



**Caribbean Center for Development Administration**

*an intergovernmental agency  
building networks with the social partners*

**A POLICY FORUM:  
SHARING PERSPECTIVES BETWEEN  
GOVERNMENTS AND THE SOCIAL PARTNERS**

Dover Convention Center Barbados  
January 1997

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**CARICAD/CMDA POLICY FORUM REPORT**  
**ON**  
**SHARING PERSPECTIVES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE SOCIAL**  
**PARTNERS**  
**Held January 29 - 31, 1997 at the Dover Convention Center, Barbados**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Some sixty (60) participants were engaged in lively and at times, provocative debate during the two and one-half days of the Forum. Jointly organised by the Caribbean Center for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Caribbean Management Development Association (CMDA), funding was provided by the British Development Division in the Caribbean (BDDC). In addition, to the 14 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member Countries of CARICAD, representatives included a member of the Legislative Council of the British Virgin Islands (BVI), the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL), private enterprise, NGOs, community based organisations, senior public sector managers, academics, and management consultants as well as delegates from Anguilla, Bermuda, Turks & Caicos Islands and the Netherlands Antilles. The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were also represented.

With the wide representation of the social partners, it was understandable that the meeting would conclude with an extensive list of recommendations. The participants therefore urged CARICAD to prioritise those requiring urgent attention and to forward for consideration by national and regional authorities, those issues which might form part of ongoing or proposed projects, aimed at building capacity for effective participation by the social partners in policy formulation and implementation.

**POLICY CONTEXT/ ENVIRONMENT**

The various issues identified and discussed, and the recommendations arising from the Policy Forum need to be considered within the context of current and emerging global, regional and organisational trends and with due consideration for the integral role of Human Resources and Information Technology. These environmental trends and factors were ably and concisely outlined by Dr. Neville Ying in his presentation on *Visioning the Future Caribbean Environment: Implications for Private & Public Sector Management*.

Global Trends

Intense **Global Competition**, accompanied by increasing **Protectionism**, particularly through the use by developed countries of strategic alliances, trading blocs and non-tariff barriers, would continue to be a critical trend affecting the economic growth of the Caribbean. Pressure to establish and continually upgrade **Technology Infrastructure** would continue, as electronic technology become increasingly integrated with work and development. **Drug Abuse** and the fight against drug traffickers would continue and **Environmental Management and Protection** can be expected to be of great importance.

### Regional Trends

Three significant growth areas within the Caribbean: **Tourism, Music & Performing Arts, and Sports** were identified for priority attention for socio-economic development and as foreign exchange earners.

### Organisational Trends

At the organisational level, the important trends will continue to be: **Re-engineering and Restructuring, Emphasis on Customer Service, Impact of Technology and the Value of Human Capital.**

The challenge for HRD was emphasised as being the: *“...re-engineering of the training function to make it integrated with and focused on strategic objectives and critical success factors of public and private sector organisations. In this regard, performance and productivity improvements in the organisation must become the important criteria for measuring the effectiveness of training and development initiatives.”*

### POLICY ISSUES

Subject to the theme of “Sharing Perspectives Between Governments and Social Partners”, various issues were discussed, including the following:

#### Social Development Issues

- The need to invest in, and sustain **the development of social capital** as a foundation for socio-economic growth and stability.
- **The need to review and revise the education curricula, and to retrain principals and teachers**, at the secondary and tertiary levels to ensure a better fit with the rapidly changing demands of the public and private sectors and the need to manage complex socio-economic issues in a dynamic society and global marketplace.
- **Training, as one element of an holistic approach to Human Resource Management & Development (HRM&D)**, was strongly emphasised, with requests for explicit attention to issues of diversity, gender and power relations.
- The **dominance of instant gratification** as the guiding motivation of the current generation, often satisfied through the drug trade and other illegal and corrupt practices, in lieu of an ethical and productive value system.

#### Economic Development Issues

- The need for **access to venture capital for small enterprise development.**
- The **impact of information technology on productivity** in the workplace..
- The implications for the countries of the region of the trend towards forming **large trading blocs, such as NAFTA, CARIBCAN, FTAA, MERCOSUR**
- **The implications of monopoly control** over telecommunications services.

#### Governance and Geo-Political Issues

- **The role of the state and the size of government.** This entailed achieving a balance between the pressures for privatisation and the need for a state that can serve effectively as the coordinator and regulator of national policies and services for the benefit of all in the society.
- **Promoting good governance.** This entailed the strengthening of civil society and the deepening of democratic social forces so that the use of the social partnership can become an effective mechanism for good governance.
- The impact of **Caribbean intra-regional migration** and the burden of increasing numbers of illegal migrants on the socio-economic infrastructure of the receiving territories (e.g. St.

Maarten); and

- The need for dialogue and **integration across the diverse language territories in the region** which include English, Dutch, French, Spanish, Portuguese and various Creole and patois derivatives of these languages.

### **POLICY PROBLEMS**

The following situations were identified as challenges to be addressed by governments and social partners in the region to ensure the required development and growth.

- Extensive **financial constraints** on the governments of the region to fund the infrastructural expansion and maintenance required to foster and sustain the social and economic development and growth of the region. Innovative solutions were required for the region to become increasingly self-financing as donor funds become more difficult to access and often entailed obligations which were not always in our best interest.
- **The declining rate of job creation relative to the population growth** in the region, given the increased use of technology and the need for leaner organisations to be cost competitive in a dynamic, complex global marketplace. In the past, i.e. twenty or thirty years ago, school leavers and university and college graduates were reasonably certain to find employment in either the public or private sectors. Now, with the trend to downsizing, there are no guarantees of a job being available and strategies to encourage self employment and entrepreneurial development have become increasingly important. **Despite the above, we are still educating our children to seek jobs rather than to identify opportunities and to develop businesses.**

### **POLICY OPPORTUNITIES**

The following situations were identified as providing opportunities for the identification and formulation of effective policies to encourage social and economic development and growth in the region.

- **Existing success stories in the region** from which case studies, best practices and models can be derived as a guide for policy and strategy formulation for replicating these successes elsewhere in the region.  
For example, the Arawak Cement Company turnaround in Barbados; the Multicare Foundation in Jamaica providing assistance to youth and communities for their self-development using sports and entrepreneurial training programmes amongst other strategies; the Youth Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Programme of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Cultural Affairs in Barbados; the Peace and Love In Schools (PALS) programme in Jamaica which is coordinated by the Foundation for Disputes Resolution and seeks to use peer group counseling, amongst other techniques, to combat the rising tide of violence in schools; the Grenada experience of Labour Union and government cooperation on the Public Sector Development Programme; the economically successful practice of the higgler system within the region, particularly the experience of the Jamaican Informal Commercial Importers (ICIs); compulsory training programmes for all ministers of government and permanent secretaries in Anguilla - were a few of the success stories mentioned at the Forum.
- The developments of the information technology age and its impact on production methodology, productivity, marketing strategy, organisational size and operational costs have significantly revolutionised thinking on the economies of scale, such that, small

sized operations are now an asset not a liability.

- The wealth of analytical reports, feasibility studies, recommendations, research study findings, case studies, conference reports, best practice information, training materials and reports accumulated in the universities, other training and educational institutions, governmental, regional and international agencies, businesses and consulting organisations within the region provide a major information resource that needs to be researched, developed, published and exploited by Caribbean nationals and to be used to inform national and regional policy direction and formulation.
- The wealth of talented, educated and experienced Caribbean nationals residing abroad which could be attracted back to the region either permanently or on special assignments and projects for temporary periods to assist with the development of the region. Appropriate policies to facilitate their re-entry and to effectively utilize their skills and knowledge are required to avoid repeating the failures of such strategies attempted in the past.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS/ INITIATIVES**

### **National Consensus-Building Amongst the Social Partners**

National strategic planning and consensus-building amongst stakeholders in support of national development was critical to the process of national development and to the achievement of sustained prosperity in any society. In particular, the strategy of the social partnership was commended. This entailed:

- Identifying common objectives on matters of national interest and development.
- Sharing of relevant information.
- Regular, meaningful consultation on national issues.
- Sublimating narrow sectoral interests under wider societal interests.

### **Developing a New Culture of Management & Labour Relations**

A new culture of union/management relations was required based on trust, confidence, openness, fairness, honesty and full disclosure of information. A Win-win approach must be adopted and sustained, and constant dialogue in non-crisis situations must be institutionalised. **The leadership of organisations needed to clarify their values and define and document the philosophy on which they wanted to base their labour/management relations. This philosophy would then become the guide to achieve the hoped-for paradigm shift.** Consequently, we need to develop labour/management relation models based on the experience of the Caribbean and develop our own literature in support of the culture we are building - a culture which we must document, publish and promote to the rest of the world. In support of this idea, it was pointed out that models of Ethics Management existed and should be applied. The work of Professors Edwin Jones, Alvin Wint and Gordon Shirley of the University of the West Indies, Mona campus in Jamaica was commended for this purpose.

In support of this new culture, labour legislation in the region needs to be reviewed and updated/ modernised, where necessary. Furthermore, managers in the public and private sectors must educate themselves in the area of labour law and change their attitude towards labour relations. Managers were warned that to ignore people and Industrial Relations issues was to do so at their peril. The deficiency in expertise, in Human Resources Management and Development and particularly in Labour Relations Management must be addressed by reviewing the labour/ management relations programmes being taught in our colleges and universities. Training programmes for

Permanent Secretaries and Ministers, particularly those newly appointed, must be developed and implemented and should include labour management, negotiating skills, strategic planning and management, among other relevant management skills.

As an integral principle of this new culture, the tripartite approach to consultation between Government, employers and labour needs to be institutionalised. To illustrate the success of this approach, the Barbados Prices and Incomes Protocol was commended to the Forum as a model for management/labour consultation.

It was also noted that the tactical personnel administration approach practiced by most Caribbean governments must be replaced by a strategic Human Resources Management and Development orientation.

### **The Development of New Entrepreneurial Skills To Meet the Challenges of the New Millennium**

This subject attracted intense debate with recommendations including both policy directions and specific strategies for policy implementation. The policy directions addressed values, education, training, socio-economic development, government services and other support services for entrepreneurs.

#### **Values, Education and Training**

A modified educational and value system was required as a critical and fundamental pre-requisite for the development of new entrepreneurial skills in the region. Value preparation, beginning with the family and the earliest educational levels (e.g. primary school system), was needed to instill the necessary values and risk-taking characteristics that support entrepreneurial development. For example, values and characteristics such as courage, prudent judgement, emotional maturity and integrity were emphasised.

#### **It was proposed that the educational system in our region needed to be modified in order to:**

- support self employment and creativity as opposed to preparation for job-seeking and employment;
- encourage a more risk-taking orientation, as opposed to a risk-averse approach;
- address the stigma attached to pursuing entrepreneurial/technical/trade courses as opposed to the traditionally lauded academic subjects and pursuit of professional careers - doctor, lawyer;
- stop the role stereotyping of men and women in their choice of work or career;
- achieve a paradigm-shift in the thinking of educators/teachers/young people to embrace the changes and new directions envisioned;
- encourage the identification of opportunities for the development of a business.

#### **Strategies Suggested To Modify The Regional Education System included:**

- Addition of modules within specific existing subjects to teach job related skills
- Implementation of on-going programmes to link teachers with the business community and entrepreneurial class to influence and support curricula change and to effect a necessary attitudinal adjustment and skills training of the teacher.

- Organisation of Teacher job attachments as well as student job attachments within the private sector.
- Identification of an organisation or group of persons or working committee to strategise and develop an Action Plan to implement the major recommendations arising on the development of Entrepreneurship as part of the educational curricula.

It was recommended that training programmes for potential entrepreneurs include, inter alia, leadership skills, project management skills, quality management, techniques in the costing of services, accounting, marketing, creative problem-solving, networking skills, foreign languages and attitude training that would be supportive of business/ risk-taking. The re-introduction of an Apprenticeship System with appropriate modifications to reflect the environment and needs of today's young person was also suggested.

### Government Services and Socio-Economic Development

Government socio-economic development policy and poverty reduction strategies need to recognise and address the different requirements of rural entrepreneurial development where basic infrastructure such as roads, water, electricity, sewage, and telecommunications services are either non-existent or inadequate. Also, an environmental protection and management policy must be defined, legislated and enforced as an integral part of any strategy for socio-economic development within the region.

Administrative bottlenecks hampering the development and growth of entrepreneurial activities and business development and growth should be analysed and streamlined.

Governmental support was required to foster the growth and development of entrepreneurs and the protection of their rights. For example, government support was needed to ensure: access to telecommunications services at a competitive cost; copyright protection of Caribbean products and services; the development (by the banking/financial sector) of new approaches to financing business start-ups.

A well-structured public education campaign for family members, communities, and the traditional business sector to support the new/ young entrepreneur should be developed and launched.

### Other Support Services for Entrepreneurs

The encouragement of formal and informal networks for entrepreneurs within the region to share information and experiences, marketing opportunities, ideas, supply sources, and to provide vital emotional/moral support to each other.

The provision of marketing data and information and services in market research and development to support the efforts of the entrepreneur. For example, statistics on the success/ failure rate of new business starts, information on needs and demands existing which would aid the identification of business opportunities and new approaches to doing business.

## **Creating an Enabling Environment for Private Sector Growth and Transformation of Caribbean Economies**

The key recommendations were concerned with marketing strategy for the region, aspects of public sector reform, and a process for national consultation on social and economic development:

Appropriate new export marketing strategies needed to be developed to exploit the changing global market place and its opportunities for niche markets to which the small volume, high quality, specialised products of the Caribbean were well suited. Selling our products to mass market, high volume, distributors was not considered to be an appropriate strategy.

Public Sector Reform Programmes needed to address the protracted procedures and “red tape” bureaucracy which impeded the establishment and growth of business. Also, the attitude of negativism presented by some civil servants in dealing with the public needed to be replaced by a more helpful, solutions-oriented approach.

National Social and Economic Consultations should be convened and hosted by the state, with invitees from the national federations or umbrella bodies of the social partners within that country. As a pre-requisite for participation, the umbrella body must have first consulted with their member groups on the relevant issues for presentation at the Consultation. The purpose of the Consultation would be to take decisions on economic and social development to be followed by communication and implementation. Dr. Neville Duncan of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), Mona, Jamaica, was requested to develop this recommendation further in the form of a proposal with format for such a Consultation.

### **Strategies and Incentives for Technology Enhancement in the Workplace**

There were three main recommendations:

A national macro-level strategic Information Technology planning process was imperative for the countries of the region if the competitive advantages of the information age were to be successfully exploited for our economic benefit.

An aggressive policy and programme for putting computers into schools, and for introducing information technology skills into the school curricula, needed to be implemented as a strategic priority.

Appropriate standards to guide the development and use of information technology must be defined to maximise compatibility and connectivity of hardware, software and database systems; and to ensure effective protection against health hazards associated with prolonged use/ exposure to computers.

### **Strategic Alliances for Regional Development and Growth for the 21st Century**

Strategic Alliances of priority were identified to be:

- joint promotion and marketing of the Caribbean as a single tourist destination
- manufacturing specialised products by companies in select territories rather than in every territory, based on the criteria of technological preparedness, competitiveness in price and quality, and profitability as primary considerations.
- mergers and joint ventures among companies to strengthen their competitive advantage in the global marketplace and to optimise the use of scarce resources
- closer collaboration among training and education institutions such as UWI, UG, Utech and Community Colleges throughout the region as a critical strategy for human resource development
- Partnerships between these institutions and the public and private sectors to strengthen strategies for human resource development
- Partnerships between Trade Unions and employers in the public and private sectors to provide industrial harmony necessary for attracting and retaining local and foreign investment and optimising returns on investment for national development.
- Partnerships between the communities and law enforcement agencies to combat crime and violence

- Post-Lome arrangements to enhance benefits to the CARICOM Single Market and Economy
- A Caribbean Court of Appeal to improve the administration of justice
- Parity in NAFTA and the Free Trade Association of the Americas (FTAA).

### **Enhancing Human Performance for Regional Development and Growth for the 21st Century**

**Enhancing Human Performance** was another critical strategy for the region which has been underlined by Prime Minister P.J. Patterson of Jamaica as a priority for attention at the CARICOM Heads of Government Conference to be held June 30 - July 4, 1997. Eight Fundamental Considerations were postulated at the Policy Forum to achieve this mandate:

- **Investment in Education** at the national and corporate levels should be benchmarked to international standards. For example, 10% of GDP per annum and 5% of total payroll per annum should be the targets for expenditure on training and education at the national and corporate levels, respectively.
- **Impact of technology on human performance**, particularly the training of graduates from our tertiary institutions that are capable of transforming IT education and training into business opportunities
- **Alternate modes of delivery** of training and education including distance teaching using interactive audio and visual linkages via satellite and cable transmissions
- **Articulation of institutional programmes** through the establishment of competency standards, assessment criteria and a credit system to link tertiary level programmes in the region. The strengthening of the University Council of Jamaica to act as the implementation agency was suggested.
- **Curricula emphasis** in training and education institutions should provide an optimal mix of social and technical skills, with an emphasis on science and technology, values and attitudes, and management of diversity.
- **Teacher Education** - scope needs to be widened to provide teachers for education and training institutions as well as managers in companies trained to be teachers, coaches and mentors.
- **Corporate University** - that is, a strategic process used by companies to address their human resource needs in a structured way with a mix of internal and external resources and strategic financial investment. This concept should be more widely implemented in the private sector.
- **Management of Education** - the development of a cadre of manager/educators to be in charge of education and training institutions.

### **CARICAD Initiatives and Follow-Up Action Arising from the Policy Forum**

Arising from the deliberations and recommendations of the Policy Forum, CARICAD has identified certain initiatives which are consistent with its mandate and future strategic directions and which it will undertake in the medium term. The major initiatives are outlined below.

#### **1. OECS PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM & MODERNISATION**

A highlight of the Forum was a panel discussion of the **Report on Public Sector Management and Reform in the OECS Countries** commissioned by the BDDC and CDB for a recent meeting of the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development (CGCED) in Washington.

In its 5 Year Strategic Plan, soon to be endorsed at its forthcoming Board Meeting, CARICAD will be giving priority attention to implementing recommendations of the OECS study. It has been suggested that a joint CARICAD/ECCB Task Force should be established to address such issues as modernisation of the legislative and operational frameworks of Service Commissions, greater delegation of authority to public sector managers for performance management, discipline, value-for-money budgeting and decentralisation.

## 2. ANNUAL MULTI-PARTITE POLICY FORUM

It was agreed that the POLICY FORUM should be upgraded to a major annual event involving multi-partite representation. For instance, issues pertaining to the impact of information technology on productivity in the workplace, concerns about occupational health and safety, monopoly control over telecommunications services and areas for competition to the benefit of consumers and society should be subjects for another POLICY FORUM.

Additionally, within its current workplan, CARICAD will seek to include other issues, such as the use of Training as one element within a holistic approach to HRM&D, diversity, gender and power relations; new entrepreneurial skills, attitudes to business and risk-taking, access to venture capital for small enterprise development and training in dispute resolution.

## 3. ROLE OF THE STATE AND SIZE OF GOVERNMENT

Much attention was given to the pooling of resources across sectors and the rationalisation of the size and scope of government. These areas demand urgent action so that greater efficiency, cost-sharing and drastic reduction in excessive wastage of resources, human and financial, can contribute to mobilising capital to run appropriate organisational units and agencies in the public sector.

Pressures for privatisation of state-owned enterprises were examined in several presentations. A strong appeal was made for the relative autonomy of the State, if the State were to serve effectively as coordinator and regulator of national policies and services, deemed essential for the benefit of society as a whole and not only to allow those who can pay to have access to quality health care, education, transportation, utilities and the like.

The sharing of experiences - both success and failure - was identified as an important area for CARICAD to organise case-studies and provide for their dissemination and discussion. This is already envisaged as a key element in CARICAD's Strategic Plan and would be critical to the emerging new culture of management and labour relations characterised by participatory decision-making and policy-making.

## 4. PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE

The strengthening of civil society institutions must be expected to assume additional prominence in deepening this initiative for the adoption of a Policy Forum for social partnerships as a mechanism for good governance. The underlying purpose is the deepening of democratic social forces so as to make a significant difference in the quality of the lives of the vast majority of Caribbean peoples, across all languages and cultures of the region.

CARICAD can be expected to play a leading role in the process of restructuring and public sector development with the necessary support of the donor community and active involvement of all the stakeholders.

## Acknowledgement

The support of the many participants, presenters, organisers and sponsors of the Policy Forum is greatly appreciated. Their contributions have ensured that the quality of the deliberations and recommendations should be of value to our regional leaders and policy makers, and to the international community that supports us in our efforts to achieve sustainable socio-economic

growth and development.

The demands may appear daunting, but our collective wisdom and consistent efforts will earn a lasting success for the Caribbean.

**Bridgetown, 1997**

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**Dover Convention center**  
**Barbados**  
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