Remote Work as an alternative work arrangement has been growing in the last few years. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, however, remote work has taken on a new manifestation in that it is not only an alternative for a few but it is fast becoming a way of life for millions across the globe.

Since August 2019, CARICAD introduced its first version of a Remote Working Policy and working arrangements. At that time, the Policy facilitated the work arrangement for one of CARICAD’s Technical Staff to work remotely from another Member State, outside of CARICAD’s base location in Barbados.

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis, it became critical for CARICAD to revise its policy framework for remote working arrangements. This allowed the organisation to further define the scope, operations, performance expectations, conditions and obligations of all parties in the remote working arrangement. Flexibility was also a critical element built into the policy, as it allowed for different conditions for the use of remote working, in keeping with changing external circumstances (such as COVID-19). This flexibility allowed CARICAD to adjust seamlessly to the expanded remote working arrangements that had to be utilised during the current pandemic.

A key objective of the policy is to ensure optimal performance at the organisational, team and individual levels, even with remote working arrangements. As such, the policy included performance management guidelines to be followed to achieve performance targets. These include:

- Adhering to an agreed performance agreement
- Agreeing to regular contact arrangements
- Ensuring work schedules overlap with those of other team members for as long as is necessary to complete their duties effectively and collaboratively

What's in this special edition...

In this special COVID-19 issue of our Horizon Newsletter, we will be sharing with you a summary of the central tenets of our policy and arrangements for Remote Working (p.3). We will also offer suggestions for Leadership in a Crisis (p.4), outline Business Continuity Planning (p.8) and present a Call to Action for Digital Government (p.12).
Recognising very early that it cannot be business as usual, the team at CARICAD worked on and introduced its first version of a Remote Working Policy and working arrangements.

- **Continued from Page 1**

Some of the guiding principles espoused in the Policy, and which are currently being utilised to ensure that remote working succeeds at CARICAD, are summarised below:

1. **A Support Infrastructure in terms of IT performance, security and responsive support**

CARICAD is maximising the use of relevant and reliable tools (eg. Software such as WhatsApp, Office 365, Zoom, Webex etc.) to allow for better collaboration, connectivity and reporting by staff.

2. **Change Management**

An intentional culture of trust is necessary in remote working arrangements. Transition from office to work at home has required trust, planning and structured workflow arrangements. Training in the use of new systems, constant communication to avoid work disruptions are critical to managing the change process. Moreover, promoting a sense of community that supports emotional aspects of individual staff members cannot be underestimated.

3. **A High Performance Organisation Culture**

The policy provides a well-defined purpose for productive remote working. Supporting mechanisms such as CARICAD’s Operational Plan, our remote working schedule, scheduled team meetings and one-on-one interactions have assisted staff in gaining understanding of the goals that we are aiming to achieve and doing this through co-located connections. Remote work involves the principle of ensuring a fair effort, through the use of time to the organisation. This means that the primary focus for remote work is on output and deliverables.

The future of work pattern will be that the right work, involving the right person(s) can be done from any location. It is our view at CARICAD that remote working will be a core focus of future work practice in our region, both in private and public sector organisations.
This page outlines nine essential components for developing an effective remote working policy.

1. **DEFINE REMOTE WORKING BASED ON YOUR ORGANISATION**
   “Remote Work” will differ across organisations. Therefore, it is critical to define “remote working” based on your organisational needs, capacity and structure. This should also include the different types of remote working arrangements employed by your organisation.

2. **EXPLAIN WHY SUCH A POLICY IS NEEDED AND UNDER WHICH CIRCUMSTANCES IT WILL COME INTO EFFECT**
   It is critical to clearly define the reason for the remote working policy and under which circumstances it is activated. This section should also include a time-frame for the remote working arrangements and a strategy for reevaluating whether to continue or not.

3. **IDENTIFY WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO WORK REMOTELY**
   Based on the varying nature of jobs, it is not always possible for every employee in organisations to work remotely. As a result, it is imperative to clearly identify who is eligible to work remotely, based on their job descriptions.

4. **OUTLINE THE REMOTE WORKING PROTOCOLS**
   Clearly outline the expected behaviours for both the employers and employees. This also includes the expected hours of work and the methods for reporting and remaining connected to the organisation. Be clear to avoid leaving room for assumptions or ambiguity. The goal is to ensure all employees understand the rules and regulations they are expected to comply with, when working remotely.

5. **ESTABLISH THE REMOTE WORKING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**
   Clearly indicate how employee performance will be measured while working remotely.

6. **OUTLINE EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**
   Update employees on any changes regarding salary disbursement, including any instructions and protocols regarding the same. Additionally, indicate whether or not employees will be receiving compensation and/or benefits for working at home to assist with their personal resources.

7. **CREATE A LIST OF THE EQUIPMENT AND CAPABILITIES NEEDED TO EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE IN A REMOTE WORKING ARRANGEMENT**
   Provide employees with a list of best practices for setting up an ideal work environment at home. This list should include the tools that they will need to function effectively; for example, Wi-Fi, laptop, etc.

8. **PROVIDE EMPLOYEES WITH A LIST OF SOFTWARE BEING USED FOR COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION**
   Clearly outline the software your team will be using for collaboration, connectivity and reporting, and provide the team with the relevant training/instruction on how to use these tools (eg. WhatsApp, Office 365, Zoom etc.)

9. **IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM TO ENSURE CYBER SECURITY FOR ONLINE ACTIVITY**
   Ensure effective measures are implemented to secure online interaction and work tasks. This is especially for vital for confidential services. This may require appointing an IT tech to oversee the entire remote work online process.

*NB: This framework is generic and might not be applicable to all departments in the public service. Due to the uniqueness and sensitivity of some departments, specialised policies should be created, to effectively facilitate their continuous operation.*
The framework suggests that Preparation before a crisis, is as important as Performance, during the crisis and Transformation, after the crisis. CARICAD developed the framework by focusing on what Leaders/Managers should Be, Know, Have and Do for the three phases; Prepare, Perform and Transform. In that regard, because we are still in the unfolding COVID-19 crisis, the focus of this article will be on leading/managing during the crisis. It is important to clarify a few concepts at the outset:

**Crisis**: is a threatening condition that requires urgent action to avoid further deterioration. Crises can be: Sudden or gradual impact, wide-spread or localised, natural or human-caused but always comprise danger and risk and there is a need for quick, decisive action to prevent deterioration of the situation.

**Transformational Leadership:**
A style of leadership where the leader collaborates with followers (employees) to identify the needed change, creates a vision to guide the change; through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of the group.
Continued from Page 3

MANAGEMENT: John Kotter defined Management as “a job which takes care of planning, organising, budgeting, coordinating and monitoring activities for a group or an organisation”.

In the public service, Leadership and Management by concept and in practice are inextricably interwoven. They are both mutually supportive and interdependent in the world of work.

The definitions and the nexus of Leadership and Management are fundamental to the CARICAD model for Leading/Managing in Crises. The matrix on Page 5 was developed by CARICAD for the Response phase of a crisis. There are two other matrices: (1) Prepare and (2) Transform but those will not be discussed in this article because we are already responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

Every crisis is different and the COVID-19 crisis has characteristics that make it truly unprecedented. The grave concern surrounding this virus arises because of a number of factors. Foremost among them is the very high level of person-to-person transfer (infection rate), even from asymptomatic individuals. We point out that experts have stated that approximately 80 per cent of infected persons display only mild symptoms and do not require hospitalisation. Recent research suggests that droplets exhaled from infected persons can travel farther and remain infectious longer than was first believed. Additionally, experts have also opined that the virus can remain infectious for many hours on surfaces that are part of normal life and a normal office environment. Further, the close contact that is a part of teamwork could become risky if an infected person is a part of a team. Additionally, unavoidable casual contact with an infected person, such as sitting next to that person on an aeroplane or on public transport, could result in illness. It should be noted that while fatalities have attracted concern at a global level, the mortality rate to date, is less than that of the SARS outbreak but the absolute numbers are frightening. At the time of writing, more than two million cases and 150,000 deaths have been confirmed globally.

The COVID-19 crisis has reminded us of the characteristics of crises that we should bear in mind as Leaders/Managers in the Public sector. These are listed below:

- Time pressure - sense of pervasive urgency for decisions and actions
- Many priorities arise at the same time
- High levels of risk remain for some workers
- Multiple hazards can spin-off from a main hazard
- Stress of all kinds is pervasive and constant
- Conflicts are common both — verbal and physical
- Self-interest increases among some people
- Anger and frustration flare up easily
- Mental health concerns are prolonged
- Sudden behaviour changes take place
- Political machinations are played out
- Clashes of cultural norms can arise
- Doubts and uncertainties bring huge stress burdens
- Some people will be very scared

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We will reflect on the Perform matrix by providing suggestions, advice and tips in a succinct manner under a few sub-headings.

LEADERSHIP IS PIVOTAL IN THE COVID-19 CRISIS

This is so because leaders:
- Create an inspiring Vision for the country/territory/organisation or the team
- Prepare plans at Strategic, Operational and Unit levels
- Are the primary interface with critical strategic partners
- Have the authority to make important decisions
- Manage procedures, processes, systems
- Inspire commitment to plans
- Motivate teams to perform

Leadership is crucial for organisational success in crises. It is useful to consider what the literature and practical experience from the CARICAD team suggest can make leaders effective in this COVID-19 crisis.

- Set direction with a realistic but inspiring Vision. Convert the Vision to a compelling narrative
- Base all your actions on sound values and ethical principles
- Create and maintain trust by being honest and keeping your word
- Perform above and beyond self-interest – work for the cause and not for applause
- Take decisions promptly and communicate them adequately

SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE COVID-19 CRISIS

- Set direction with a realistic but inspiring Vision. Convert the Vision to a compelling narrative
- Base all your actions on sound values and ethical principles
- Create and maintain trust by being honest and keeping your word
- Perform above and beyond self-interest – work for the cause and not for applause
- Take decisions promptly and communicate them adequately
Leading in a Crisis - Suggestions for Public Sector Leaders

- **Continued from Page 5**

- Use creative and innovative thinking to underpin actions that are required to generate new solutions
- Focus on technology as the primary tool for remote working not as an end in itself
- Ensure that appropriate broad-based arrangements are put in place for Remote Working

**Be a Manager as well as a Leader:**

⇒ Make the necessary plans; be quick but thorough
⇒ Review and revise budgets
⇒ Establish new priorities; align new priorities with job responsibilities, skills, processes and systems
⇒ Set new timetables and deadlines
⇒ Authenticate any new rules and procedures
⇒ Ensure that all relevant records are still being kept
⇒ Ensure that reports are prepared and submitted on time
⇒ Ensure that entitlements are preserved and applicable benefits provided

- Set an example for Leadership by being a good example of leadership
- Communicate by following the Seven Cs of Communication. Be: Correct; Clear; Complete; Concrete; Concise; Courteous and Considerate

It is important that all public sector Leaders/Managers, keep as clear a mind as they can during the current crisis. The crisis will be demanding and stressful. There will be big demands on you from the other dimensions of your life. You might be working selflessly and competently with great dedication to tasks but you are still only one person (still very human) and especially in this COVID-19 crisis, you can be overcome by anxiety and stress. It is important that you protect your health and physical fitness as best you can. You should be particularly mindful of any pre-existing medical conditions that could make you more vulnerable to the virus; and work hard to protect yourself. The human dimension to this crisis means that you could be called upon to be Comforter-in-Chief; Advisor-in-Chief; Referee-in-Chief and Chief Spokesperson during the crisis. Those roles should be considered integral to your day-to-day responsibilities and not an adjunct to them.

**LESSONS WE SHOULD LEARN**

There are many lessons that we can all learn from the COVID-19 crisis. We should learn them and apply them as the crisis continues to unfold and there will be opportunities to put the lessons into practice.

1. Crises can arise from a variety of hazards and threats; (not just hurricanes in the case of the Caribbean)
2. A crisis can unfold at anytime and may give very little warning of its potential lethal effects
3. We can be negatively impacted in a pandemic by what previously was our normal life - public transport, church, school, office work, shopping, sports, entertainment, recreation
4. Business Continuity Planning (BCP) is integral to organisational success and survival
5. In crises, we should learn as we go and adapt to the new realities
6. We live in an interconnected world – this pandemic did not originate in the Caribbean
7. Technology (no matter how sophisticated) is a tool; it is not a replacement for your team
8. Creative thinking is required to solve problems for which there are no existing textbooks
9. Many (not all) modern jobs can be performed remotely
10. The COVID-19 pandemic may have a pervasive, long-term effect on the work of the public sector – numbers, policies, structures, strategies, skills, planning procedures, processes, and such.

CARICAD entreats all public sector Leaders/Managers to embrace these and all other lessons, internalise them and apply them as best you can in the months and years ahead.
Business Continuity Planning (BCP) refers to all the activities planned and performed by an organisation to ensure that critical business functions can continue in the event of an emergency, crisis or disaster.

The concept of Business Continuity Planning is often juxtaposed with the Business Continuity Plan. However, it is important to realise that Business Continuity Planning means more than simply producing a Business Continuity Plan. It means maintaining a mindset and a culture of preparedness such that an organisation can continue to deliver on its mandate even in the most extreme of crises; such as the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The concept of BCP is used with reference to all the economic and social sectors viz: the public, private and voluntary. Additionally, the BCP concept is increasingly being folded into the much broader concept of Organisational Resilience. The website resorgs.org.nz explains the Resilience concept in this manner:

Organisational resilience is the ability to survive a crisis and thrive in a world of uncertainty. Resilience is a strategic capability. It isn’t just about getting through crises. A truly resilient organisation has two other important capabilities - the foresight and situation awareness to prevent potential crises emerging, and an ability to turn crises into a source of strategic opportunity.

Resilience is one of the pillars of the CARICOM Strategic Plan and it is therefore important that all organisations strive ultimately for Resilience but because we are in the COVID-19 crisis, the focus of this article is Business Continuity Planning. We will use BCP for ease of reference.

CARICAD FRAMEWORK FOR CRISES
The CARICAD framework for managing in crises, is aligned with the BCP process. The framework emphasises actions before, during and after a crisis. The framework points to the need to perform during the crisis but also to transform afterwards. The CARICAD framework connects BCP and Resilience. The CARICAD framework is shown in this edition of the Newsletter in the Page 4 article Leading in a Crisis. We have not reproduced it here to avoid the notion of repetition.

PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING
BCP follows some well-established principles; the topic areas are shown below:

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PROCESSES OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

BCP is a systematic, methodical and logical process. The BCP concept, principles, processes and practices for incidents and events that preceded COVID-19 were well developed in global literature. They stood the test of time and many incidents. However, the COVID 19 pandemic is truly unprecedented. That reality does not remove the value of BCP for other threats. We will highlight some of those BCP techniques succinctly, as a means of encouraging a greater commitment to BCP among the public services in CARICAD member states for all threats, hazards and incidents.

POLICY ADJUSTMENTS

These policy adjustments are among the ones that should be catered for in BCP.

- Attendance at work during crises and afterwards
- Payment of salaries and wages
- Welfare and relief supplies for staff
- Emergency leave
- Emergency “overnighting” on the work compound if necessary
- Accommodation for and special treatment of family members of staff
- Use of official vehicles
- Procurement procedures
- Liability concerns
- Good Samaritan protection
- Emergency storage for dangerous and hazardous equipment and materials
- Re-deployment of staff
- Creation of ad hoc teams
- Use of office equipment
- Remote work and flexi time
- Interfacing with the media

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR RESILIENCE

Some of the best established planning principles of BCP are those shown below.

- Be comprehensive: deal with likely hazards from all sources
- Be current; review BCP plans regularly and keep them updated
- Include Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with strategic partners
- Share with all staff and support partners
- Conduct drills, rehearsals and tabletop and other exercises to build capacity
- Include BCP sessions in orientations for new staff
- Ensure that responsibilities are assigned clearly and updated as required
- Practice emergency evacuation procedures
- Involve strategic partners in exercises

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It could appear that BCP is very far removed from the everyday reality of work.

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- The current BCP arrangements that are being put in place for the COVID-19 crisis in CARICAD member states could to some extent, distort perceptions about the importance of the more typical approach of pre-incident planning and preparedness. Further, it could appear that BCP is very far removed from the everyday reality of work. CARICAD urges all public sector Leaders/Managers to commit to and lead the BCP process within their organisations.

- It is important to recognise that preparedness, readiness and resilience arise from a commitment to business continuity and a constant and consistent series of actions based on continuity plans. An effort should be made by the Heads of organisations to create and maintain a culture of readiness and preparedness throughout the organisation.

- CARICAD continues to make the point that there needs to be a focus on building capacity for business continuity across all entities in the public sector. The effort to build capacity for continuity planning has been heavily concentrated in National Disaster Offices. This has resulted in the vast majority of public sector organisations being very poorly prepared to face hazards such as the hurricanes of 2017. Business continuity skills should be systematically developed among all public officers.

- Technology is a very important tool for business continuity, just as it is for modern business. However, if staff are not familiar with technical applications, software, systems and equipment, those deficiencies will become glaring in a crisis and reduce both organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, there is a great need for significant pre-event preparedness for using technology; especially for remote working.

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- Crises affect people differently. This fact should be accepted and catered for in the BCP process. Great care should be exercised with regard to asking staff to carry extra heavy workloads in a crisis. The crisis might crush the spirits and confidence of some of them. Organisations should prepare for and have information regarding sources of psycho/social support that could assist staff as needed.

- In crises, stress comes from many sources, further, the effects of stress may be displayed in any or all of the following realms: physically, emotionally, psychologically or behaviourally. It must be remembered too that some workers may internalise much of their stress. Plan for the reality that such persons might “blow up” without warning to others.

- In a major crisis or disaster, those at the lowest income levels tend to feel the greatest and most enduring negative effects. This should be considered in the BCP process. Great care should exercised when considering giving such persons a new and or more demanding workload, post event.

- Employees are human beings first. This means that in a crisis the other spheres of life (spouse, partner, parent, caregiver, friend, relative) will also impact on the persons that we may think of only as employees or workers.

- Emotionally competent people are able to deal with crises best. CARICAD suggests that training in Emotional Intelligence should be included in the BCP planning process. Ensure that your BCP process has guidelines for resuming work. The guidelines most likely will have to be established on a phased approach. It is not likely that a “light switch” approach to work resumption can be used in which all levels of service can resume together.

IN CONCLUSION

In addition to the matters described before, successful business continuity will rely on Leadership, Coordination, Teamwork, Public Relations, Information Dissemination, Strategic Alliances and Inter-agency Collaboration, Reporting and Documentation. It is ironic that those are all elements of organisational success on an everyday basis.
Globally, COVID-19 created a major difficulty for normal life as we know it. Multiple deaths have been recorded, countries placed on lockdown and economic challenges have emerged. COVID-19 has created uncertainty for a return to normality. An increasing view is that “normal” will be defined differently in a post-COVID-19 future.

COVID-19 has thrust remote work or working from home to the centre of attention as a necessary alternative to work at the office. Remote work, as the name suggests, is an arrangement that allows employees to work from locations other than their usual office. Importantly, technology is available to support the functionality of remote work and some are making the best use of it.

Increased attention is also being given to ensure secure access to information stored on servers, or in the cloud to support working remotely. However, it must also be recognised that the technology for remote work depends on the provision of cost-effective and stable Internet service and electricity supply.

Across the region, various attempts are being made to take advantage of the technology to work remotely.

Whilst recognising that some jobs will be difficult to digitise, it is evident that progress with Digital Government has been met with various levels of success; but, not enough for the creation of a resilient public service that provides citizens with access to service. COVID-19, and the restrictions emanating, have once again established the need to increase the pace of implementation of digital government.

The study, “Wait No More: Citizens, Red Tape, and Digital Government, Caribbean Edition”, conducted by the Inter-American Development Bank, with input and feedback from CARICAD, indicates that, “In the Caribbean, however, government transactions are often headaches: on average, they take more than four hours to complete, and more than 30 per cent of transactions require three or more visits to public offices”. The implication is that during “normal times” significant amount of human interaction is required.

According to the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies, digital government may be defined as, “the use of digital technologies, as an integrated part of governments’ modernisation strategies, to create public value. It relies on a digital government ecosystem comprised of government actors, non-governmental organisations, businesses, citizens’ associations and individuals which supports the production of and access to data, services and content through interactions with the government.”

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The success of digital government requires associated action, including whole-of-government planning, appropriate change management, effective business process re-engineering and relevant technology solutions. In the end, the public service exists to meet the needs of its citizens. It is evident that to achieve its mandate, relevant adjustments must be made.

As a result of COVID-19, services have been restricted, and, in some cases, closed to the public. In the 21st Century it is expected that citizens should have the option to obtain government services without necessarily going to a brick and mortar building. Importantly, there is a growing number of persons with Internet-capable devices. Also, Internet penetration continues to increase strongly, suggesting that the average citizen will be able to make use of digitised services.

CARICAD’s vision for 21st Century Government utilises an approach which is:

- Citizen-centric
- Outcome focussed
- Systematically transformative
- Technologically innovative and data-driven
- Talent managed

The objective of CARICAD’s 21st Century Government concept is to transform the public service to support sustainable and resilient development. Achieving this objective would mean that during normal and challenging times, the new resilient public service would be capable to deliver services to citizens in a cost-effective, timely, and convenient manner. A key contributor for success is the development of robust digital government.

COVID-19 has exposed the weakness of the current digital government operations. COVID-19 is increasing awareness that the capabilities of technology can and must be leveraged to improve the efficiency of the public sector for policy planning and execution, accountability, and service delivery. Post COVID-19, it is highly likely that we will adopt a new modality for work.

Digital Government is expected to transform the operations, responsiveness, credibility, and performance of the public service, and create a more meaningful relationship between the government and citizens. The pace of implementation of digital government must, therefore, be quickened.

COVID-19 has now provided the impetus to look at the resilience of operations to unusual circumstances. It also demonstrates the need for serious preparation to ensure that the government remains on the job even in trying situations. After all, the citizens are depending on government, and particularly so, during times of crises.

Useful websites, other sources of information
Compiled by Trudy Waterman, Programme Implementation Officer at CARICAD

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to obtain information from credible sources. In addition to your local Government Information Service and other official sources, the websites below are reliable sources of information on the coronavirus.

Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)  
http://www.cdema.org

Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)  
http://carpha.org/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
https://www.cdc.gov/

Eastern Caribbean Central Bank  

Pan-American World Health Organization  
https://www.paho.org/en

Operational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)  
https://www.osha.gov/
The Covid-19 pandemic is a global health crisis of enormous proportions. Since the outbreak started in December 2019, there have been over 80,000 deaths worldwide (as at 9 April 2020), of which a total of 38 have been spread across 10 Caricom countries.

Not only is Covid-19 a global health crisis, but it has upended social norms, caused acute psychological pain and delivered a decisive and pronounced shock to global economic and financial systems. Governments worldwide have rightly focused on containing the spread of the virus, with the ultimate objective of saving lives, with a proximate objective of protecting livelihoods as much as practical and feasible. Indeed, governments’ actions must continue, and in some cases, intensify to stop the virus.

While current efforts are rightly focused on containment, it is not too early for us in the Caribbean to start thinking about the new normal post-Covid-19, in fact, the “next new normal” because we have been in a new normal post the global financial crisis of 2008. For sure, the choice that we will face when we get past Covid-19 is how do we deal once and for all with the myriad of issues that are required to address our vulnerabilities and build our resilience to health and other crises in the future. Make no mistake, everything we do will, and must change post-Covid-19. This article offers the following thoughts on how the Caribbean can begin to navigate towards the “next new normal.” I will elaborate on these ideas in a subsequent publication.

**Fundamental Improvements in Pandemic Preparedness and Health Systems**

The health crisis has exposed the Caribbean’s (and the world’s by and large) ill-preparedness to deal with pandemics. Of necessity therefore, the region needs a quantum shift in its approach to pandemic preparedness as well as substantial improvements in public health and enhancements in primary healthcare systems with attendant capacity building and institutional strengthening.

**Renewed Focus on Building Resilience**

Deforestation, pollution and other forms of environmental degradation exacerbate human health challenges and in turn, intensify the impacts of pandemics such as Covid-19. Indeed, the Covid-19 crisis has reinforced the imperative of building resilience in all of its forms, and resilience to pandemics must be given more prominence in the resilience-building architecture of the Caribbean. Even so, the Caribbean can ill-afford to lose focus on building resilience to climate change and must continue to invest in climate adaptation and mitigation measures and climate-resilient infrastructure. To be sure, the climate crisis remains the greatest existential threat to our humanity.

**Overhaul of the Economic System and Approach to Policy Formulation**

Coming out of this crisis, the region must jettison the extant economic model that isn’t rooted in moral values, which prioritizes profits over people, perpetuates income inequality, retards poverty reduction, undermines environmental sustainability and treats the deficient GDP per capita numeric as the sacrosanct measure of wellbeing and development. Of necessity, a new development paradigm is required; one that is based on a “systems-thinking and multi-sectoral” approach (rather than an incoherent, piecemeal and siloed approach) to public policy formulation.

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A development model that is inclusive and sustainable for current and future generations should prioritise economic, social and environmental sustainability in an integrated manner, where people and their wellbeing are the linchpin of development.

Innovation, Innovation, Innovation
The use of technology will become even more important post-Covid-19 because all facets of our lives will be different. Countries would have to operate in more resilient and sustainable ways; possibly with shorter supply chains, higher-energy-efficiency production, increased digitisation of sales and financial services, new modes of work (working remotely), greater use of technology in the education system (more online teaching) and in the agriculture sector to ensure food security, as well as in other sectors. Data systems would also have to be substantially improved to normalise the production and dissemination of real-time data and information to inform evidence-based decision making among other strategic objectives.

New Modes of Governance and Partnerships
Post-Covid-19, a new political culture and model of governance would be required. At minimum, these must promote inclusion and not division. Accordingly, citizens’ active participation in the development process must be better facilitated through entrenched and institutionalised arrangements. Protocols and compacts must be established to link citizens more directly to the decision-making process. Moreover, increased emphasis must be placed on broadening citizens’ understanding of public policies to promote country ownership of policies, foster national consensus on issues, and deepen trust between the Government and citizens. Importantly also, genuine and durable partnerships must be forged among stakeholders in the development process to promote unity and solidarity across different political, gender, class, social, age, and other real or perceived divides. Stronger partnerships within and across countries would be needed. Regarding the latter, the institutions of Caricom would need to be reshaped or perhaps even reimagined to ensure their resilience and relevance in the “next new normal” post-Covid-19.

Rebirthing of the Society
Coming out of the Covid-19 crisis our human spirits, both individually and collectively should be renewed. The crisis should teach us the importance of living a life of purpose and living life on purpose. Social interactions should improve, relationships strengthened, compassion bolstered, and joy found in the simple things of life, such as being at one with nature. Indeed, the crisis can mark the rebirthing of our societies with a renewed sense of unity, purpose and common destiny, where we all live peacefully, safely, lovingly with each other and in harmony with our natural environment.

Finally, the crisis of our times presents opportunities for rebalancing, refocusing, reshaping and re-energising systems, frameworks and underpinning institutions. Stakeholders in the development process – public sector, private sector, civil society organisations, community and faith-based organisations, youth, academia and individuals – must act with unity of purpose, collective clarity and shared responsibility to shape a more resilient and prosperous Caribbean post-Covid-19. For sure, the Covid-19 crisis is a defining moment of our times as a Caribbean people and region and we must be willing to leave the familiar without disturbing the essentials; the essentials of safety, security, health, social relationships, equality, a decent living standard and harmony with nature.

(Source: Dr. Kari Grenade is a Regional Economist and Macroeconomic Advisor. This article was reproduced from nowgrenada.com.)
During the COVID-19 pandemic, each person must take responsibility to contain the spread of the virus. It is important to follow your local country policies and procedures. In addition to these, the World Health Organization has provided the following guidelines to protect yourself and others from the spread of COVID-19.

**Protecting yourself and others from the spread COVID-19**

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and others. Why? When someone coughs, sneezes, or speaks they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person has the disease.
- Avoid going to crowded places. Why? Where people come together in crowds, you are more likely to come into close contact with someone that has COIVD-19 and it is more difficult to maintain physical distance of 1 metre (3 feet).
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and infect you.
- Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands. Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.
- Stay home and self-isolate even with minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. Have someone bring you supplies. If you need to leave your house, wear a mask to avoid infecting others. Why? Avoiding contact with others will protect them from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.
- If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention, but call by telephone in advance if possible and follow the directions of your local health authority. Why?

**Continues on next page**

Compiled by Trudy Waterman, Programme Implementation Officer at CARICAD
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• National and local authorities will have the most up-to-date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.

• Keep up-to-date on the latest information from trusted sources, such as WHO or your local and national health authorities. Why? Local and national authorities are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.

**Advice on the safe use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers**

• To protect yourself and others against COVID-19, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly.

• Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash your hands with soap and water. If you use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, make sure you use and store it carefully.

• Keep alcohol-based hand sanitizers out of children’s reach. Teach them how to apply the sanitizer and monitor its use.

• Apply a coin-sized amount on your hands. There is no need to use a large amount of the product.

• Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose immediately after using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, as it can cause irritation.

• Hand sanitizers recommended to protect against COVID-19 are alcohol-based and therefore can be flammable. Do not use before handling fire or cooking.

• Under no circumstance, drink or let children swallow an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. It can be poisonous.

Remember that washing your hands with soap and water is also effective against COVID-19.

Meet Lincoln Allen, CEO, Cannabis Licensing Authority of Jamaica, who is currently pursuing CARICAD’s Transformational Leadership Development Programme.

Here’s what he had to say about the Programme: “The integration of the COVID 19 pandemic into our leadership programme is commendable. This approach shows reflexivity, responsiveness and relevance to our current leadership realities, which underscores the value of this programme to the participants.”

Contact us at caricad@caricad.net to get more information about our leadership development offerings.

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