Latin America and the Caribbean should strengthen production, distribution and access to medicines and vaccines. To achieve this, on 18 September 2021, ECLAC presented a plan for self-sufficiency in health matters requested by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). We are moving from design to implementation of the plan, with focal points in all the countries and various meetings planned for the coming months. We hope the Caribbean will join us", Bárcena stated.



Meanwhile in his remarks, Minister Camillo Gonsalves, Chair of the CDCC, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to address the problem of non-communicable diseases at a time when all Caribbean countries are fighting the pandemic, and many of their ministers and leaders are focused on climate change and the subregion's future in the framework of the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26).

"Non-communicable diseases are responsible for 6 of the 10 main causes of death in the subregion," Minister Gonsalves said as he emphasized that NCDs impose a heavy economic cost on governments, due to high health expenditures, as well as on individuals. NCDs have a disproportionate impact on people living in poverty, which means that addressing them constitutes a development challenge for the Caribbean, which is also true for other phenomena such as climate change, Gonsalves noted.

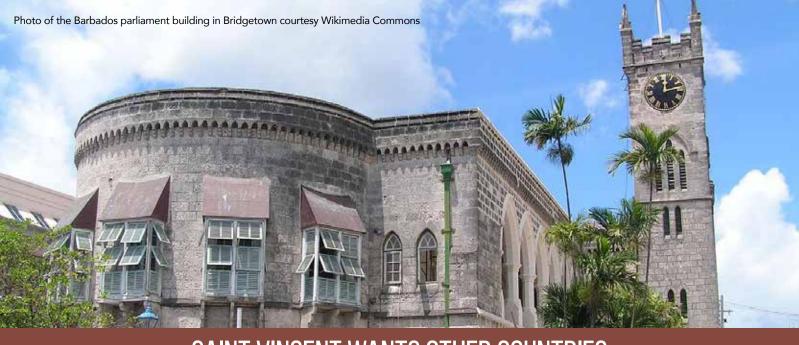
"Non-communicable diseases are within our control, they are preventable", the Minister acknowledged, affirming that current policies are not effective because they are not sufficiently focused on prevention, nor do they include cross-sectoral and coordinated approaches.

Simon Anderson, Professor and Director of the George Alleyne Chronic Disease Research Center at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus Barbados, acted as moderator to the seminar's first panel, which featured remarks by Dr. Kenneth George, Chief Medical Officer of Barbados; Fitzroy Henry, Professor at the College of Health Sciences of the University of Technology of Jamaica; Kavita Singh, Senior Research Scientist at the Public Health Foundation of India; and Francis Morey, Deputy Director of Health Services of Belize.

Participating in the second panel were Anselm Hennis, Director of the Department of Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health

at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO); Rachel Nugent, Vice President of Global Noncommunicable Diseases at RTI International; Stanley Lalta, from the Centre for Health Economics of The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago; and Rosa Sandoval, Coordinator of the Economics of NCDs Team at PAHO. Acting as moderator was Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator of the Statistics and Sustainable Development Unit at ECLAC Caribbean.

The specialists called on governments to invest in a comprehensive approach to NCDs, with a focus on strengthening primary care and preventing risk factors such as an unsuitable diet, physical inactivity and tobacco and alcohol abuse. ■



# SAINT VINCENT WANTS OTHER COUNTRIES TO ATTAIN REPUBLIC STATUS

Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves said he looked forward to the day when other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries would follow Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Dominica and adopt a republican form of government. In a lengthy letter congratulating Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley on her island becoming the fourth CARICOM State to replace Britain's Queen Elizabeth as head of state, Prime Minister Gonsalves said other CARICOM countries, namely Haiti and Suriname had also adopted a republican form of government, with both countries having executive presidents.

"Guyana and Dominica have been republics since independence respectively in 1966 and 1977 although Guyana has an executive Presidency and Dominica, a Non-Executive President. Trinidad and Tobago which became independent in August 1962 with a constitutional monarchial system with a largely ceremonial Governor-General, altered its constitution in 1976 to a republican one with a Non-Executive President", he said.

Gonsalves said that prior to Prime Minister Mottley's successful leadership on this issue, only Dr. Eric Williams, "the political titan of Trinidad and Tobago", was able to lead triumphantly on republicanism by way of an alteration to an existing post-independence Constitution. "So, Barbados is not doing anything novel. But what it is doing is of utmost significance, for the better, for its people and our Caribbean civilization. It is my hope that, in my lifetime, all or most of the independent countries of CARICOM would move from a monarchial system to a republican one.

"I earnestly look forward to such a change in Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. These eight CARICOM member-states plus six other countries are those outside of the United Kingdom, with the British monarch as their Head of State: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu."

Gonsalves further observed that there are five British colonies or overseas territories in the Caribbean, namely Anguilla, Cayman Islands, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, and Turks and Caicos Islands. Bermuda, located in the Atlantic, but with Caribbean

connections, is also under British rule.

"The wider Caribbean is also awash with colonial territories or departments of colonial powers of the United States of America, France, and Holland", he wrote, adding "hopefully, too, all these colonial territories will push for independence within the comity of nations globally. It would be good to see the end of colonialism in our Caribbean. But that initiative belongs not to me but to the people of these 20 or so colonies or territories and their national leaders", Gonsalves wrote in his congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Mottley.

On the historic occasion, Barbadian Dame Sandra Mason was sworn in as Barbados' first head of state during a glittering ceremony at National Heroes Square in the heart of the capital, Bridgetown. Prince Charles witnessed the transition as a representative of the former monarch stating in a speech to the ceremony that, "The creation of this republic offers a new beginning." Also, in attendance at the ceremony was the international talent, Rihanna, a native of the island who was honored as a national hero during the celebration.



## SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES RECEIVES **VOLCANO RECOVERY FUNDING**

The World Bank recently approved US \$40 million for the Volcanic Eruption Emergency Project in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The project is also financed by a US \$2 million grant from the European Union's Caribbean Regional Resilience Building Facility, managed by the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

In April 2021, the La Soufrière volcano experienced explosive eruptions that damaged critical services, infrastructure, and agriculture, in addition to affecting the entire population of the island of Saint Vincent. The eruption also resulted in significant population displacement; approximately 22,400 people were evacuated from areas close to the volcano, with many remaining in shelters for months. The natural disaster compounded the effects of COVID-19, creating financing needs estimated at US \$175 million, 23 per cent of the country's gross domestic product in 2021.

"The people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have endured the twin shocks of the volcanic eruption and COVID-19. The project will help the country build back better while taking into account its vulnerability to natural disasters and the growing threat of climate change", said Lilia Burunciuc, World

Bank Country Director for Caribbean Countries. "This project will support the government's efforts to restore infrastructure, stimulate economic activity, and assist the most vulnerable in the population, particularly women. We hope that this project will be a catalyst for growth and strengthen the country's resilience".

The Volcanic Eruption Emergency Project will support the rapid restoration of critical infrastructure damaged by the volcanic eruptions. It will also improve the government's capacity to respond to future emergencies. Additionally, it will provide temporary grants to 4,000 displaced households, as well as implement a cash-for-work program to support the labor-intensive work of ash and debris cleaning.

In April 2021, the World Bank provided US \$20 million to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to address immediate needs. Plus, the Bank allocated a further US \$50 million for budget support in June 2021. The Volcanic Eruption Emergency Project financing, which is from the International Development Association (IDA), is interest-free with a maturity of 40 years, including a grace period of 10 years. ■



## RECKONING WITH COVID-19: RECOVERY AND RESILIENT FUTURE FOR THE CARIBBEAN

A specially prepared report was presented at the 20th Monitoring Committee meeting of the CDCC, held virtually on 5 November 2021, for review by delegations from Caribbean and Latin American countries. The report provided comprehensive data and policy recommendations for the consideration of governments and the wider regional and international community, on critical issues that must be addressed, to bring the countries of the Caribbean safely out of crisis post COVID-19, and back on the path to durable, resilient, inclusive development.

The report stated that the Caribbean has always faced persistent development challenges stemming from inherent vulnerabilities. Even

before COVID-19 struck, the subregion was finding it difficult to recover from the global financing crisis of 2008-2009, with growth rates stubbornly remaining well below pre-crisis levels. In the interim, the impact of extreme climatic events and external economic shocks, as well as, challenges born of structural rigidities linked to over dependence on a few sectors has intensified.

COVID-19 therefore could not have come at a worse time for the subregion, which now faces multidimensional challenges affecting all areas of development, particularly the economy, health, education, social protection and the environment.

The health challenges and the responses have seen the unfortunate loss of many lives, as in recent months new caseloads per day, have risen above that of Latin America, and there has been the virtual shutdown of major economic activities. Social distancing, the loss of income and livelihoods and the drying up of financial inflow through foreign direct investment (FDI) have conspired to place the region, with perhaps the exception of Guyana, in tenuous circumstances.

By August 2021 more than US \$1.2 billon was expended for fiscal support to sustain businesses, maintain livelihoods, and create preventative measures to contain the virus.



The road ahead can be made easier through collaboration among all the stakeholders in determining appropriate policy choices

Despite these dire circumstances, Caribbean people and policymakers must remain hopeful and grasp all the opportunities available. The road ahead can be made easier through collaboration among all the stakeholders in determining appropriate policy choices, and in crafting strategies aimed at robust recovery with economic and social transformation.

The report also highlighted that the world had changed considerably since COVID-19, with digitization and interconnection through ICT as well as closer integration, assuming a more vital role in strategic and resilient response to emerging challenges.

The subregional resources and capacities, both human and financial, were assessed insufficient to meet the increasing needs of the Caribbean in the wake of COVID-19. South-South and triangular cooperation and other meaningful forms of collaboration were suggested as influential enablers to jump start stalled strategies and projects needing support. Particular areas of interest included public health management, including better access to vaccines, technology development, trade, finance, and global advocacy, especially for middle-income small island developing States (SIDS).

The report noted that the pandemic's socioeconomic impact had significantly widened the

Caribbean countries' financing gap. Furthermore, given the systemic nature of risk in the Caribbean and the already highly indebted economies, capacity to maintain high levels of social protection was being stretched to the limit. Several useful short- and medium-term recommendations were put forward by the report to support the subregion in its effort to limit the fall-out in economic activity, employment and livelihoods.

## **Trini Pastelle Pie**

#### What you will need:

- 11 lb beef
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 bundle chive, chopped
- 1 small pepper, chopped (optional)
- 2 pimento peppers, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- Chadon beni, chopped (to taste)
- Fine thyme
- Ketchup
- Worcestershire sauce
- 3 tbsp capers
- 3 tbsp raisins (optional)
- Olives (optional)
- Oil
- 2 ½ cups cornmeal
- Salt
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- All-purpose seasoning
- 8 oz butter
- ¼ vegetable oil
- 3 cups water
- ½ lb grated cheese

#### How to Make it:

- 1. Heat pan over medium heat and add beef.
- 2. Add onion, chive, pepper, pimento, garlic, chadon beni and thyme and mix well. Add ketchup, worcestershire, capers, raisins and olives and mix well.
- 3. Cover and let cool for 10-14 minutes.
- 4. Season with salt to taste and set aside.
- 5. Place cornmeal in a bowl. Add salt, cayenne and all-purpose seasoning.
- 6. Add butter, then vegetable oil and 2 1/2 cups of water. Add remaining water if needed.
- 7. Preheat oven to 350°F.
- 8. Place half of the cornmeal mixture into a greased baking dish. Add beef mixture. Cover with remaining cornmeal.
- 9. Top with grated cheese.
- 10. Bake for 45 minutes, then serve.



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