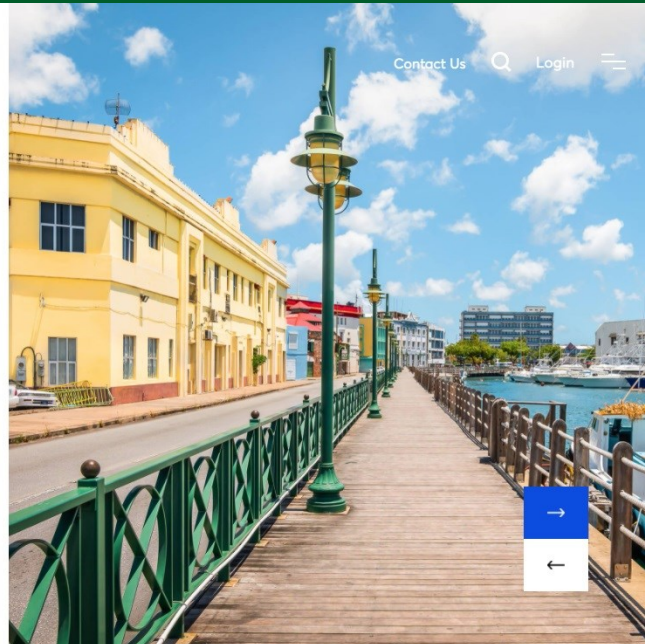




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Welcome to the  
Caribbean Centre for Development Administration

**Transforming Public  
Services for the  
People of the Caribbean**



# *A Journey in* **TRANSFORMATION**

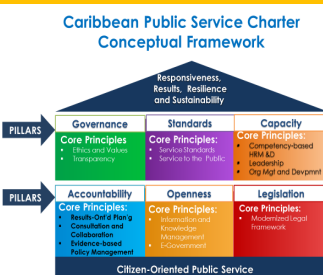
**C**ARICAD is committed to the transformation of public sector entities for the people of the Caribbean. What better example can we provide other than our own journey in transformation?

CARICAD responded to the COVID-19 crisis with alacrity, agility and creative thinking. We made the redevelopment of our website a priority. That enabled us to move towards greater digital engagement. We made our **Horizon** newsletter more comprehensive and informative. We were among the first to produce a template for a COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan. We at CARICAD have transformed the way we do business to meet all of the needs of our various stakeholders. This edition of the **Horizon** provides some insight into some stories of transformation and highlights some of the challenges faced by the "new normal". We hope that you enjoy this first newsletter for 2022.

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# *From the Desk of...*

**Devon Rowe, Executive Director of CARICAD**



# *Thank You!*

**I** do not have the vocabulary of an Antiguan we all know, and so my

words may be inadequate to express sincerest appreciation for your contributions to the successful journey (so far) of the CARICAD Secretariat team through the perils of 2020 to 2022. It was a challenging journey; but, certainly rewarding.

I believe everyone delivered above and in some cases went way beyond expectations to ensure that a viable path was found for CARICAD despite the enormous challenges. All our jobs were delivered with more and new technology. Meetings are now being held remotely with success though we still need to become experts with all the software options available.

I do not believe that people fully grasped the extent of our challenge and thus will be unable to fully comprehend the extent of your service. You all took the time to learn more, and your combined efforts resulted in relevant services being delivered competently.

We may not be aware in the short term of the true

# to the team at CARICAD

impact of our service, but I know that everyone's diligence set the basis for a brighter future for CARICAD than we could have imagined at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis.

This year is expected to be no less challenging than 2020 and 2021. The COVID virus remains with us and is no less demanding on our time, energy, and safety precautions. I suspect that we will have to devise new methods to live with COVID. Let us continue with professionalism, enthusiasm and dedication as a united force to provide an exceptional, positive experience for those we serve.

Hopefully, our constituents have benefited immensely from information shared, interventions delivered and technical assignments completed.

I hope that, like me, you found addressing the challenges a valuable experience. May you continue to inspire excellence.

Thanks again for a job well done!

# CARICAD'S NEW PARADIGM FOR PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION

## *Re-think* TRANSFORMATION

by Franklyn Michael Supplementary Associate, CARICAD

**C**ARICAD has developed a new paradigm for Public Sector Transformation. We base it on the following ideas:

1. There should be a Regional Model for Transformation
2. Transformation should be developed and implemented on a country-specific basis in each CARICAD member state but under a Regional framework
3. Transformation is not a destination but a continuous journey of change, adaptation and innovation
4. Transformation is cross-cutting and multi-faceted. It is not about a single subject or the work of a Transformation/Reform Unit in isolation
5. Transformation and Public Financial Management are inextricably interwoven

CARICAD interprets Transformation in this manner:

*Public Sector Transformation is a continuous process of leading and managing change in the public service for innovative adaptation. The process is intended to enable delivery of services and results in a resilient and sustainable manner.*

Examination of that description leads to the conclusion that Transformation cannot be static or single-event-driven. CARICAD has concluded that in the past, Transformation was managed like an

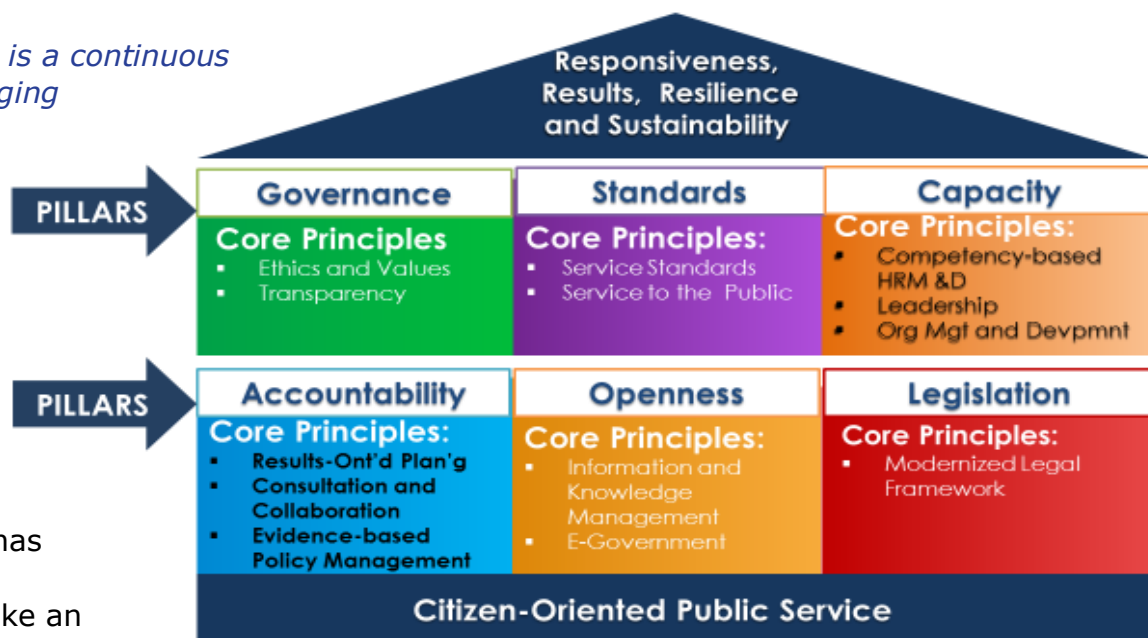
event that had a start date and end-date. It was promulgated as though there was a single goal, such as *better customer service or right-sizing*.

Right-sizing usually meant reducing numbers on the payroll. Reduction in numbers sometimes occurred but that was usually in the core public service among Ministries and Departments but not in state-owned enterprises. That approach derived from imported models of thought. The record shows that much of what occurred as Transformation, did not accomplish the stated goals.

CARICAD created the Charter for Caribbean Public Services in 2015 with an associated Implementation Guide. A schema for Transformation was

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### Caribbean Public Service Charter Conceptual Framework



# CARICAD'S NEW PARADIGM FOR PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION

## *Re-think* **TRANSFORMATION**

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subsequently created in 2017.

The Charter identifies components of a professional and effective public service. It also establishes a general framework of guiding principles, policies and management mechanisms, reflecting a common commitment of the Public Services of the Caribbean Region to an innovative approach to Transformation. The Charter is not a one-size-fits-all prescription. It is an attempt to provide an overarching framework for Public Sector Transformation in the CARICOM Region that is sufficiently holistic to apply to all member states but is flexible enough to allow for the various levels of size, development and focus in relation to Public Sector Transformation.

Public Sector Transformation must become a constant process of adaption and change, because the role of the public sector in the Caribbean has changed in the last 40 years and will continue to change. Transformation must now be accepted as integral to economic growth and macro-economic stability and societal resilience. In our small economies, the role of the public sector is pivotal to national development and the well-being of citizens.

Transformation must have nimble and adaptable strategies. It must also be perceived as a core responsibility of all public sector Ministries, Departments and entities, not merely of a Public Sector Reform or Transformation Unit.

This change of approach is required to support and sustain the ongoing thrust to a pattern of development that is sustainable and resilient. The realities of our development challenges suggest that societies, policies, planning contexts, global realities and technology constantly change. Public Sector Transformation should be embraced as an ongoing,

***While we cannot escape certain realities, Transformation must become a tool of development not an instrument of uncertainty and suspicion***

continuous process. Let us regard it as more of a ***journey*** to reach new destinations than a single voyage with a starting point and a final destination.

We cannot escape the fact that with our small populations, we face dis-economies of scale. We cannot escape the fact that for many of our countries, a large share of government expenditure goes to meet the cost of wages, salaries and related expenses. We also cannot escape the fact that in the smallest of our economies, the public sector will remain the biggest employer. Transformation must become a tool of development, not an instrument of uncertainty and suspicion.

The realities that we face in relation to budgetary deficits, debt service requirements, low levels of economic growth, elevated levels of unemployment among youth, crime and chronic non-communicable diseases and the enduring effect of the COVID-19 pandemic suggest that our perspectives on national and regional development need to change. This

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# CARICAD'S NEW PARADIGM FOR PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION

## *Re-think* **TRANSFORMATION**

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requires a more distinct articulation of the relationship between Public Financial Management (PFM) and Transformation. It further suggests that the role of the Ministry of Finance in Public Sector Transformation must be brought from the background to the forefront.

CARICAD has developed a Schema for Implementation of Public Sector Transformation as a tool to clarify thinking on and management of Transformation. The Schema, which is shown on the page which follows, graphically illustrates the institutional relationships, roles and responsibilities and process flows that CARICAD regards as essential for Transformation. It brings together the following:

- The importance of an undisputed single Vision for development of the country
- The need to take the regional as well as the national context into account
- The importance of a public sector based on Values and Ethics
- The Six Pillars of the Charter for Caribbean Public Services: *Governance, Standards, Capacity, Accountability, Openness and Legislation will be pivotal for successful effort*
- The critical need for high-level endorsement, support and strategic leadership for Transformation
- The road-map for Transformation should include not only the establishment of a Transformation Unit but the articulation of a policy, the development of a Strategy and an Action Plan
- The need for appropriate systems and procedures for Transformation

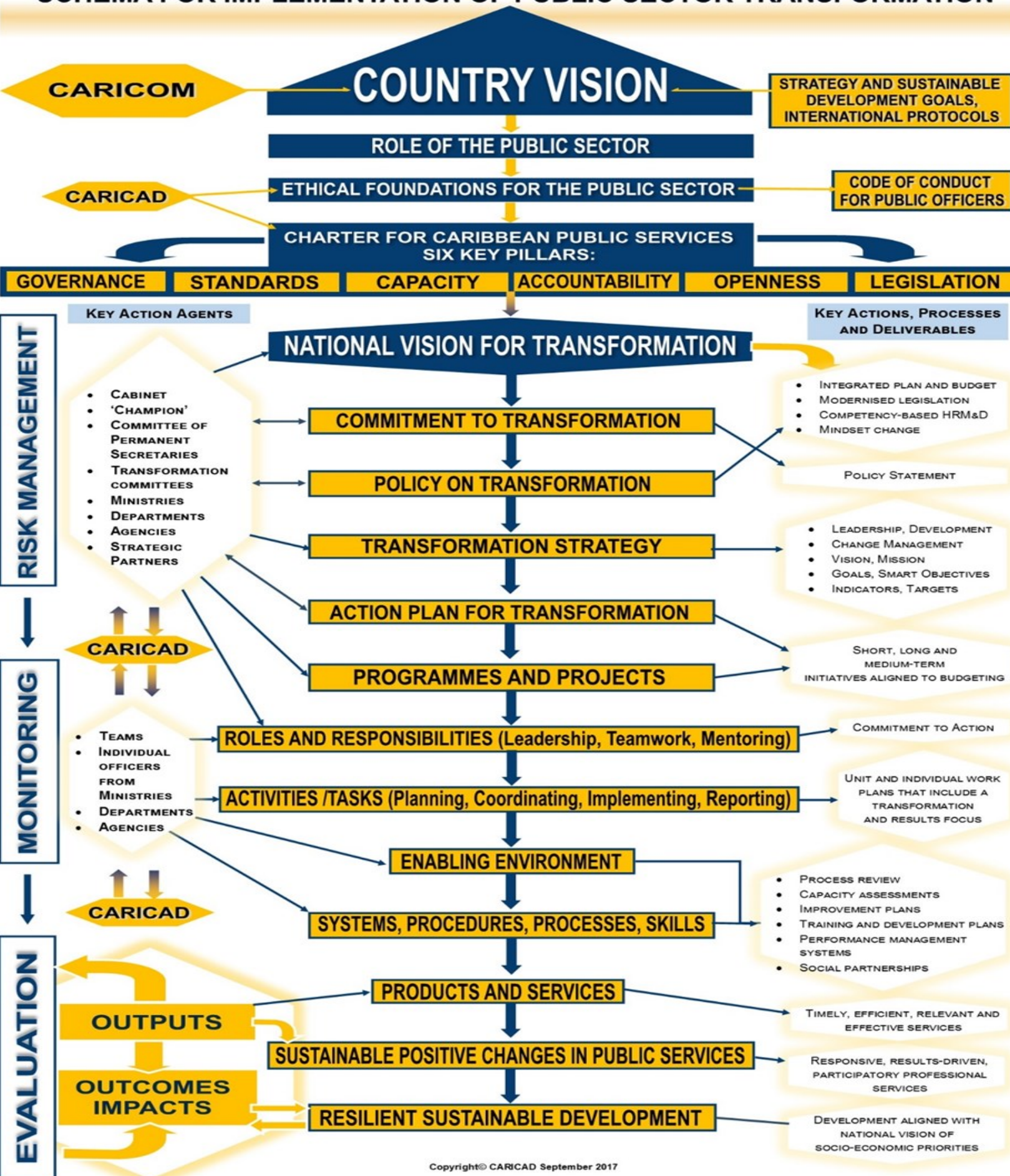
- The need to keep a focus on outputs in the form of products and services that are efficient and effective
- Transformation initiatives should be included in Strategic and Operational plans for Ministries, Departments and entities
- The importance of constant monitoring and the need for periodic evaluations

The recent experiences with hurricanes, earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic remind us (*inter alia*) that the public service must be nimble, creative, adaptable and flexible. The looming effects of Climate Change will intensify those requirements. The CARICAD approach to transformation offers the Region a home-grown model and methodology that can easily be integrated into the everyday work of public services.

***CARICAD's Schema for Implementation of Public Sector Transformation graphically illustrates the institutional relationships, roles and responsibilities and process flows that CARICAD regards as essential for Transformation.***

• ***See Schema on next page***

# SCHEMA FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION



# *Toward Strategic Resilience-Building* **Within the Caribbean Public Sector**

**By Wendy C. Grenade, PhD**  
**Senior Lecturer in Political Science**

**The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados**

**T**he contemporary moment is the most defining period in modern history. The interplay of the existential climate crisis, the devastating effects of COVID-19 and its socio-economic, gender and psychological implications, have and will continue to exacerbate development challenges for countries in the Global South. When taken together this cascade of crises has far-reaching implications for small developing post-colonial economies, such as those in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) region. For the Caribbean, crises are not new. However, in the contemporary moment, the severity and intensity of risks and threats have led to major disruption at all levels of human endeavour. As the world grapples with unprecedented challenges, a maze of uncertainty continues to expose inherent vulnerabilities that threaten the viability of Caribbean economies, the sovereignty and security of states and the well-being of the people within Caribbean societies. Yet, despite the challenges, there are opportunities to break entrenched norms as the region seeks to build greater resilience in every sphere.

This article focuses on Strategic Resilience-Building (SRB) within the Caribbean public sector. The article is based on the premise that the public sector is one of the main drivers for the transformation of the Caribbean region. I contend that the public sector does not exist to serve itself but it is critical to societal transformation and nation-building. In fact, it is much more than a bureaucratic hub for 'service delivery'. As part of the executive branch of government, the public sector is the brain power in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policy. It is that vital bloodstream that flows between citizens and the state. The public sector is that arm of government that stretches across and within sectors to provide public goods to sustain

society (such as health care, security, environmental conservation and education). In some cases, through its tourism bureaus and diplomatic missions, the public sector is the face of the country to the world and has a fundamental role in enhancing the image of the country overseas as it interfaces with the diaspora, potential investors and international actors. Without an effective public sector, a country becomes ungovernable. Therefore, the public sector is an indispensable organisation that must be continuously renewed. My main contention is, if the Caribbean is to mitigate against its inherent vulnerabilities, SRB must be a critical pillar of public sector transformation. The article proceeds in this way. Following this introduction, the article provides a brief overview of the discourse on vulnerability and resilience. It then focuses on SRB and outlines some of the core dimensions that are imperatives for the 21st Century public sector.

## *Vulnerability and Resilience: A Brief overview*

The debate on vulnerability and resilience is central to the discourse on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Thomas 2004; Briguglio 2014). For Thomas (2004), vulnerability refers to "proneness of small states to the adverse effects of changes in their environment and insufficient resilience to overcome these adverse effects on their own." Vulnerability twins the incidence and intensity of risks and threats and the ability to withstand them. For Caribbean SIDS, types of vulnerabilities include physical, economic, social, political and institutional. While vulnerability is generally inherent, policies can be induced to build resilience. From an economic

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# *Toward Strategic Resilience-Building* **Within the Caribbean Public Sector**

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perspective, resilience generally refers to “the extent to which an economy can withstand or bounce back from the negative effects of external shocks” (Briguglio 2014, 14). A country can build its economic resilience through macroeconomic stability, market efficiency, good political governance, social development and environmental governance. What are the implications for organisational resilience?

## *Organisational Resilience: Brief Survey of the Literature*

As the world becomes more complex, financial, economic, social and environmental crises have challenged the capacity of the public sector to effectively fulfill its mandate. There is a body of work that has emerged on organisational resilience, which is “the ability to effectively absorb [and] develop specific responses to and engage in transformative activities to capitalise on disruptive surprises that potentially threaten organisational survival (Lengnick-Hall *et al*, 2011). Bracci and Tallaki (2021, p. 333) observe that, “Scholars have investigated resilience in relation to crisis and disaster management (Boin and Lodge, 2016); the transformational characteristics of resilient organisations (Fitzgerald and Lupton, 2015); the value-sets implemented to respond to austerity fiscal shocks (Stark, 2014); and resilience as a strategic level of change (Rochet *et al*, 2008).” Bracci and Tallaki (2021) have argued that in spite of the attention resilience receives in relation to public policy and public management, very few studies have analysed the internal mechanics of public sector organisations to see what is producing their resilience. They considered management control systems (MCSs) as the drivers of organisational change and explored their role as determinants of resilience in the public sector. Their

study found that MCSs support adaptive behaviour and assist decision-making by providing knowledge and ready-to-use answers to cope with external shocks. Bracci and Tallaki (2021) also found that “MCSs played an essential role in shaping anticipatory and coping capacities. At the same time, financial shocks fostered the investment in MCSs, cyclically strengthening or developing new anticipatory and coping capacities” (p. 332).

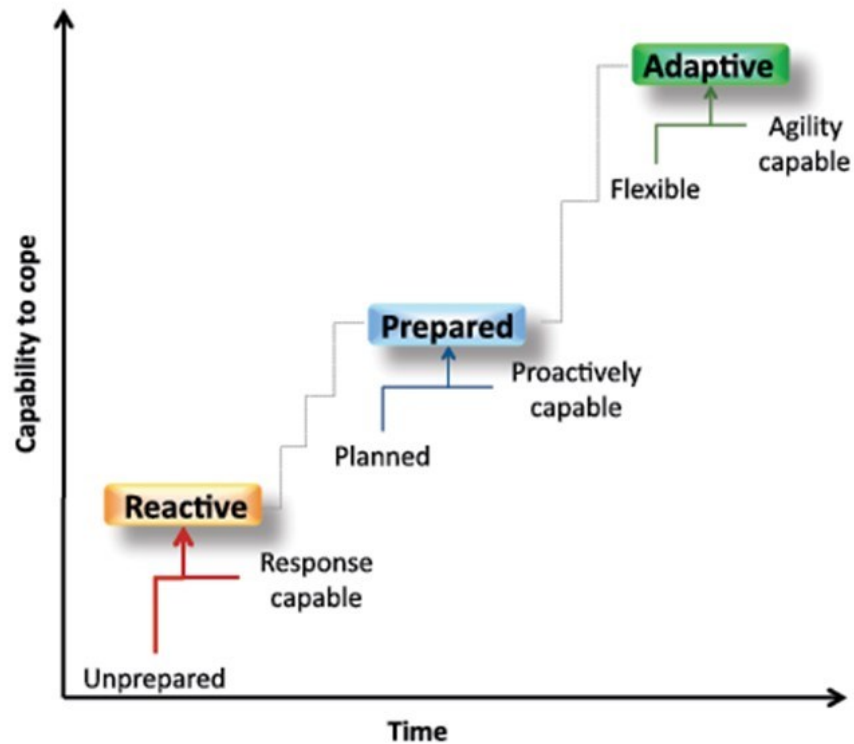
There is a useful framework developed by Barbera *et al* (2017 cited in Bracci and Tallaki 2021, p. 335) which combines external or environmental conditions and internal capabilities to foster resilience:

- ♦ *Anticipatory capacities* relate to tools and capabilities that enable organisations to identify and manage vulnerabilities and recognise potential shocks before they arise;
- ♦ *Coping capacities* become visible in times of disruption through coping actions. They refer to three capacities:
  - \* *Buffering capacities* refer to the ability to absorb shocks without changes to structure or function and adapting capabilities refer to the ability to absorb shocks without changes to structure or function.
  - \* *Adapting capacities* refer to the ability to implement incremental changes to extant structures and functions without changing underlying principles, culture and values.
  - \* *Transforming capacities* refer to the ability to implement radical changes, encompassing structures, functions, goals and values necessary for financial self-sufficiency.

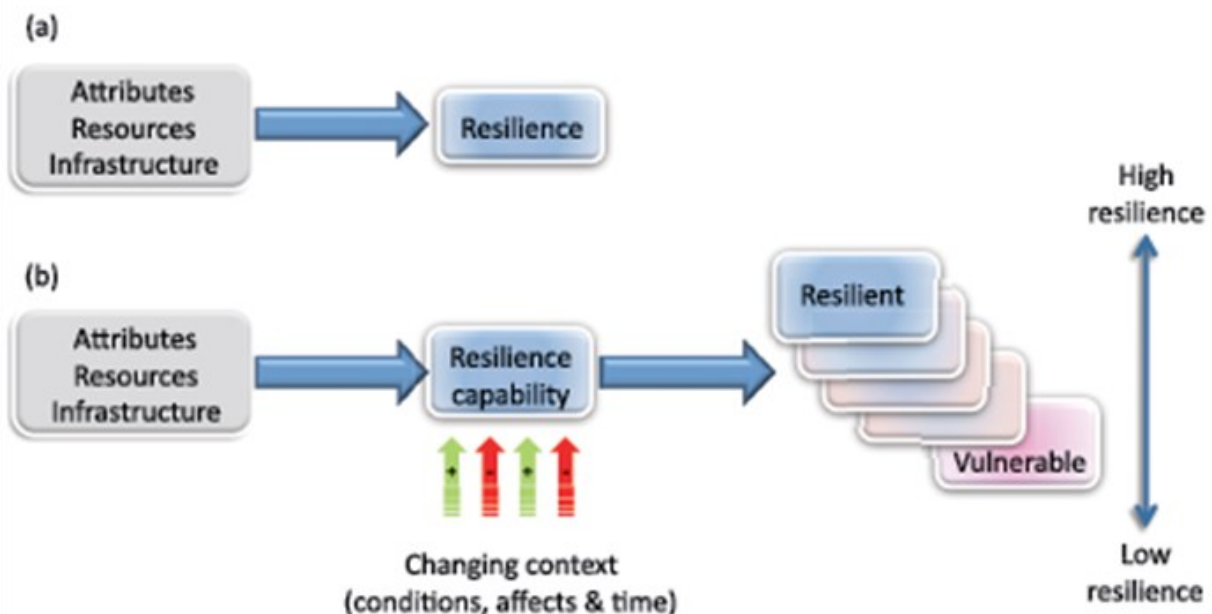
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# *Toward Strategic Resilience-Building* **Within the Caribbean Public Sector**

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Both photos taken from the Australian Journal of Emergency Management Volume 25, Issue 2



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# *Toward Strategic Resilience-Building* **Within the Caribbean Public Sector**

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## *Strategic Resilience Building in the Public Sector*

Drawing on the literature on vulnerability and resilience from the discipline of economics (Thomas 2004 and Briguligio 2014) and the discourse on resilience from the field of Management and Organisational Behaviour (Barbera *et al* 2017 and Bracci and Tallaki 2021), I define Strategic Resilience Building (SRB) for the public sector as the art and science of anticipating shocks in the external environment and intentionally developing internal capabilities to withstand and bounce forward better from shocks. This is a comprehensive approach to public sector transformation that combines strategic scanning of the external environment with ongoing capacity-building *within* to promote a culture of nimbleness and tactical adaptability in the face of uncertainty.

Some of the key elements of SRB include a paradigm shift in mindsets that strategically locates the future in the present. This futuristic focus (despite uncertainty) involves trade-offs between current demands and future imperatives. In this context resilience-building is both a means to and an outcome of public sector transformation. Therefore, a starting point for SRB must be shifts in mindsets to operate

at the intersection of the future and the present, while mindful of the past.

SRB requires leadership at all levels. Leadership in crisis has become the new normal for the private and public sectors alike. The new environment requires strategic leadership as a norm. This means, the ability to see beyond the obvious with an instinct for adaptability and nimbleness. Given the demands of the new environment, leadership for enhanced public sector transformation is an imperative for developing countries as they seek to reset the button post COVID-19. CARICAD is well-placed, as an institution of CARICOM, to continue to build public sector capacity for greater resilience.

***SRB for the public sector is the art and science of anticipating shocks in the external environment and intentionally developing internal capabilities to withstand and bounce forward better from shocks***

Strategic planning is another core dimension of SRB. There must be a clear vision, with core values and guiding principles buttressed by smart objectives. However, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation must twin adaptive and coping capabilities, supported by a culture of resilience. This refers to an instinct to withstand and rebound from adversity. But this rebounding must not necessarily go back to "normal" if "normal" was not steeped in resilience. SRB at its core must centre strategic planning which seeks to build transformative capacities as the public sector grows forward.

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# *Toward Strategic Resilience-Building* **Within the Caribbean Public Sector**

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Importantly, SRB requires a holistic approach to resilience. The “wicked problems” of the 21st Century are cross-cutting. Consequently, the new environment requires the combination of whole of government and whole of society approaches. SRB must be viewed as a comprehensive, multi-sectoral process that transcends a culture of silos. Coordination of efforts and unity of purpose to achieve common goals are central to SRB.

SRB must be buttressed by effective use of technologies. The new environment demands appropriate technologies to develop and maintain optimal capacity. Building resilience within Caribbean public sectors must be supported by innovation and creativity with appropriate technologies.

It is imperative that SRB be supported by a political culture that promotes inclusiveness and participation in the context of fairness and impartiality. SRB within the public sector requires an environment that operates above the cut and thrust of partisan politics.

Another key imperative for SRB is a focus on results-orientation, as a norm. An implementation

paralysis is often cited as one of the impediments to transformation within the Caribbean in general and within the Caribbean public sector in particular. SRB requires a new ethos that promotes and entrenches a results-based culture. There must be accountability mechanisms to check progress, measure deliverables, celebrate successes and learn lessons.

## *Conclusion*

Finally, SRB demands proactive structural and institutional transformation to: (1) mitigate, in as far as is possible; adverse effects of shocks; (2) adequately prepare for shocks; (3) effectively respond to; and (4) recover *better* from shocks. This requires the entrenchment of resilience as a public sector norm. It is a continuous process which seeks to achieve an optimal capacity to withstand adversity and exploit possibilities, despite inherent vulnerabilities and constant uncertainty. The public sector is not an end in itself but it is one of the most critical catalysts to achieve national and regional development and societal well-being. Therefore, as the world becomes more complex, SRB is a necessary imperative for the Caribbean public sector as the region seeks to reassess its development agenda going forward.

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# Succession Planning in a Changing Environment

by Rosemund R. Warrington  
Specialist in Strategic Human Resource  
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**T**he COVID-19 Pandemic has demonstrated the importance of business continuity in organisations. From our observations, the immediate response (in addition to safety and health matters) to the pandemic by a number of organisations focused on business continuity. CARICAD, in response to this need, developed a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) template at the start of the pandemic in 2020, for customisation by Member States. By adopting a Business Continuity Plan in the heart of the pandemic, Member States were able to deploy effective plans, putting in place contingencies, identifying capabilities and strengthening technological infrastructure. From a Human Resources Management (HR) perspective, all of these actions assisted with the management of the sudden increase in remote work arrangements. For instance, the use of technology including business communication platforms such as Microsoft Teams facilitated HR processes in recruitment, learning management systems, and redeployment of employees, among others. For most if not all organisations, the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated that HR is an integral component of business continuity. Public Sector Organisations (PSOs) have been forced to re-focus and to re-direct themselves towards becoming more flexible and adaptable.

The pandemic required answers to important questions:

- *What does our talent bench look like?*
- *Do we have the capabilities for interim replacements in the event of an unexpected*

*absence or multiple absences?*

This article treats briefly with some key HR considerations to ensure continuity in PSOs, as they confront risks and opportunities in times of crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has also shown that public officers, whether senior managers, mid-level officers, individuals in critical positions including specialists, as well as administrative and technical support staff are not immune to the virus. CARPHA has reported a total of 3,255,544 cases in the Caribbean as of March 7, 2022<sup>1</sup>. The risk of further cases occurring in the Caribbean, according to CARPHA, remains *Very High*. PAHO also reported that in January 2022 COVID-19 infections were increasing in most countries in the region because of the Omicron variant and that Caribbean islands had the steepest increase in infections since the pandemic began<sup>2</sup>. Public Sector employees no doubt are included in this number. From CARICAD's knowledge of regional public services, public sector programmes and projects continue to be impacted by the absence of COVID-19-affected employees at all levels, thus creating disruptions in work continuity. ILO-OECD in 2020 reported loss of jobs and declined income, globally resulting in supply shock<sup>3</sup>. It was also reported that there were unprecedented fall-offs in employment and total hours worked. In fact, according to the ILO, there was a decline of 9.9% in total hours worked in the Caribbean, at the peak of the pandemic<sup>4</sup>. Such data shows that the impact of COVID-19 on organisations and the workforce is significant.

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1 - CARPHA Situation Report #219

2 - Congressional Research Group – *In Focus, 2022 Latin America and the Caribbean: Impact of COVID-19* January 21, 2022

3 - ILO-OECD "The Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on jobs and incomes in G20 economies" 2020

4 - ILO:COVID-19 eliminates the equivalent of 1.5 million jobs in the Caribbean ,2020

# Succession Planning in a Changing Environment

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COVID-19 has intensified the need for PSOs to seriously consider well-tailored risk-management programmes to plan for the unexpected absences or loss of key persons during times of crises and subsequent Recovery effort. The adoption of succession planning and structured interim replacement planning must now become critical HR processes to ensure business continuity. The idea of succession planning is certainly not new; however attention to the process has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its adoption will therefore require a reinvigorated approach to the development of talent which includes re-skilling, upskilling, and retooling of public sector employees.

Succession Planning and Talent development go hand in hand and are two critical HR processes. For clarity, talent development focuses on processes and programmes that build capabilities which in turn impact an organisation's ability to drive results. Succession Planning is the process whereby an organisation ensures that employees are recruited and developed to fill critical roles. This process ensures that there will not be a critical role vacant for which a replacement employee is not prepared. It is now recognised that critical roles are not only strategic in nature such as senior managers, but also include those roles that are critical to the success of essential workflows.

While Succession Planning may be commonly understood as the identification of critical positions and preparing to move people into higher-level jobs, I hold the view that succession planning is not just

about preparing for the automatic replacement of employees who leave or retire. The concept is broader. Succession planning is about developing a clear approach to the identification and development of talent for all levels of staff, through which skills development interventions can be prioritised and delivered. PSOs would therefore need to develop clear approaches to the identification and development of high performing talent, identifying future workforce and talent requirements, ensuring effective retention, talent management, robust data, and development strategies across staffing levels.

***Succession Planning requires purposefulness in terms of deliberate action by PSOs***

As the above suggests, Succession Planning **requires purposefulness in terms of deliberate action by PSOs**. It is worth noting that the majority of CARICAD Member States that responded to our survey do not have a Succession Planning programme in place (CARICAD Survey-2018). The reasons given for not having such an important HR process in place include financial constraints, the lack of HR systems to support succession planning, the absence of meritocratic systems, and the failure to recruit, train and retain the right individuals who will lead in the future.

As PSOs re-evaluate their succession planning efforts, several key factors should be borne in mind. Succession Planning in the Public Sector must entail active engagement by top executives, Public Service Commissions and unions who are all required to coalesce to build a holistic strategy and set the tone for guiding the development of employees through training, mentoring, coaching, shadowing, and

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# Succession Planning in a Changing Environment

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similar modalities. This concept of a *talent growth* approach to succession planning is a key consideration, whereby, not only are staff well prepared and developed for the challenges of strategic initiatives and the ever-changing world in which work is conducted, but the systems, structures, and cultural interactions within the public sector must serve as active enablers. Ensuring successful succession planning will require a keen focus on individual plan development that sets the foundation for learning experiences whether through education, engagement or exposure/attachments. Such actions will help strengthen the talent bench. A talent growth approach to succession planning also supports structured replacement planning which has the objective of minimising the threat of interim unplanned loss of key job holders as has been experienced during the pandemic.

Some may be of the view that Succession Planning is a waste of time and there is a perception that jobs are not being filled by persons with the right competencies. There may even be a tendency in our region to see key posts in the public service as rewards for loyalty and not competence. There are those who may even say: "Why do succession planning when no one is certain that he/she will be appointed in identified key positions?" Whilst these may be the realities in some of our organisations, Succession Planning can be part of a wider talent development plan that is aligned with recruitment, retention, training and development and performance management. I hold the view that an approach that can be perceived as non-threatening in terms of limiting cherry-picking or selectiveness in relation to appointment, promotion, training etc. and one that provides opportunities for employee growth and development at all levels, in a fair and equitable manner, would be better embraced in a public sector setting.

There are costs in time and effort associated with talent-based Succession Planning. However, having the right staff, in the right place, and at the right time, should represent a great return on investment and improved organisational performance. Succession Planning is a long-term investment that continues to be worthwhile regardless of diminishing budgets and prevailing cynicism.

In order to curtail risks associated with the loss of valuable employees, organisations must engage in succession planning. Effective implementation of Succession Planning in public sector organisations in our region is not an impossible feat. However, the process must be focused and transparent in ensuring that a pipeline of talent is available for future leadership and interim replacements. It is equally recognised that a fully integrated succession system will require an effective enabling environment including complementary HR strategies and other systems.

As you consider your specific public service environment you are invited to reflect on the following questions:

- *How might we re-calibrate our HR Strategies to enable and adopt a talent-based approach to Succession Planning?*
- *What barriers might there be to successful implementation of Succession Planning in your country and organisation?*
- *How can Succession Planning be done under institutional fiscal constraints?*

***Please note that CARICAD is far advanced with the development of a Succession Planning Guide which is expected to be available before the end of June 2022.***

# *Digital Identity Fundamentals - A Cornerstone of Digital Transformation in the Caribbean*

## **A Perspective from the CTU**

**T**he CTU has been promoting throughout the region the principles of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Government which, being citizen-centric and seamless, clearly demonstrate the value, in particular, of countries adopting an enabling national digital identity system and its beneficial effects on national development. This is especially true for Caribbean countries, where the digitalisation of services can advance economic recovery, increase competitiveness and efficiency, and enhance functional cooperation, entrepreneurialism, innovation and citizens' welfare.

The notion of digital identity is gaining significant traction in international fora and entities such as the United Nations and the World Bank are now promoting the use of digital identity systems, globally. Several Caribbean countries have commenced, or are currently in the process of initiating projects to implement digital identity systems, for example, the OECS Digital Transformation Project which involves Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and initiatives in other countries such as Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. However significant strengthening of institutional capacity, robust governance structures and system integration will be required to support the provisioning of planned national digital identity systems and mutual recognition of digital identities among Caribbean countries.

The fundamental step towards adopting an effective national digital identity system, as outlined in the [CTU's Handbook for the Implementation of Digital Identification Systems](#) in the Caribbean, is the development of a clear, implementable framework that is relevant to the local and regional context. This is of the utmost importance, as it provides the structure around which the entire digital identity system is planned, designed, implemented, operated and improved. The Caribbean has suffered

in the past from approaches to the adoption of technology that ultimately proved ineffective, having neglected to pay sufficient attention to the analysis of its local and regional context and the relevant frameworks that would effectively guide its implementation.

Assessment of the local context should include, among other things, the supporting legal and regulatory frameworks and the main demography to be served. This would identify issues that may arise from gaps in existing regulations and laws that can potentially impact the adoption of a digital identity system. Effective measures for amending applicable regulations and laws to address any such gaps must be instituted prior to officially pursuing and implementing digital identities, given that a number of jurisdictions have seen legal challenges to the constitutionality of mandatory ID systems. Appropriate legal controls for security, data protection and privacy, as well as cyber security must also be in place. Robust legal and trust frameworks are important factors in providing adequate levels of assurance for users and to facilitate interoperability and harmonisation of common cross-border systems.

Additionally, technical system design will need to consider a number of factors, including the number of citizens expected to use the digital identity system, how often they might do so, and the total number of services provided within the digital identity system. Success will depend very much on the correct assessment of these factors.

Equally important, are national multi-stakeholder consultations and assessments to foster acceptance and adoption of the new models by end-users as well as various government and private-sector institutions that would rely on the digital identity systems. It is recommended that governments

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consult with individual stakeholder groups to understand their particular experiences and challenges with the existing identity systems. This would inform appropriate re-engineering of the digitally-enabled systems and processes as well as identify capacity-building needs of users and other stakeholders to be addressed during implementation in order to maximise adoption. A practical step towards understanding the current identity system landscape would be to take stock of the identity ecosystem and its stakeholders.

Once a government has thoroughly assessed the local context and decided on its role, it should take measures to ensure that the digital identity system will be sufficiently adopted. Several optional measures have been recommended in [CTU's Handbook for the Implementation of Digital Identification Systems in the Caribbean](#), each having its specific peculiarities from both the citizens and service provider perspectives. The important factor for Caribbean governments, is to clearly and precisely define the role they will play in all aspects of adoption. Government must establish itself as the lead and most involved stakeholder from the inception, in order to successfully drive the national digital identity programme.

It is also important for government to assess its own capacity and experience in the field of digital identity nationally and be willing to source specific expertise that can be leveraged regionally. This would provide significant insight into the national strategic goals for digital identity, and the preferred implementation approaches.

As regards infrastructure, Caribbean countries need to ensure that a widely accessible, resilient high-speed broadband Internet is in place to support an online identity solution. This will also facilitate cross-border electronic transactions as part of the digital

economy. Digital ID systems can be interoperable without the need for harmonisation into a common system through adopting minimum interoperability standards, legal and trust frameworks. This would provide for levels of assurance, set baseline rules and build confidence and acceptance in respective national digital identity systems.

The operational models selected for adoption directly influences the stakeholders and actors involved in the digital identity system. For this reason, governments need to carefully evaluate their options and pursue governance, architectural, technical and adoption models that suit the country-specific approaches or needs. Government may act in the dual role of the regulator and identity provider or simply be the regulator of a separate authorised identity provider. Regardless of the governance model adopted, checks and balances must be maintained over the organisations involved. Ultimately, a robust multi-layered institutional governance structure will be eventually needed as the digital identity environment matures.

The architectural model may follow different

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**Government should assess its own capacity and experience in the field of digital identity nationally and be willing to source specific expertise that can be leveraged regionally**

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approaches, including a centralised system with a single identity provider that collects and manages all the information and data (recommended as the logical starting point for most Caribbean countries), a distributed system with multiple identity providers (may serve as the next evolution of identity providers in the Caribbean); or a system with intermediaries between identity provider(s) and the other elements that act with specific verification or control functions (may serve as an advanced country and regional model). The selected architectural model will determine how the digital identity system will be built and evolved and inform the options to be considered for the digital identity technology solution.

Finally, the economic aspects need to be considered. For any national digital identity system to be successful, realistic and sustainable goals need to be established and pursued. Governments therefore need to plan in advance how the system will be sustained, for instance, internally by generated revenues, or externally by government subsidies.

There is no one single model for a national digital

identity approach that is better than another and no one-size-fits-all solution, as each country has its own distinctive characteristics, needs and goals. The [CTU's Handbook](#) provides a summary of the main elements of sufficiently mature national digital identity systems which represent an invaluable source of information that can be referenced by Caribbean Governments, to draw lessons-learned about different approaches adopted globally, but adapted for the Caribbean context.

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## **CARICAD, CDEMA Recommit to Capacity Building**

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and CARICAD have renewed their joint commitment to capacity building in the Caribbean with the signing of a second memorandum of understanding (MOU) in December 2021.

Executive Director of CARICAD Devon Rowe stated that, "This second agreement further

strengthens our collaboration and comes at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic and the global response to it have reshaped the thinking of many. The continuation of this MOU offers the opportunity to build on the gains of the past and the forging of new solutions for an environment that is evolving in front of our very eyes."

CDEMA Executive Director,

Elizabeth Riley indicated that since the first signing in 2016, the two agencies have collaborated in several capacities over the years, including response to disaster events and strategic planning and noted that for the CDEMA Coordinating Unit, the second MOU constitutes a renewal, extension and expansion of its institutional commitment to this partnership.

# *The CARICOM Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting System*

# **CARMES**

**T**he Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat has developed and launched a CARICOM Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting System (CARMES) which is a web portal platform, for the three implementing partners – Member States, Regional Institutions and the CARICOM Secretariat – to monitor and report on the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan. The Community Strategic Plan is built on eight Integrated Strategic Pillars under which interventions are undertaken towards achieving Regional Public Goods and Outputs that lead to realising the Outcomes of the Community. These Pillars are:

- Building Economic Resilience
- Building Social Resilience
- Building Technological Resilience
- Building Environmental Resilience
- Strengthening the CARICOM Identity and Spirit of Community
- Strengthening Community Governance
- Coordinated Foreign and External Economic Affairs
- Research and Development and Innovation

To monitor progress being made towards achieving these Pillars, CARMES comprises a Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) which has been developed for the Community Strategic Plan. As the Community Strategic Plan is informed by national priorities and aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, CARMES contains several indicators which Member States are already reporting on, including some Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators, hence reducing duplication of efforts.

The operationalisation of CARMES is part of the Implementation of Phase II of the CARICOM RBM System which includes the development and

implementation of a RBM Policy by all implementing partners, towards fostering a results-oriented Community. This follows the mandates from the two highest decision-making bodies of the Community, namely, Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM and the Community Council of Ministers, that Member States, Regional Institutions, Organs and Bodies expedite the full adoption of RBM. In this regard, CARMES provides a facility whereby Implementing Partners can report directly on progress made on the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan, which will assist with ensuring timely interventions where challenges exist to avert implementation delays.

The implementation of an RBM Policy will engender improvements in programme and project planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting while also supporting transparency and accountability in all implementing partners. This result will go a long way in ensuring evidenced-informed and sustainable decision-making across the Community.

Prior to its full operationalisation, a successful pilot was conducted with a sample of Member States and Regional Institutions, and extensive training was provided to all implementing partners. The ongoing Phase II of the CARICOM RBM System deliberately includes a significant capacity building component, during which time implementing partners will continue to receive further training in relation to RBM and the use of CARMES which has the facility to generate periodic progress reports, which will inform the development of the Community's annual results-focused Annual Report.

As the Community finalises the Community Strategic Plan 2020-2030, the adoption of RBM and intensification of monitoring, evaluation and reporting by all implementing partners have become even more critical with the socio-economic and other impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region.

# *My* Virtual Internship *A First for CARICAD*



**A perspective provided by Jael Daniel**

**O**n August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, I started my internship at CARICAD, which was facilitated through the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility Segregated Portfolio Company (CCRIF SPC). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a virtual internship, with my work being guided through *WhatsApp*, emails, and *Microsoft Teams* meetings.

For a little over two months I worked on preparing a guide for geological hazards in the Caribbean region. Those hazards include volcanic events, earthquakes, landslips and landslides.

The emphasis of the guide is on the significance of the hazards and the role of the public sector of CARICAD Member States in planning and preparing for such hazards. Through my desk research and interviews with professionals in the field of Disaster Risk Management, I gained knowledge of this topic which I had only just started to learn about. The interviews especially, were a good on-the-job learning opportunity and helped to build my self-confidence.

I was very excited to be involved in this project due to my academic background. I studied Sociology and Psychology for my undergraduate degree at the University of the West Indies and I am currently doing my Masters in Sustainable Development with the University of London. I was able to use my skills in the Social Sciences and my evolving knowledge in Climate Change when developing the guide and I enjoyed using those specific tools while also learning more about geological hazards and Disaster Risk Management.

Despite the internship being conducted remotely, I always felt guided by Mr. Franklyn Michael, my supervisor, who gave me the freedom to lead my own efforts but also provided resources and knowledge to aid in my work being done well. While I would have appreciated an in-person job experience, I don't necessarily feel robbed from not having it, as I was still able to learn and gain professional experience, while also receiving insight and wisdom from the CARICAD team.



## A Small Token for a GIANT of a Man



On December 31st, 2021, we officially said farewell to our intellectual giant, Programme Specialist Franklyn "Frankie" Michael. We had presented Frankie with a printed copy of his celebratory "secret" newsletter in the days prior to his retirement. We now share two photos from that presentation, with our Administrative Officer Angela Eversley, handing over the keepsake to Frankie. It was well received, with a most memorable expression of gratitude.

### THE TEAM

The CARICAD Horizon is a regular publication of the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD). The Horizon has superseded the "Chronicle". The Editor-in-Chief is CARICAD's Executive Director, Devon Rowe. The Production Team comprises: Franklyn Michael, Rosemund Warrington, Dr. Lois Parkes, Trudy Waterman, Angela Eversley and Petra Emmanuel.

### Previous editions can be viewed at:

October 2021  
Special Hurricane Edition June 2021  
March 2021  
October 2020  
July-August 2020  
Special Hurricane Edition June 2020  
Special COVID-19 Edition May 2020  
March 2020

December 2019  
October 2019  
Board Meeting 2019 Special Edition  
April 2019  
December 2018  
August 2018  
December 2017  
July 2017