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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
Office for the Caribbean

CDCC (PRE-CGCED) CONSULTATIVE MEETING
NEW YORK, 19 JUNE 1981

Prepared by
S. St. A. Clarke
Director

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Organization and Participation

In keeping with the directives of the CDCC Fourth and Fifth Sessions, a CDCC Consultative Meeting was convened 19 June 1981. The meeting was held at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, the arrangements having been made with the assistance of the UN Regional Commissions Section.

His Excellency, Ambassador Sir Edgerton Richardson, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations chaired the meeting, Jamaica currently holding the Chairmanship of the CDCC. The Director of the ECLA Caribbean Office served as Secretary to the meeting assisted by two staff members from the Regional Commissions Section. The UNDP was represented by Mr. Denis Benn, Chief of the Caribbean Unit in the Latin American and Caribbean Region Section of UNDP.

All CDCC participating Governments were notified in advance by the CDCC Secretariat; and in addition the Permanent Missions at New York were notified by the Regional Commissions Section. In addition it was listed in the UN Journal of daily events No. 81/118. Representatives from six countries participated in the meeting - Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Documentation and Discussions

Arrangements were made by the ECLA Washington Office for transmission to UN New York of copies of documents that were to be considered at the fourth CGCED meeting, Washington 23-26 June 1981. That documentation was the basis for the pre-CGCED consultations, with emphasis on the Regional programmes. The focal point of the consultation was to brief the CDCC Secretariat. The objective was to seek to achieve a high level of co-ordination of CGCED and CDCC activities.

The World Bank document GG-81-13 titled "The Caribbean Group, Current Situation and Prospects" was in fact the only one available and copies were

circulated to all the participants. In its main sections it covered a review of the Caribbean Economies in 1980, External Financing needs and prospects, Regional Programmes before the CGCED, and Conclusions and Suggestions.

The meeting examined briefly the economic review section of the report before going on to its discussion of the regional programmes. The serious balance-of-payments situation and the low growth rates of most Caribbean countries were commented upon. The UNDP representative observed that in the CGCED there had tended to be concentration on these short-term problems, but the expectation was that emphasis would shift to longer term development issues.

Regional Programmes

At the outset the point was made that the CDCC orientation was in terms of developmental strategies for the Caribbean countries, rather than on seeking external financing for projects. This latter aspect was the focus for CGCED activity.

Examination of the regional programmes to be considered by the CGCED, was taken in the order that they were presented in the document.

Tourism - Attention was drawn to the fact that the proposal was to work towards a merging of the activities of the Caribbean Tourism Research Centre (CTRC) and Caribbean Tourism Association (CTA) and the Eastern Caribbean Association (ECTA) under an umbrella tourism organization. It was noted that the activities of those bodies were mainly promotional and market research, while the CDCC mandates placed emphasis on social displacement, linkages between tourism and other economic sectors, and problems of environmental impact on tourism.

Export Promotion - It was observed that these CGCED activities had been confined thus far to the CARICOM area, with a joint World Bank, CARICOM Secretariat, UNDP, OAS and AID work programme. The activity had begun with a review of CARICOM fiscal harmonization measures. OAS had undertaken a study on credit, and USAID, CARICOM and UNDP export incentive studies, which are expected to be extended later to non-CARICOM countries. Separately, the

International Trade Centre (ITC) had undertaken strengthening of support services in trade information for CARICOM, based on EEC financial support under the Lomé Convention provisions. The ITC export promotion programme was to cover: Survey of export potential, export packaging, training in export promotion, studies of product groups. The intention was that the scope of geographical coverage would be extended to include the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Netherlands Antilles, and Suriname; but this would depend on availability of financing.

Private Sector - It was pointed out that the CGCED meeting would discuss the further work of the Private Sector Task Force and the Caribbean Project Development Facility. And it was noted that there were no specific regional programmes in the CDCC programmes that were oriented specially to the Private Sector.

Energy - It was explained that the CDCC orientation has been (a) towards the development of institutional approaches within the governments to enable them to treat energy more comprehensively in policy terms; and (b) the development of pooled information systems to facilitate planning and programme development in energy. In contrast, the CGCED initiatives had been in the field of petroleum exploration promotion in the Caribbean region.

In the discussion of energy, coordination was emphasized. It was felt that overlapping between CDB, CARICOM and other institutions' programmes should be minimised.

Agriculture - The issue of overlapping of programmes was also central to this discussion. In this case it was felt that the action proposed for the CGCED would result in duplication of some of the work of the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology. The proposal before the CGCED was that a Caribbean Research Co-ordinating Committee (CARCC) be established to co-ordinate the planning and financing of a regional agricultural research programme. Steps had been taken to bring the CARCC into being but financing was still being sought to make it operational.

Transport - The primary concern tabled to CGCED was that priority improvements in fire and rescue services should be implemented without delay. The study that had been concluded by ICAO had shown up serious deficiencies in airports support and maintenance systems, and financing was being sought to enable introduction of the corrective measures.

For the other major activity in this sector, the Development of Shipping project based in St. Lucia there, a report was to be made to CGCED on the progress of implementation. It was noted that the shipping traffic survey which was to be done by the ECLA Office had been completed and that the document had been presented to the Governments.

Other matters - The meeting also noted that other subjects to be discussed at the CGCED in Washington would include an information system on foreign assistance flows, and the special programmes for the ECCM countries. These were not explored in depth.

OBSERVATIONS

The meeting took on the character of the Director of the ECLA Office and the Chief of UNDP's Caribbean Unit briefing most of the representatives about activities in the CGCED, and putting the proposals to be considered into perspective. As on previous occasions, the representatives were at the disadvantage of not seeing the documentation sufficiently far in advance to be able to study it. It was also the case, as on previous occasions, that most of the representatives at the Consultative meeting were not designated to participate the following week at the CGCED meeting. But although they were not generally involved with CGCED matters, it did not prevent a critical consideration of the matters brought to their attention. A more detailed examination of the issue would have been possible within a group involved with CGCED.

In his concluding statement the Chairman deplored the small attendance at the meeting and the lack of briefing of some of the members present. He observed that CDCC members not participating in CGCED would have benefited by attending, because the Washington meeting would not be restricted to just financial matters but would touch upon all assistance to the area. The Director of ECLA Caribbean Office thanked the Chairman for his handling of the meeting, and the participants who attended.

ATTENDANCE - CDCC CONSULTATIVE MEETING

Countries

BARBADOS	Mr. R. R. Browne, First Secretary
GUYANA	Mr. Ian Fraser, Second Secretary
HAITI	Dr. Fritz N. Cineas, Permanent Representative Mr. Henry Dorleans, First Secretary
JAMAICA	Sir Edgerton Richardson
SURINAME	Mr. Henk Goedschalk, Deputy Director National Planning Office Mr. Ram Mahabir, Adviser, National Planning Office
TRINIDAD + TOBAGO	Mr. Philip Sealy, First Secretary

SECRETARIAT

ECLA/CDCC	Mr. Silbourne St. A. Clarke, Director, Caribbean Office, Port of Spain
UNDP	Mr. Denis Benn, Chief, Caribbean Unit
ECLA/Hqs.	Ms. Barbara Norwood, Regional Commissions Unit